



Influence of Party Politics on the Administration of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria

Priscilla Mbahiin Akaangee; Cletus I. Tyokyaa; Godwin Ochai & J. I. Agbe

Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of party politics on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria. Three specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 9,708 academic and senior administrative staff within the seven public Universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 384 academic and senior non-academic staff. The sample size was selected using proportionate stratified and accidental sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire titled "Party Politics and Administration of Public University Questionnaire (PPAPUQ)". The questionnaire was validated by five experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer research questions while Chi-Square Goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that party politics significantly influence funding, provision of basic infrastructure and location of site in public universities in North Central Nigeria. The study concluded that, party politics exert a significant and pervasive influence on various facets of the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria. The study therefore recommended among others that, Government and University Administration should collaborate to establish an independent body comprising financial experts, educationalist, and university administrators to allocate funds to public universities transparently and without political interference. Also, the Ministry of Education and University Governing Boards should enforce policies safeguarding infrastructure development in universities from political influence, forming dedicated committees within each institution with unbiased experts in infrastructure planning.

Keywords: Party Politics, Administration, Funding, Infrastructure, Site Location

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a key driver of social and economic development, contributing to the empowerment of individuals and fostering national growth. In Nigeria, public universities play a vital role in providing access to higher education for millions of students across the country. However, the development and sustainability of these institutions are heavily influenced by the political landscape. The extent to which political actors shape funding, infrastructure provision, and the location of public universities in Nigeria, particularly in the North Central region, has become a topic of significant concern.

Nigeria's political system is characterized by the dominance of party politics, where political interests often influence policy decisions. Party politics is the act of governing and administering of people. Lasswell (2016) sees party politics as who get what, when and how. Party politics play prominent position in our environment as it is backed up with power and how one uses the power in the society. According to Okeke (2007), party politics is a civilizing agent and a way of ruling in divided society without violence. Party politics seems to influence education positively and negatively based on the educational policies issued by the government in power on its citizens as formulation of these policies are sometime influenced by political parties in power. There are observations that technocrats are always not placed in their area of specialization even in government as politicians in Nigeria have been criticized by their veto power at nominating and announcing appointment of principal officer in the universities without due process.

Education and party politics are related because the education system is funded by the government in power of the day hereby propagating government policies. Party politics has influence on education right from the policy formulation stage to the implementation stage. Therefore, party politics in this research is a situation where political preference is given to certain individual or issues rather than due process in which case the administration of a public universities may be influenced by the wishes of those in power rather than by established guidelines. Party politics observed by Usman (2012), as the extent to which party politics is used to cater for national well-being in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. Those in power seem to have abused the good intentions of party politics for fair representation and equitable distribution of resources among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. The misuse of power by political office holders through the use of catchment areas, quota system or federal character in order to control and manage scarce resources leaves much to be desired.

Although administration as an integral part of education is seen as the process of integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and effective for achieving the purposes of a programme. Idoko (2015) defines administration as the process concerned with using methods, principles and practices to establish, develop and execute the goals, policies, plans and procedures necessary to attain the objectives of education. With reference to public universities, administration is seen as a process of creating, maintaining, stimulating, controlling the public universities to accomplish predetermined objectives. It involves certain functions and work activities that tertiary institution managers perform to achieve the goals of the institutions. In the view of Okechukwu and Okechukwu (2011), university administrative efforts are primarily aimed at increasing manpower development, survival, profits and gains of the university. As an integrating mechanism which pulls policies and process together to achieve goals, university administration is very important and has a vital bearing on how the quality of labour and manpower of the university are developed as well as on national economic growth. The survival of a university is hence dependent largely on the quality of administration or administrative services involved.

Similarly, the administration of public universities requires proper planning, directing monitoring and controlling of human, material time and physical resources, finances records and information flow. However, administration of public universities seems to have been affected drastically within or latter part of the 21st century by the nature and level of political interference (Okeke, 2010). Such undue interference may result in allocating insufficient funds to universities or diverting what is meant for a particular university to another. It has also been speculated that university administration deviates from the laid down procedures and guideline hence the appointment of principal officers, admission of students, employment of staff in public universities may be influenced by government interference.

