



INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES AND ACADEMIC STAFF SERVICE DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

This study examined institutional variables and academic staff service delivery in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study is an Ex-post facto research that involved a stratified random sample of 449 academic staff from the three universities in Cross River State. The population of the study was 2768 academic staff. Two research questions were answered using descriptive statistics. The reliability and validity for the questionnaires were obtained using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha of .81-.90. Data collection was carried out using institutional variables and academic staff service delivery questionnaire (IVASSDQ). Two theories were used to support the study and literature reviews were carried out accordingly to the variables of the study. Independent t-test and One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Fisher Least Significant Difference were used to test the hypotheses. The results obtained revealed that institutional leadership style and climate significantly influence academic staff service delivery. From the result it was concluded that to a large extent, academic staff service delivery is dependent on institutional variable. From the findings and conclusion, it was recommended among others that, the university leadership should practice and lead by democratic principles especially now that university is autonomous. That will give the academic staff a sense of inclusiveness that is motivational and productive; lecturers on training in university and the highly ranked lecturers should establish a good working climate that is motivational and encourages mentorship; the university administration should establish a calm and more positive working climate to bring the best for the achievement of university goal.

KeyWords: Institutional Variables, Academic Staff, Service Delivery, Universities

Introduction

Education all over the world is recognized by various nations as an instrument par excellence in national development (Awolala, 2012). It is a critical index for determining the level of development, as nations have used it as a tool to enhance its policies and programmes aimed at the development of the totality of her citizenry. The relevance of education in the development of man has been documented in literature. Emphatically, the Federal Ministry of Education in the National Policy on Education (2014) 6th edition posits that, “education would continue to be priority of the nation as it makes any good thing happened”. Through the universities, society effect positive changes in their developmental strides. A country’s level of development is very dependent on the level of its educational development and education is not just a mere sector of any country’s economy (Haller, 2010). Education as a sector is the mother, the spring board, on which the economy of any nations breathes feeds and survives. Any economy that is not run and propelled by functional education would only remain at the level of the early men’s economy of subsistent farming, of such a time when rustic men only fed and survived on fruits. Such time that men lived in houses of leaves and grasses, before building mud houses (Razera, 2011). Education is the basis of development at the individual, community and national levels of the development efforts of a nation. It aids the development of its human resources, that is, human development. Human development refers to the totality of the efforts and achievements made at ensuring that people in a society are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and

environmental condition necessary for them to achieve their full potentialities as human beings. It includes considerations of provisions made for education, health and other welfare benefits of individuals.

University exists to disseminate knowledge through teaching, research and community service (Adedeji, 2011). These triple mandates make universities unique organization whose existence stands for purely academic purposes. There is also no gainsaying the fact that universities are established for the sake of training high level manpower of which students are the main constituents (Nwagwu, 2006). Students are the major beneficiaries of universities dissemination of knowledge as they constitute the end product of university education whose quality determines to a large extent the service delivery of academic staff in universities (Taiwo, 2010). Without students, universities would not be established. Universities render many services, one of which is academic staff service delivery. This is so because their existence center's on executing academic activities. It can therefore be rightly pointed out that the ability of universities to fulfill their mandates is a purpose of their success in managing their academic staff service delivery. Also, university education is the apex of educational provisions in the world generally; saddled with the responsibility to produce quality manpower and workforce for sustainable national development and international relations. In Africa, especially in the Sub-Saharan regions, the position university education plays in the advancement of third world economies for global relevance cannot be overstated. It is impossible to deny that the Nigerian university system has led to major improvements in every facet of Nigerian society, including increased cultural, economic, political, scientific, and technical advancement. A full range of skills is offered in universities, while essential competencies in academia, medicine, law, government, business, research, and science are also available. These areas produce highly talented individuals that are responsible for running the economy, civic society, the education of students, as well as the molding of entire societies. Additionally, the knowledge the Nigerian people have received at university has empowered them to be successful members of society. Nigerian universities, much more than any other kind of institution, lead to increased self-awareness and a more thorough understanding of one's environment. Lecturers, therefore, has a significant role to play in transmitting desirable qualities, culture, norms and values in students. Since, values give directions, control, code of conduct give sense of right and wrong and also guide decision making. It is imperative that academic staff education should provide the needed value orientation to trainee lecturers so as to be able to inculcate the right value to into students through service delivery.

One of the objectives of Nigerian education is to inculcation of the right values. The National Policy on Education (2013) 6th edition enunciated that some set of values that are expected to be imbedded in the quality of instruction at all levels of our education. Among them are:

- i. Faith in man's ability to make rational decision.
- ii. Shared responsibility for the common good of society.
- iii. Respect of worth and dignity of the individual
- iv. Promotion of emotional, physical and psychological health of all.
- v. Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations
- vi. Shared responsibility for the common good of society.

