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2022/2023 PhD Thesis Abstract

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RT: Ethical Practices and Intergroup Conflicts in Selected Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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AB: Intergroup relations in academia, particularly in Nigerian Federal Universities (NFU), should result in a stable and secured society if properly handled. However, the pervasiveness of conflicts such as strikes, violent protests, and an unduly unionised university system has jeopardised the institutions' development. Yet, these conflicts had been linked to ethical issues that include, but not limited to application of extant regulations, leadership appointments and honouring of negotiated agreements. While conflict resolution mechanisms, power structure, administration and funding of universities have received significant scholarly attention, limited research has been conducted on ethics and intergroup conflicts. This study, therefore, examined ethical practices and intergroup conflicts in selected federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

The study adopted phenomenological research design. The population of study were council members, principal officers, trade unionists and government representatives in the supervisory ministries from selected federal universities in South-West Nigeria. Council members and trade unionists were identified through snowballing. Eight Key Informant Interviews and fourteen In-depth Interviews were conducted with unionists and management staff respectively. Six focus group discussions comprising three sessions each for academic staff and non-academic staff were also conducted. Data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis.

The findings showed that ethical standards were intensely eroded at the NFU. The deformalisation of Council composition frequently gets intergroup conflicts reinforced. Leadership styles in the system had a noticeable effect on the failure of university governance. Conflicts between the trade unions and Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) arose from agreements that were not honoured. The laws and regulations existed to preserve academic culture, but their implementation was often with caution to protect the interest of stakeholders. There was considerable acceptance of principal officers' appointments where merit was side-lined. However, the institutional frameworks for managing the system lacked adequate measures positioned to address peculiarities of the university operations because of moral and social implications of their application in combating unethical practices that prompted conflicts.

The study concluded that federal universities are hampered by their incapacity to function in accordance with their own laws and regulations, but tend to be encumbered more by supervisory and regulatory agencies that continually entrap university autonomy. This dependency led to perpetual conflicts between the partners. University autonomy that promotes peace can only be negotiated if the universities are self-sufficient. The study recommended that the FGN should review leadership selection process for university organs to be based on merit, and that the universities be governed in accordance with their Statutory Acts.

Keywords: Agreements, Ethical practices, Intergroup conflict, Regulations, University autonomy

Word Count: 405

Abbreviations: RFN: Researcher's Full Name, RD: Researcher's Department, RS: Researcher's School, RE: Researcher's Email, RAE: Researcher's Alternate Email, RP: Researcher's Phone Contact, RT: Registered Title, MS: Main Supervisor, ME: Main Supervisor's E-mail Address, SP: Main Supervisor's Phone Contact, CS: Co-Supervisor, CE: Co-Supervisor's E-mail Address, CP: Co-Supervisor's Phone Contact, AB: Abstract

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