Additionally, administration of public universities in Nigeria has been observed to suffer a lot of retardation, this is because of the high rate of party politics in the educational system. Party politics according to Okwori and Ede (2012), consists of the struggle between and among actors pursuing conflicting interests on public issues, interest and values. Okwonkwo in Yawe, Ivagher and Ijov (2015) defines party politics in three interrelated components. These are activities focused on the acquisition and usage of power through control of institutions of government, activities in which public issues are discussed and demand upon government expressed through political parties, interest groups, mobs or solidarity individuals and activities of the formal institutions of government which make laws, interpret them, allocate resources and carry them out. Kolma, Etebu, Charles and John (2011) assert that since Nigeria is multi-ethnic in nature, ethnicity and other factors have continued to play politics with the various policies that have not advanced the course of education. The extent to which party politics is used to cater for national wellbeing in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. The misuse of political office by those in power in-order to control and manage scarce resources leaves much to be desired. The nature of party politics practised in Nigeria appears to have some kind of influence on the administration of public universities in various ways such as allocation of funds, the location of school site, the appointment of administration staff like the vice chancellor, employment of staff, provision of infrastructure and to some extent the admission of students into these institutions among other factors.

It is speculated that the extent to which public universities in North Central Nigeria will accomplish their objectives is determined by the government in power and the administration of these universities, finances are controlled by the government in power, she decides the area of priorities. Its investment decisions are influenced by party politics. The allocation that goes into education is dependent on the interest of the government in power for this reason Nigeria fails to meet the UNESCO standard on the amount that should be allocated to education. It is speculated that party politics influence the funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria as promises made by politician on education during campaign yield no positive results.

Another challenge faced by the administration of public universities in Nigeria could be the involvement of political forces in infrastructural development as many scholars have argued that poor infrastructure can affect the student's learning and performance (Ajayi, 2011). As such learning environment remains an important area that should be well managed. In Nigeria today, schools are closely associated with the communities. Most schools depend on the neighbourhood communities for the provision of good and appropriate infrastructure, furniture and all forms of equipment for the certain activities. There is the need for a well-planned educational infrastructure in our institutions of learning to avoid poor performance. Addipe in Oyedum (2012) notes that inadequacy of infrastructural facilities like classrooms; laboratories and other academic resource translate to poor results because it breeds over crowdedness. Party politics seems to influence the provision of infrastructure in public universities in north central for effective teaching and learning.

In North Central Nigeria, the desire to bridge the yawning educational gap between it and the Southern geo-political zones and to also eradicate poverty, ignorance, disease and achieve socio-economic and political development has brought about competition of where these institutions should be located so as to provide equal educational opportunities to their people which most time turn to over concentrate these institutions in a particular region leaving the other areas without influence in government to their fate. Party politics seems to influence the establishment of universities right from the first set of universities which was politically influenced not to have followed the detailed recommendation of the Ashby commission report as observed by Obadan (2011). Government in power site these universities based on interest rather than recommendation. It is believed that party politics has adverse influence on the siting of these universities, funding, employment of staff, admission process, appointment of principal officers. In the North Central Nigeria, it is observed that the administration of public universities is a fertile ground for politicking and politicians most times influence the administration process as loyalists of the ruling party are rewarded without due process with employment of staff, admission of students, appointment of vice chancellors and members in council, funding and location of the institutions. Most times, it gets to a point where the school administration lose control over the institution in terms of administration and procedures. The researcher as observed the unhealthy relationship between party politics and the administration of these public universities that brought about negative inimical to the set down rules and regulations for the smooth running of the concerned public universities.

Literature Review

Theoretical Analysis

This work is hinged on Political Economy Theory by Karl Marx in 1980. The theory suggests that economic systems cannot be fully understood without considering the political contexts in which they operate, including the interests and motivations of politicians, government institutions, and other stakeholders. Political Economy Theory examines the relationship between politics and economics, focusing on how political institutions, power structures, and political actors influence economic decisions, policies, and outcomes. This theory examines how political forces influence economic policies, decisions, and resource allocation, particularly in public institutions, including education. The political economy framework considers the interaction between political processes, governmental policies, and economic systems, recognizing that political interests and power dynamics often shape the distribution of resources, infrastructure, and site locations.