The same section of the National Policy on Education also concluded that efforts will be made to relate education to the overall needs of the Nigerian society. Values can be seen as the guiding principles that order the life of individuals. They help to shape attitude and beliefs or sentiment on an issue or thing and are essentially for well-being of the society. Values are the expected modes of behavior which a society cherishes for her survival.

The researcher observed that academic staff objectives are to enhance acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the academic staff welfare. To maintain ethical values, moral integrity and good leadership qualities in promoting academic staff excellent. Centrally is to promote research, teaching and community service for sustainability of university goals; to look at the university condition of service to promote academic staff appraisal and promotion and to act with honesty and integrity; to have mutual love and concern on student academic

race, to show strong potential and mutual cooperation for their colleagues, to be friendly in their place of work, to provide precise and appropriate information, to be well knowledgeable about modern issues and upcoming progress, to have power to develop mutual appreciation of issues and difficulty they face, to make possible excellent communications network, to keep and assist with the growth of academic processes within universities and being able to enhance educational skills for efficient academic service delivery practice and strengthens students' learning experiences. The researcher defines academic staff service delivery as the ability to carry out academic activities in the university system to promote students' knowledge, research and innovation to equip students with skills needed to meet demand in the labour market development. Under an ideal situation, academic staff in universities in Cross River State and elsewhere, should be punctual to lecture students, manage and evaluate students, adhere to prescribe universities policies, engage in active research, collaboration and dissemination, supervise students' research works, participate in all the events tailored towards students' improvement and deliver other tasks that would be assigned to them from time-to-time by superiors. However, it seems to the researcher that some academic staff in universities is not delivering these services as expected. Through the experiences of the researcher, some senior academic staff in universities in Cross River State tends to classify between undergraduate and post-graduate students, giving preference to the latter at the expense of the former. Consequently, some senior academic staff assign or hand over teaching services to junior colleagues while they either relaxed in their offices, attend to other matters or focus only on postgraduate students. This observation corroborates an extensive submission of other scholars who have reported similar situations (Agba and Ocheni, 2017; Mbon, Omorobi, Owan, and Ekpenyong, 2019; Odigwe and Owan, 2020).

In other situations, some academic staff are only compelled to carry out research investigations just for the sake of promotion; as the only option left is to "publish or perish." In a narrative, the researcher sought the opinion of well-respected scholars of public universities in Cross River State, to share views regarding research practices among the modern-day academic staff of universities. To the dismay of the researcher, the scholar in a quote said "the attitude of lecturers towards research in recent times is annoying; they do researches just for promotion" (Situs, 2007). Furthermore, "when research is taken away from staff promotion, only a handful of university lecturers would still carry out empirical investigations and publish same (Razero, 2011)". This short narrative suggests that the essence of research as a knowledge bank or problem-solving activity has been undermined by some academic staff, with attention shifting towards the "publish or perish" paradigm; instead of to "publish and flourish," according to modern scholars (Gray, Madson and Jackson, 2018; Lambovska and Todorova, 2021; Yeo, Renandya and Tangkiengsirisin, 2021). Publishing just because of promotion seems to have created the problem of low-quality research produced from academic staff in universities in Cross River State. According to Bassey and Owan (2019), to produce a good quality of research, a lot of time must be committed to the problem identification, conceptualisation, literature search, review and incorporation, data collection, management and analysis, report writing and submission to reputable journals and/or funding agencies, peer review and eventual publication. In terms of ranking universities in Cross River State, such as the University of Calabar, Calabar, University of Cross River State and Arthur Jarvis University Akpabuyo – Cross River State are currently ranked in the 37th, 88th, and 145th positions respectively, among Nigerian universities (UniRank, 2021). In any case, the University of Calabar has greatly improved from the 41st and 43rd position of 2019 and 2020 respectively to the 37th position in 2021. The reason for this improvement would be attributed to the steps taken at the university to ensure that academic staff publish a portion of their scholarly works in journals indexed in renowned databases such as Web of Science (managed by Thompson Reuters) and Scopus (managed by Elsevier). This change in universities ranking suggests that quality research output by academic staff could promote the author and universities prestige, which would, in turn, lead to enrolment increase, international universities collaboration, affiliations, students' transfers and other benefits. Institutional variables are "the characteristics and attribute that a university possess or that can be judged as applying to a particular university" (Arop and Owan, 2018). Institutional variables are those variables that emanate from the university in which the university uses to improve their academic standard. This is to