Political Economy Theory focuses on understanding how political factors (such as governance, party politics, and power dynamics) influence economic decisions, resource allocation, and institutional governance. In the context of public institutions like universities, this theory posits that political actors may use their influence to direct resources, such as funding and infrastructure, in ways that serve their political interests or affiliations, rather than based on merit or objective needs. The theory suggests that those in power, particularly within political parties, may exercise control over public resources to reinforce their influence, reward political supporters, or secure future electoral advantages. In the case of public universities, this can manifest in unequal funding, infrastructure development skewed toward politically favored regions, or the strategic siting of universities to enhance political visibility and control.

Related Studies

Several studies have examined the influence of party politics on educational administration and development across various levels of education in Nigeria. Obadare (2003) conducted research on party politics and the misadministration of funds in public secondary schools in Abia and Imo States. The study aimed to investigate how party politics affects the management of school funds in secondary schools. The findings revealed that party politics often leads to embezzlement and deliberate inflation of contract fees, resulting in financial mismanagement within the education sector. Emenike (2015) explored the political influence on public school funding in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. The study found that party politics significantly affects government subvention, as well as contributions from other organizations such as the Ford Foundation, UNESCO, UNDP, Rockefeller Foundation, and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). This indicates that political dynamics can influence not only governmental but also external funding sources for educational institutions. Adebisi and Aina (2009) reported that the Nigerian university system is severely underfunded, a situation that has substantial implications for university governance. Their findings align with those of Halidu (2015), who suggested that low funding levels and poor financial administration negatively impact the management of universities. These studies underscore the role of politics in exacerbating financial challenges within higher education institutions.

Tabotrdip (2000) examined the influence of party politics on primary school administration. The purpose of the study was to identify the effects of party politics on the funding and development of primary schools. The study revealed that party politics significantly influences school funding and development, particularly in the provision of physical infrastructure and facilities. Obi (2014) assessed the factors affecting the effective administration of tertiary institutions in North Eastern Nigeria. The study found that party politics leads to inappropriate allocation of funds for infrastructural development, with political office holders diverting funds for personal gain or to benefit institutions with political connections. This political favoritism often undermines the equitable distribution of resources across institutions. Ikoya and Onoyase (2018) investigated the impact of politics on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in Cross River State. They found that political considerations play a significant role in determining the provision of infrastructure, which, in turn, influences the effective administration of these universities. Adebisi and Aina (2009) also examined alternative modes of financing higher education in Southwestern Nigeria. Their study found that inadequate infrastructure and facilities in Nigerian universities, caused by insufficient funding, have critical implications for university governance. Akabogu (2001) investigated the political impact of school location on student achievement and found that political considerations significantly influence the location of schools, which can affect educational outcomes. Similarly, Ayogu (2002) researched the influence of party politics on site allocation and found that politics plays a major role in determining the location of primary schools in Ebonyi State. Kirui (2002) studied the influence of school location on cost efficiency in public secondary schools in Taraba State. The study found that school location decisions are often influenced by the government in power, aligning with the findings of this study, which highlight the role of politics in the siting of educational institutions. In summary, these studies demonstrate that party politics has a significant impact on the funding, infrastructure provision, and site location of educational institutions in Nigeria, across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The political interference in these areas often leads to inequitable resource allocation and hinders the effective administration of schools and universities.

Problem Statement

The role of public universities in driving socio-economic development and fostering academic excellence is critical, particularly in regions like North Central Nigeria. However, the equitable distribution of resources, infrastructure, and university site locations remains a major concern, particularly when influenced by party politics. There have been growing concerns that political affiliations and party dynamics may overshadow objective criteria in determining funding, infrastructure provision, and site selection for public universities. This could potentially hinder the ability of these institutions to serve their intended purpose and contribute to regional development.

Researchers have observed that party politics may interfere with the fair allocation of resources, leading to imbalances in funding and disparities in the provision of essential infrastructure across public universities. In some cases, the location of new university sites may be politically motivated, rather than based on the needs of the educational system or equitable geographic considerations. This could result in inefficiencies, underfunding, and unequal access to educational resources, which ultimately affect the quality of education provided.

The problem of political interference in these key areas has not only raised questions about the effectiveness of public university governance but also about the potential long-term consequences for educational quality, access, and regional development. Addressing these concerns through empirical research is essential to understanding the extent of party politics' influence on the public university system in North Central Nigeria, with the aim of promoting fairness, accountability, and transparency in decision-making processes.

Objectives of the study

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives

- 1) Determine the extent to which party politics influences funding in public universities in North Central Nigeria.
- 2) Determine the extent to which party politics influences the provision of infrastructure in public universities.
- 3) determine the extent to which party politics influences site location of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. To what extent does party politics influence the funding of public universities?
2. To what extent does party politics influence the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities?
3. To what extent does party politics influence site location of public universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Party politics has no significant influence on funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Party politics has no significant influence on the provision of infrastructure in public universities
3. Party politics has no significant influence on the location of site of public universities

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design and was carried out in North Central Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 9,708 academic and senior administrative staff within the seven public Universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 384 academic and senior non-academic staff from seven Federal Universities in six States of North Central Nigeria and the FCT, Abuja. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane (1969) sample size determination formula. The sample size was selected using proportionate stratified and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Party Politics and Administration of Public University Questionnaire (PPAPUQ)". This questionnaire was developed in line with the specific objectives of the study such that the research questions were answered. The questionnaire was divided into 3 clusters, that is, cluster A, B and C, D. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by five experts. Three of the experts were from Educational Administration and Planning and two from Measurement and Evaluation, the experts from the Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) and Benue State University Makurdi. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, copies of the instrument were trial-tested on a sample of on a sample of 30 academic and non-academic staff from three Federal Universities, Federal University Wukari, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Yola and University of Maiduguri, Bornu in North Central Nigeria which was not part of the study sample but considered to have similar characteristics to the subjects under study. The reliability index of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method and coefficients of 0.77, 0.81 and 0.80 for A, B and C respectively. The instrument has an overall coefficient of 0.87. The data collected was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-Square Goodness of Fit to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does party politics influence the funding of public universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which party politics influence the funding of public universities

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	St.D	Remark
1	Party politics determine the allocation of funds for capital projects in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.	101	103	68	32	2.92	.88	High Extent

2	Sectional sentiments have influence on allocation of capital projects in some public institutions in North Central Universities.	98	171	78	37	2.86	.91	High Extent
3	My university has been receiving poor subvention from government because the university administration is not in the good books of politicians in power.	107	200	49	28	3.01	.84	High Extent
4	My university does not receive equal subvention with other universities because the visitor of the university is from a different political party.	103	189	73	19	2.98	.81	High Extent
5	Party politics affects the timely release of funds for vice chancellor to carry out their duties in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.	111	191	58	24	3.01	.83	High Extent
6	Political sentiments influence allocation of funds to some public universities in North Central Nigeria	106	181	58	39	2.92	.91	High Extent
Cluster Mean						2.95	.86	High Extent

Analysis of data as presented in Table 1 shows the mean responses of respondents on the extent to which party politics influence the funding of public universities with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented on Table 1 revealed that, the respondents rated 'high extent' on all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) with mean scores ranging from 2.86 – 3.01 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .81 – 0.91. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.95 and SD= .86. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that the extent to which party politics influence the funding of public universities is high.

Research Question 2: To what extent does party politics influence the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which party politics influence the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	St.D	Remark
1	Due to party politics additional halls are not built in my university	99	188	76	21	2.95	.82	High Extent
2	Vice Chancellor who are in the good books of a political party receives adequate support for infrastructural buildings of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.	103	177	64	40	2.89	.92	High Extent
3	Support for provision of ICT facilities in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria is often based on the discretion of the ruling party in the state	98	189	80	17	2.96	.80	High Extent
4	Vice Chancellor who are in the good book of a ruling party often gets support for provision of adequate sporting facilities	103	174	74	33	2.90	.89	High Extent
5	The provision of adequate classroom facilities in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria is often based on the decision of the ruling party in charge of affairs	110	169	71	34	2.92	.91	High Extent
6	The provision of adequate office furniture in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria is often based on the decision of the ruling party in charge of affairs	98	201	59	26	2.97	.82	High Extent
Cluster Mean						2.93	.86	High Extent

Analysis of data as presented in Table 2 shows the mean responses of respondents on the extent to which party politics influence the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented on Table 2 revealed that, the respondents rated 'high extent' on all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) with mean scores ranging from 2.89 – 2.97 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .80 – 0.92. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.93 and SD= .86. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that the extent to which party politics influence the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities is high.