compliment learning in the lecture room and also enhance academic delivery of lecturers and students. It is generally believed that institutional variables are important factors that affect students' academic achievement and academic staff service delivery in institutions of higher learning. This is so because remarkable studies have shown a correlation between institutional variables and academic achievement as well as effective service delivery. In the context of this study, institutional variables were defined as the distinctive attributes that classify one university academic staff service delivery from another. These variables are physical, observable and also vary from university to university. In this study, two institutional variables were of interest to the researcher. These include leadership style and climate. These institutional variables affect the extent of academic staff service delivery in universities as discussed hereafter. Institutional leadership style refers to the executive management styles that Vice Chancellors of different universities adopt in running their universities. It is believed that different individuals possess different personal attributes and also tend to adopt a varied approach to doing things. Even the same individual can adopt different approaches to doing things at the same or different times. The choice of approach may affect the way universities leaders relate with academic staff, which in turn, affect academic staff in delivering their services. Institutional climate, according to Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic and Bromhead (2017), is a social attribute of an institution that explains the kind of relationship between staff and students, staff and staff, students and students with a focus on studying and learning, principles and standards, and common activities and approaches. These types of relationships may favour or disfavor academic staff across different universities, which may also affect academic staff service delivery. The researcher defines institutional climate as a force that bring modification to university system, students and researchers. Based on this background, this study was under taken to find out the extent to which institutional variables affect academic staff service delivery in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Institutional leadership style refers to the leadership styles that Vice Chancellors of different universities adopt in running universities. It is believed that different individuals possess different personal attributes and also tend to adopt a varied approach to doing things. For example, leadership and decision-making practices are different in public and private universities (Zulfqar, Valcke, Devos, Tuytens and Shahzad, 2016). Leadership style is very important to an organization or even to a country because it is the basis for the direction and development of an organization or country. According to Hafid, Omar and Rahman (2020), good and positive leadership is needed in public organizations such as ministries, government, or educational institutions. And that the efficiency of the administration may symbolize the overall efficiency of government administration. The concept of leadership is important in terms of employee work style, which significantly influences organizational performance, effectiveness and results from leader behaviour (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016). Leadership plays a key role for an organization to create good relationships among employees as well as management that has a positive impact on the organization, improve service performance and change the outcome of behaviour when used properly (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017). Leadership is the process of influencing a group or individual to achieve a specific target while a leader is an individual who can influence others (Adobor, 2014). In addition to the process, leadership is also seen as a system used by an individual to influence group members towards achieving objectives (Hao and Yazdanifard 2015). Leadership is arguably one of the most observed, yet least understood phenomena on earth (Bello, 2021). An ineffective leader does not contribute to organizational progress and can detract from organizational goal accomplishment. According to Naylor, cited in Bello (2021), effective leadership is a product of the heart and an effective leader must be visionary, passionate, creative, flexible, inspiring, innovative, courageous, imaginative, and experimental and initiates change using the Batho Pele principle to evaluate the public service delivery system. Over time, researchers have proposed many different styles of leadership as there is no particular style of leadership that can be considered universal. No matter the styles of leadership, however, a good or effective leader must inspire, motivate and direct activities to help achieve group or organizational goals (Adobor, 2014). At the same time, a certain leadership style is needed to ensure the delivery system runs smoothly and meets the target of

the people as a whole. Narad, Kaitano and Lakhanpal (2020) found that transactional style made a significant contribution in predicting teacher effectiveness, followed by passive avoidant style.