Research Question 3: To what extent does party politics influence site location of public universities?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the extent to which party politics influence site location of public universities

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	St.D	Remark
1	Party politics often decides where a Public University will be located permanently.	109	181	64	30	2.96	.87	High Extent
2	Party politics has relegated to the background the regulated policy of site location of Public Universities.	89	192	72	31	2.88	.85	High Extent
3	Political loyalists of a ruling party in their communities influence the location of Public Universities.	115	174	70	25	2.99	.86	High Extent
4	The government in power often ignores the opinions of the general public in pursuit of political scores in the site location of Public Universities.	111	180	58	35	2.96	.90	High Extent
5	Political differences among people often result in crises in location of Public Universities.	102	190	68	24	2.96	.83	High Extent
6	Public Universities are often located in zones that favours the party of the incumbent Government	100	178	71	35	2.89	.89	High Extent
Cluster Mean						2.94	.87	High Extent

Analysis of data as presented in Table 3 shows the mean responses of respondents on the extent to which party politics influence site location of public universities with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented on Table 3 revealed that, the respondents rated 'high extent' on all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) with mean scores ranging from 2.88 – 2.99 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .85 – 0.90. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.94 and SD= .87. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that the extent to which party politics influence site location of public universities is high.

Hypothesis 1: Party politics has no significant influence on funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria

Table 4: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of the influence of Party Politics on Funding of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α - level	Remark
SA	104	96.0					
A	186	96.0					
D	64	96.0					
SD	30	96.0					
Total	384		3	141.083	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 4 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 141.083, degree of freedom df=3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, party politics has significant influence on funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Party politics has no significant influence on provision of infrastructure of public universities in North Central Nigeria

Table 5: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of the influence of Party Politics on Provision of Infrastructure of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α - level	Remark
SA	102	96.0					
A	183	96.0					
D	71	96.0					
SD	28	96.0					
Total	384		3	133.896	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 5 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 133.896, degree of freedom $df=3$ and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, party politics has significant influence on provision of infrastructure of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: Party politics has no significant influence on location of site of public universities in North Central Nigeria

Table 6: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of the influence of Party Politics on Location of Site of Public Universities in North Central Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α - level	Remark
SA	104	96.0					
A	183	96.0					
D	67	96.0					
SD	30	96.0					
Total	384		3	133.646	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 6 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 133.646, degree of freedom $df=3$ and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, party politics has significant influence on location of site of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Discussion

The first finding of the study revealed that party politics has significant influence on funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria. The findings indicate a consistent and high extent of agreement among respondents on the influence of party politics on the allocation of funds for capital projects, sectional sentiments affecting capital project allocations, poor subvention due to political affiliations, unequal subvention based on political party ties, and the impact of party politics on the timely release of funds for vice chancellor duties. The collective responses convey a prevailing sentiment that party politics plays a substantial role in shaping the financial landscape of public universities in the region. This finding corroborates with that of Obadare (2003) whose study on party politics and misadministration of funds found that party politics in education tend to bring embezzlement, deliberate inflation of contracts fees. The finding also corroborates with that of Emenike (2015) whose study on political influence on public school funding in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State found that party politics has significantly influenced government subvention and the contributions of other organizations such as Ford Foundation, United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP, Rolkefeller Foundation and Tertiary Education. The finding is in tandem with the report of Adebisi and Aina (2009) that, the present Nigerian university system is under-funded which have significant implications for university governance. Also, the findings of Halidu (2015) suggesting that a low level of funding and poor financial administration has affected the administration of the university system are in corroboration of the findings of this study. Further, the finding agree with that of Tabotrdip (2000) who found that, party politics influenced the funding and development of primary schools. The observed significant influence of party politics on the funding of public universities in North Central Nigeria can be attributed to several interconnected factors. Firstly, the allocation of funds for capital projects and the distribution of subvention may be subject to political considerations, with ruling parties prioritizing projects in alignment with their political interests and loyalists. Sectional sentiments influencing capital project allocations may stem from political leaders favoring certain regions for political gain. Additionally, the reported poor subvention linked to political affiliations implies that universities not aligned with the ruling party may face financial challenges, affecting their overall operations. Unequal subvention based on political party ties suggests a lack of equity in resource distribution, further emphasizing the influence of party politics. The impact on the timely release of funds for vice chancellor duties indicates a potential politicization

of administrative processes, hindering the effective functioning of university leadership. Collectively, these factors underscore the intricate and pervasive role of party politics in shaping the financial dynamics of public universities in the region, raising concerns about the fair and transparent allocation of resources within the higher education system.