The study of Arop *et al.* (2018), as earlier cited, used the one-way analysis of variance to determine whether differences exist in the job performance of teachers in schools with autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire leadership style. It was revealed that the leadership style adopted significantly influenced the job effectiveness of teachers in secondary schools. More specifically, a teacher job effectiveness was highest in schools where the leadership style adopted was democratic, followed by schools with laissez-faire leadership. The effectiveness of teachers was lowest in schools with autocratic leadership styles. The Fisher's test of multiple pair wise comparison revealed significant differences in the mean of teachers' effectiveness in schools with different leadership patterns. It was suggested that school principals embrace a more flexible management approach, in which different situations may need the employment of diverse tactics. This may reduce conflict and ensure that principals have a positive relationship with all teachers. The cited study is related to the present research because of the examination of various leadership styles and their link to the job effectiveness of teachers. This is similar to university leadership and academic staff service delivery, with the difference being in the type of teachers whose service delivery was examined. The present study seeks to understand the service delivery of universities' academic staff; while in the cited study, the job effectiveness of secondary school teachers was examined. In Kenya, (Alari, 2020) surveyed undergraduate students' perception of leadership, governance and integrity in universities. Mixed research methods were used. A survey was conducted using a digital questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect data. The study revealed that the majority of respondents have a good understanding of leadership style, governance and integrity. Although the findings revealed that, for a vast majority of respondents, the university experience is modelling them to persons of integrity. A good number of respondents had concerns about leadership and integrity in the university. Because sustainable development is not only anchored on academic excellence but also ethical values and society's moral development, the study recommended that universities should consider anchoring and laying emphasis on key aspects of ethical leadership, good governance and integrity in the curriculum as they train students. Though the population of this study was undergraduate students, it is related to the present study because the perception of the student could tell the height which has been attained in the leadership. This may have a relation with how service is rendered to students. Similarly, (Adekanbi, 2016) investigated the impact of leadership styles on employee retention. Employee retention is a major concern of the Nigerian banking sector today because of increased employee turnover. It was reported that leadership style has a moderate significance on employee retention and that the transactional leadership style best encourages employee retention in the Nigerian Banking sector. Based on the findings, the study recommended that leaders and managers should properly implement the exchange process of the transactional leadership style to mitigate employee turnover in the Nigerian banking sector. This study focus was on the banking sector; however, it is relevant to the present study since it considers leadership which is the independent variable of this sub-variable. This study is relevant to the present study because the level of consistency could tell the nexus between academics and the banking sector. In an attempt to explore the critical exposition of leadership challenge of Nigeria, especially in the 21st century, Nwagboso and Duke (2012) examined the extent to which inept and corrupt leaders have over the years, adversely affected the development of Nigeria as a nation. The study adopted the descriptive approach and content analysis as its methodological orientation. The study concludes that official corruption which has hitherto cascaded Nigeria's developmental efforts certainly emanated from poor leadership and needs to be addressed if Nigeria must attain greater heights. This politically-minded study revealed how leadership style influences organisations. The study identified that poor leadership accounts for poor development in the area of study. It can be inferred from the study that poor leadership style may lead to poor service delivery. This why the study recommended the need to urgently reflect on the institutionalization of leadership training centres at all levels for the emergence of credible leaders at Local, State and National levels in Nigeria. Another Kenyan study by (Nyamwega, 2018) focused on the evaluation of the strategic

leadership development programme in public service commission for effective service delivery. Convergent parallel mixed methods design was adopted in the study. Analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics. The study showed that the programme was effective in transforming managers into efficient leaders and that beneficiaries were satisfied with the approach engaged. The study further established that several challenges were facing the programme implementation such as over-emphasis on leadership skills in comparison to follower's group dynamics and team applications. Although the study highlighted challenges, it was generally agreed that certain leadership styles influence their service delivery. The cited study is related to the present study because it presented evidence that a leadership training programme was instrumental in the preparation of workers for quality service delivery. However, the cited work did not test empirically for the relationship between leadership preparation and service delivery. Therefore, any inference drawn from the cited study is likely going to be subjective rather than objective. This calls for the gap to be bridged based on a data-informed study. Bayou, Hailu, Jenberie, Minalu, and Tesfamichael (2020) adopted a mixed method to assess the impact of primary health care unit service delivery through leadership, management and governance training in Ethiopia. Changes in leadership competencies were assessed through pre-and post-test evaluations. As a result of the leadership style, management and governance training, providers working in supported facilities noted improvements in the workplace atmosphere, provider motivation, and teamwork and resource management. The leadership style, management and governance training resulted in improved manager and provider motivation, and competency to carry out leadership, management and governance practices. The training catalysed positive competition between health facility teams to achieve facility-level service delivery goals. This implies that service delivery may be influenced by the style employed by the leadership.

Institutional climate has been lauded for its relationship to a host of desirable academic, behavioural, and social-emotional outcomes for youth. Schools, just like other organizations, are a series of interactions that may affect all the individuals in a School as well as affect the total environment and the climate of the school (Werang and Agung, 2017). Mitchell *et al.* (2010) defined school climate as shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students, teachers, and school principal. Battere, Amjad and Macleod (2014) argued that the school climate can be easily manipulated and thus directly influence the behaviour of people associated with the school. The researchers added that a positive school climate is often characterized by: a strong relationship between students and staff; the formal discipline administered is not punitive by any measure, but agreeable to the consequences; engagement, assessment and managership opportunities for students in a wide range of activities. Meanwhile, Green, Albanese, Cafri and Aarons (2014) reported that a positive organizational climate supports providers in developing a positive working alliance with their clients. Organizational climate had direct associations with work attitudes, and partially mediated the effect of organization on work attitudes (Aarons and Sawitzky 2006). That is, organizational system not only impacts work attitudes directly but also indirectly through its effect on organizational environment. Successful climate change may be more likely to filter down through the organization and promote a more positive climate and work attitudes. The same source added that climate is likely to be driven by policies and deeply ingrained norms perpetuated by top management. Targeted culture change may impact multiple organizational processes and result in positive change. The study was in the contention that climate impact work attitudes and subsequent staff turnover (Aarons and Sawitzky 2006). This is similar to (Werang, 2018) who investigated the potential effect of workload, individual characteristics, and school climate on teachers' emotional exhaustion in Christian elementary schools of BovenDigoel district, Papua. Data were analysed quantitatively using a simple linear regression analysis technique. The study revealed that workload, individual characteristics, and school climate partially have a positive significant effect on teachers' emotional exhaustion in elementary schools. Based on the position of Pabalan and Pabalan (2020), both well-performing and less performing schools share the same perception of their school principles', particularly on the various dimensions of the curricular elements, decision-making and school-based leadership categories. The researchers attributed the evidence to the fact that they all belong to the same structural system. That is, the public-school system under the

monitoring of the Department of Education. No wonder an earlier study recommended that universities should be adequately funded and they should be granted the autonomy to manage their affairs in conformity with the best traditions of accepted academic norms (Obadara, 2012). Obadara also suggested that the hierarchy of authority should also change to make room for the adoption of autonomy and thus, encourage the development of universities.

Empirically, Kidanu, Degu, and Tiruye (2017) assessed the factors influencing institutional delivery service utilization in Dembecha district, Northwest Ethiopia. The study was cross-sectional and studied 674 mothers who gave birth within two years. Descriptive statistics were done to characterize the study population using different variables. In the study, it was established that the level of institutional delivery service utilization was low compared to government initiatives. According to the study, the history of stillbirth, low number of antenatal care visit, unavailability of functional media and existence of distant health facilities were found to be significantly associated with low utilization of the service. The factors identified in the study could be termed the health-related climate. In this case, the study is similar to the present study because institutional delivery service utilisation is a product of many variables including staff and workers. Similar to this, (Oyerinde, 2020) investigated the extent to which the independent variables (leadership style, work environment and organizational silence) influenced the institutional effectiveness of polytechnic libraries in South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design. The population consisted of 429 library personnel from the 32 polytechnic libraries in the area of study. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that the level of institutional effectiveness was low; the leadership style predominately practised was transactional, closely followed by transformational leadership style; the work environment of employees was found to be unconducive, organizational silence was at a low degree in the Polytechnics. These led to the conclusion that leadership style; work environment and organizational silence were the major factors contributing to a low level of institutional effectiveness. Institutional effectiveness which could be impacted by the service delivery of academic staff was the problem of the study. One of the independent variables of the study is the environment of the employee, making it related to the present study. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) assessed the extent to which the eight Batho Pele principles are implemented in the education sector in Limpopo district, South Africa. With a sample of 52 officers and 50 educators, the study found that the system of delivery of educational services is in an unsatisfactory or problematic category. Ng'ethe, Namusonge and Iravo (2012) sought to find out the influence of leadership style on academic staff retention in public Universities. Data was collected from 547 academic staff members sampled from the seven fully-fledged public universities in Kenya. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data that was collected using questionnaires. The study established that leadership style inversely and significantly influences intention to leave of academic staff and hence there is a need to embrace a leadership style that promotes staff retention for these institutions to thrive. In a similar study, (Madakison, 2016) conducted a study on the effect of leadership style in any organization: a tool for quality service delivery, innovation and job standard. The study showed that the relationship between transformational leadership and quality service is enriched through innovation behaviour in any organization, as well as the relationship between transactional leadership and quality service is enriched through job standardization. Similarly, (Ng'ethe, 2013) established that leadership style negatively influenced academic staff retention in Kenyan public universities. The study was conducted using a survey design. The total population of the academic staff in the seven full-fledged public universities covered by the study was 4967. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics included correlation, multiple regression enter method and multiple regression (Stepwise) for moderation analysis. The study, therefore, brought to the fore, the role of leadership and their leadership style in academic staff retention. The findings also indicated that promotion influenced academic staff retention. In the presence of leadership style, training and promotion, remuneration did not influence academic staff retention. The findings also indicated that in the presence of leadership style, promotion and remuneration, training did not influence academic staff retention. Further, the study established that majority of those who left for studies abroad especially to