Secondly, the findings of the study revealed that party politics has significant influence on the provision of infrastructure in public universities in North Central Nigeria. The findings consistently reveal a high extent of agreement among respondents across different aspects of infrastructure provision in public universities. These aspects include the construction of additional halls, support for infrastructural buildings, provision of ICT facilities, support for sporting facilities, provision of adequate classroom facilities, and provision of adequate office furniture. The results paint a picture of a pervasive influence of party politics on the provision of basic infrastructure in public universities which is crucial for understanding the complexities and challenges associated with infrastructure development in the higher education sector in this region. The findings align with that of Tabotrdip (2000) whose study to determine the influence of party politics on primary school administration found that provision of physical infrastructure, and facilities were affected because of party politics. The finding also aligns with that of Obi (2014) whose study on assessment of factors affecting effective administration of tertiary educational institutions in North Eastern Nigeria found that party politics has made government officers to allocate funds for infrastructural development inappropriately thereby favoring other institutions to the detriment of others, and that, political office holders divert funds meant for infrastructural development some tertiary educational institutions to their personal benefit or to institutions that relate to them or are located in their communities. More so, the finding agree with Ikoya and Onoyase (2018) who found that politics influence the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities that help in effective administration of the institutions. This also agrees with the findings of Adebisi and Aina (2009) that, there is inadequate infrastructure and facilities in the Nigerian University system which in turn, have significant implications for university governance. The observed significant influence of party politics on the provision of infrastructure in public universities in North Central Nigeria can be attributed to the intertwining of political interests and resource allocation. Political considerations often play a pivotal role in determining the prioritization of infrastructure projects, leading to the construction of additional halls and support for various facilities that may align with the ruling party's agenda or benefit politically important regions. The consistent high extent of agreement among respondents across diverse aspects of infrastructure provision suggests a systematic pattern where political influence permeates decision-making processes related to university development. The provision of ICT facilities, sporting facilities, classrooms, and office furniture may be subject to discretionary support based on political affiliations, potentially leading to disparities in infrastructure quality across institutions. This finding underscores the need for a more transparent and equitable approach to infrastructure development in public universities, minimizing the impact of political dynamics and ensuring that resources are allocated based on educational priorities and the genuine needs of the academic community.

Lastly, the study's findings revealed that party politics has significant influence on the location of site of public universities in North Central Nigeria. The findings consistently demonstrate a high extent of agreement among respondents on the influence of party politics on the site location of public universities. This is evident across various aspects, including decisions on permanent locations, the relegation of regulated policies, influence from political loyalists, government's disregard for public opinions, political differences leading to crises, and the favoring of locations based on the party in power. This insight is crucial for understanding the intricate relationship between political considerations and the strategic decisions related to the establishment of higher education institutions in the region. The finding is in consonant with that of Akabogu (2001) who found that politics has significance impact on the location of schools. The finding also aligns with Ayogu (2002) whose research on the influence of party politics on site location found that party politics affect site allocation of primary school in Ebonyi State. Similarly, the finding of Kirui (2002) that location of school is based government of the day is in tandem with this study's findings. The identified significant influence of party politics on the site location of public universities in North Central Nigeria can be attributed to the intricate relationship between political power dynamics and strategic decision-making regarding educational institutions. The decision on the permanent location of universities, as well as the relegation of regulated policies and the influence exerted by political loyalists, underscores the role of political considerations in shaping the geographical distribution of educational resources. The reported government disregard for public opinions and the impact of political differences leading to crises in location decisions highlight a potential lack of transparency and inclusivity in the site selection process. Moreover, the favoring of locations based on the political party in power suggests a tendency to prioritize areas aligned with political interests, potentially neglecting regions that may have greater educational needs. This finding underscores the importance of depoliticizing site location decisions to ensure equitable access to quality education and prevent the undue concentration of resources in specific political strongholds.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that party politics exerts significant influence on various facets of the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, party politics plays a substantial role in shaping the funding, provision of infrastructure and location of sites in these institutions. This suggests that political considerations impact key aspects of university administration, potentially influencing resource allocation, decision-making processes, and overall governance. The study underscores the need for attention to the challenges posed by political influences in the higher education sector, emphasizing the importance of developing policies and practices that prioritize merit, transparency, and the academic integrity of public universities in the region

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Government and University Administration should collaborate to establish an independent body comprising financial experts, educationalists, and university administrators to allocate funds to public universities transparently and without political interference.