the United States of America did not return. An Indonesian study by Hafid, *et al.* (2020) aimed at identifying the role of leadership on the effectiveness of the public service delivery system in Kabupaten Nunukan. Using questionnaires and a total of 376 staff as respondents, the study showed that leaders adopted a transformative leadership style rather than adaptive and participative for quality service delivery. Also, Naser and Al Shobaki (2017) studied organizational excellence and the extent of its clarity in the Palestinian universities from the perspective of academic staff. The researchers have used the descriptive and analytical approach. The researchers used a sample stratified random method by the university. The study found that there was consensus among members of the academic staff in universities about the importance of leadership style excellence as one of the elements of organizational excellence, and received a large proportion of approval to some extent. These studies (Hafid, *et al.*, 2020; Naser and Al Shobaki, 2017) are related to the present study because they focused on the leadership style techniques of university leaders; although none was focused on academic service delivery. While the former study cited study revealed that leaders likely adopted transformative leadership style, the latter study revealed that academic staff had positive feelings about their leadership style. Furthermore, (Bello, 2021) conducted a study on knitting the web of leadership styles and strategies on service delivery and economic wellbeing of citizens in the Nigerian Fourth Republic prevailing situation the leader finds him or herself. The population of the study is the entire staff of the 43 Federal Ministries in Abuja, Nigeria. The sample size was 236 respondents. The study adopted both primary and secondary sources of data; correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the existing relationship. The study found that a positive relationship exists between leadership styles/strategies and service delivery to citizens, but not significant in achieving service delivery. The study also reveals that there is a positive relationship between leadership styles/strategies and the economic wellbeing of citizens in Nigeria. The study concluded that the different leadership styles/strategies to be adopted are based on the prevailing situation the leader finds him or herself. This conforms to the earlier posit that no leadership style is considered more universal (Adobor, 2014). The cited study is related to the present study since it studied the leadership style and the service delivery in the economic well-being of citizens. The study is not the same as the present study based on locational differences; however, the cited study is relevant since the leadership in the national perspective is broader than and influences institutional leadership in universities. In 2019, Asif, Jameel, Sahito, Hwang, Hussain, and Manzoor investigated the relationships between participative leadership, administrative quality, medical quality, and patient satisfaction using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Healthcare Criteria. The data was obtained from 123 public sector hospitals in Pakistan. The study employed the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques to test the structural model. From the study results, it was reported that a significant and positive relationships between participative leadership, administrative quality, medical quality, and patient satisfaction. In addition, the study found the administrative quality and medical quality as potential mediators on PL-PS relation. Adopting participative leadership as an exogenous factor, and both administrative and medical quality as potential mediators of patient satisfaction, provided new insights into the criteria used. The cited study was a Pakistan-based study with direction on public health sector. The importance of the cited work to this present study is that it highlighted that participating leadership style as an exogenous factor of satisfaction, hence related to the present study since the quality-of-service delivery may lead to satisfaction among recipients.

According to Rigii, Ogutu, Awino, and Kitiabi, (2019), strategic leadership is an important concept as it enables leaders to empower teams through envisioning, anticipating and creating changes strategically. Before his statement, the researchers determined the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery by County Governments in Kenya. The study used positivism research philosophy and quantitative approaches were utilized in a cross-sectional survey. The unit of analysis was the 47 Counties in Kenya. The study's regression results showed that strategic leadership had a significant influence on service delivery. It was therefore, recommended that County Governments must understand that county leadership has to be more strategic and train employees on innovations for better service delivery. The findings of Rigii *et al.* strictly demonstrated strategic planning. This implies that

strategic leadership is more favourable in Kenya. This may apply to the Nigerian university context since individual characteristics differ across regions. Similarly, Rono and Bomet (2019) investigated the influence of employees' perception of leadership strategy on the implementation of strategic plans in public technical vocational education and training institutions. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design using both qualitative and quantitative approach. The target population was 1255 employees in selected seven (7) public TVET institutions within the Rift valley region. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe both dependent and independent variables. The result indicated that leadership strategy significantly influences the implementation of strategic plans. The findings suggested that management in public TVET institutions should pay more attention to leadership strategy to ensure success in strategic plan implementation. There is a level of relatedness of the cited study to the current study. First, it was driven by the perception of the employee on leadership strategy. It also focuses on education and training institutions; hence the findings of the study may be useful to the present study. By focusing on the implementation of strategic plans, the cited research is different from the present study focusing on the service delivery of academic staff. Owan, Egbula, Mbon, Arop, Asuquo, Nwannunu, and Okon (2020) investigated the leadership factors of secondary school principals as a possible source of undergraduates' worsening attitudes toward practicum work. In Cross River State, the entire 667 secondary school administrators (271 principals and 396 vice principals) were studied in a census study. The collected data was analysed using one-way ANOVA and simple linear regression analysis. It was discovered, among other things, that students have a positive attitude about practicum exercise in secondary schools whose administrators use democratic leadership styles, followed by schools where administrators use laissez-faire and authoritarian leadership styles. It was also shown that principals' leadership styles had a substantial impact on students' views about practicum exercises. The Tukey post-hoc test demonstrated a significant difference in undergraduate views regarding practicum exercise comparing institutions whose principals followed democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. When the views of undergraduates toward practicum exercise were examined between democratic and autocratic leadership styles of principals, the mean was considerably different. Finally, when the leadership styles of laissez-faire and autocratic principals were examined, it was observed that the mean difference in undergraduate views toward practicum exercise is statistically significant. The mentioned study, which was done in the same field, is relevant to the current work since it indicated how trainee instructors respond to expected tasks based on school leaders' leadership styles. Although the stated study linked higher education students to secondary school leadership, it may be argued that undergraduates obtaining practical service delivery training in secondary schools are not the same as academic staff at universities.

In 2020, Akparobore and Omosokejimim carried out a study on leadership qualities and style as a panacea for job productivity and effective service delivery among library staff members in academic libraries in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The target population comprises 672 library staff members from 23 university libraries across the South-South region of Nigeria. The data collected for this study were analysed using simple percentage/frequency counts and weighted mean. Finding from the study revealed that the leadership style mostly adopted and practised by the staff members at the management level in academic libraries in the area is the autocratic type of leadership. Also, almost all library staff members in academic libraries in South-South, Nigeria upheld the view that democratic type of leadership, if practised by staff members at the management level in academic libraries, may allow for maximum job productivity and effectiveness among library staff members. They believed that commitment and passion for their job, excellent communication skills, good decision-making skill, and a delegation of authority/subordinate empowerment among others are qualities of a good leader. The study is similar to this study in two ways - the area of study and the leadership qualities it addresses. A confirmation of the finding of the cited study may be relevant to the universities in the area. Thus, the present study is necessary to extend the scope of the cited study beyond the area of library and information science to other areas not covered. Yarow, Jirma and Siringi, (2019) investigated the moderating effect of democratic leadership style on the relationship between management of devolved health services and health-care service

delivery in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey design with a population of 113 Sub-Counties demarcated as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) and distributed within 23 counties in Kenya. Quantitative analysis entailed computing descriptive statistics like the frequency and percentage for the quantitative data. It was reported that democratic leadership style has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between management of devolved health services and healthcare service delivery in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in Kenya. The need for good leadership has been emphasized as an ingredient necessary for the progress and development of a nation (Nneoma, Ajike, Akinlabi, and Kabuoh 2014). According to the researchers, the poor state of leadership in Nigeria is accounted for the low running of the country. The researchers extensively examined culture. The study revealed that the followers contribute greatly to the corrupting influence of the leaders. Relating this report to the present study, it means academic service delivery may not be influence by the leadership approaches employed by leaders. In 2019, Arop, Owan and Ibor examined school quality indicators and instructors job performance in Cross River State. One research topic and four null hypotheses were raised using factorial research design. A proportionate random selection methodology was used to pick a sample of 1,463 teachers, representing 30% of the total population of 4,878 instructors in Cross River State's 271 public secondary schools. The data was collected using the "school quality indicators questionnaire (SQIQ)" and the "teachers' job performance questionnaire (TJPQ)". The collected data were examined using descriptive statistics, while the null hypotheses were all evaluated at the .05 alpha level using Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analyses, as required, with the use of Minitab statistical software v18. The findings revealed, among other things, that the quality of leadership, school facilities, and supervision accounted for 90.6 percent of the total variance in teachers' job performance; there is a significant correlation between the quality of leadership and secondary school teachers' job performance; and there is a significant relationship between the quality of leadership and secondary school teachers' job performance; quality of leadership, school facilities, and supervision all have a significant composite influence ($f=4800.58$, $p.05$) on secondary school teachers' job performance; quality of leadership was the best predictor of teachers' job performance ($t=45.38$, $p.05$), followed by quality of school supervision ($t=27.29$, $p.05$). The cited study is related to this aspect of the present study due to its focus on school leadership. However, the cited research did not study various leadership techniques but rather used Likert scale items to measure the quality of leadership holistically, making it deficient in substance and methodology. Furthermore, the cited research was conducted at the secondary education level while this study is targeting the university education level. The report of Narad *et al.* (2020) indicated that leadership styles adopted by principals' and organizational climate were significant joint predictors of teacher effectiveness of school teachers. The researchers investigated the leadership styles of principals and organizational climate as predictors of teacher effectiveness in secondary schools of Malawi. The descriptive survey method was employed. The sample comprised 150 teachers from both government and private schools in Chikwawa district in the South West Education Division. The following were the other findings of the study. First, it reported that teachers of both government and private schools had a similar perception of leadership styles of principals'; again, teacher effectiveness of school teachers in government and private schools as perceived by principals was similar; the study also reported that organizational climate of government schools was similar to that of private schools. In addition, the leadership styles adopted by principals, organizational climate and teacher effectiveness of school teachers were significantly and positively related to each other. This cited study studied two independent variables similar to the present study. The teacher effectiveness pursuit by the cited study is also similar to academic staff service delivery because teacher's effectiveness is a predictor of service delivery, hence related to the present study. While the cited study focused on secondary school teachers, this present study is on universities, hence not a repetition. In a similar approach, Allen, Grigsby and Peters (2015) examined the relationship between transformational leadership style, school climate, and student mathematics and reading achievement. Survey data were collected from a purposeful sample of elementary school principals and a convenience sample of their respective teachers located in a small suburban school district in Southeast Texas. The researchers used the school climate inventory-revised (SCI-R) survey to