2. Ministry of Education and University Governing Boards should enforce policies safeguarding infrastructure development in universities from political influence, forming dedicated committees within each institution with unbiased experts in infrastructure planning.
3. National Universities Commission (NUC) and Ministry of Education should create transparent guidelines for public university site selection, conducting thorough feasibility studies and involving local communities, academic experts, and NUC representatives.

REFERENCES

- Adebiyi, A. I. & Aina, O. I. (2009). Alternative Modes of Financing Higher Education in Nigeria and Implications For University Governance. Final Report Submitted to Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana
- Ajayi, I. (2011). Towards effective management of university, education in Nigeria. *International NGO Journal*, 4(8), 342-347
- Akabogu, J. U. (2020). Enhancing interest among senior secondary students in expository essay writing in South East Nigeria. *Journal of Education*, 12(5), 38.
- Ayogu, C. C. (2002). Influence of politics on administration of primary education Ebonyi State. Unpublished M.Ed Thesis, Faculty of Education, Nsukka University of Nigeria
- Emenike, M. (2015). Political influence on education funding in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. *Higher Education*, 42, 307-332
- Halidu, S. G. (2015). An evaluation of university funding in Nigeria: Evidence from university of Ibadan. *Fountain Journal of Administration and Social Sciences* 4(2), 127 – 144
- Idoko, A. A. (2015). *Educational management and other contemporary problems*: Wintoren Publishers, Makurdi, Nigeria
- Ikoya, P. O. & Nonyase, D. (2008). Universe basic education in Nigeria: Availability of schools' infrastructure for effective program implementation. *Educational Studies* 34 (1): 11 – 24.
- Kirui, K. (2023). Influence of school location on cost efficiency in public secondary schools in Bomet County, Kenya. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 9(1), 41–43.
- Kolma, C., Etebu, E., Charles, A.M. & John, S.M. (2011) Impact of Unregulated Privatization of Education in Nigeria. appraisal of the lead city university. *Mediterranean journal of Social Science*, 2 (7), 100-121
- Lasswell, H. D. (2016). *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*. (Reprint ed.). Martino Fine Books.
- Marx, K. (1980). *Capital: A critique of political economy* (B. Fowkes, Trans.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1867)
- Obadan, M. I. (2011). *Managing politics and conflicts in the councils and the appointment of Vice Chancellors*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd
- Obadare, E. (2003). White collar fundamentalism youth religiosity and civil society in Nigeria AAPS occasional papers series page 1 – 14
- Obi, K. (2014). Assessment of factors affecting effective administration of tertiary educational institutions in North Eastern Nigeria. *Human and Social Sciences Journal*, 4(1), 61-67
- Okechukwu, F. C. & Okechukwu, F. C. (2011). Total Quality Administration in Higher Education: Symbolism or Substance? A Close Look at the Nigerian University System. [Online]. <http://books.google.com.my/books?hl=en&lr=andid=IA>[Accessed 11 July 2018].
- Okeke, B. S. (2007). *Politics of education: The Nigerian experience*. Awka: Doone Printing & Publishing.
- Okwori, A., & Ede, S. (2012). *Administration issues in education*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers
- Oyedum, G. U. (2012). Relative effect of environmental factors information literacy course of study and resources availability to students use of university libraries in Nigeria. *Journal of information and knowledge administration* 3, (1 & 2), 1 – 19
- Tabotrdip, J. E. (2000). Influence of party politics on primary school administration in Imo State Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of Nigeria, Nsukka
- Usman.O. (2015). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Jos ADB Publishers
- Yawe, A. A., Ivagher, E. D., & Ijov, M. T. (2015). Impact of political appointments on the administration of higher education in Nigeria. *Report on Opinion*, 7(4), 82-89