measure teacher perceptions of school climate. The study reported a positive relationship between transformational leadership and school climate. However, a relationship was not found to exist between transformational leadership and student achievement nor between school climate and student achievement. The focus of this cited study was on the achievement of mathematics students concerning school climate. Since the service delivery of teachers may showcase the achievement of student, the cited study may be relevant to this present study. A health-related study in Sweden investigated the association between the school's pedagogical and social climate and individual-level mental health in adolescence (László, Anderson and Galanti, 2019). The researchers studied 3416 adolescents from 94 schools involved in the area, a longitudinal study conducted in eight regions in the area. The multilevel logistic regression models were performed in the study. The researchers reported that there is no association between total student school climate score and mental health. The study found that teacher, but not student-rated school climate was associated with an increased risk of poor mental health at the student level; the association was most pronounced for internalizing problems. László *et al.*, study target was on adolescent mental health; the study opens that teacher plays a higher role in the mental health of the study. The researchers did not mention teacher as school climate. The study argued that school climate does not affect the mental health of the students. This cited study is considered related to this study because of the variables (teachers, school climate, and students mental health) considered. A negative influence of organisational climate among faculty members emotional exhaustion was reported in Dinibutun, Kuzey and Dinc (2020). Before the findings, the study examined the effect of organizational climate on the burnout of faculty members at both state and private universities. Using the survey method, 984 responses were collected from faculty members. The study also reported that the balanced workload, clarity of task, cohesion, and the ethical dimensions within the organizational climate produced a negative effect on the depersonalization of faculty members. Again, the lack of clarity of task and ethical dimensions contributed negatively to the diminished personal accomplishment. In addition, the study demonstrated that state university faculty members having cohesion dimension of organizational climate were less likely to be exhausted emotionally, whereas cohesion among private university faculty members negatively influenced the depersonalization. The research of (Monari, 2021) sought to establish the moderating effect of organizational climate on the relationship between performance management initiatives and service delivery in state corporations in Kenya. The study applied a descriptive survey research design to gather data from the sampled respondents of the State corporations. Data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential. The study established that performance management initiatives as an institutional variable have a positive and significant influence on service delivery among state corporations in Kenya. The organizational climate was found to have no moderating effect on the relationship between performance management initiatives and service delivery. The findings of the cited study may be relevant to the present study since it related to organisational climate and service delivery. Having conducted a study, Eldor and Shoshani (2017) hypothesised that the indirect relationship between the climate for service and teachers' job satisfaction and intention to leave work may be mediated by teacher work engagement. The researchers explored the notion of service in school domains by examining the joint effects of climate for service and the internal service in schools on teachers' work attitudes: work engagement, job satisfaction, and intention to leave their work. According to the researchers, the notion of climate for service emphasizes the school's attitude of teachers as service providers to its students and their parents; the researchers added that internal climate emphasizes the school's attitude of providing service to its teaching staff. The findings of the study were drawn from a sample of 423 teachers of 30 different schools in Israel. The disparity in the cited and present study is in the area of study and population. While the present study is on academic staff service delivery, the cited study was interested in the job performance of secondary school teachers all utilizing school climate as the independent variable. In addition, O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, and Eklund (2014) carried out a study on school climate, family structure, and academic achievement. The sample of the study consisted of 902 California public high schools, including responses from a population of over 490,000 students in Grades 9 and 11. Regardless of family structure, students with more positive school climate perceptions

self-reported higher-grade point averages (GPAs). According to the findings, foster care and a positive climate environment had a weaker effect on the students self-reported GPA compared to students living in other family structures. A unique curvilinear trend was found for homeless students, as the relationship between their school climate perceptions and self-reported GPA was stronger at lower levels. The overall finding of the study indicated that the moderation effect of positive school climate perceptions on self-reported GPA was strongest for homeless youth and youth from one-parent homes, suggesting that school climate has a protective effect for students living in these family structures. There is a need for the present study because O'Malley *et al.*'s study studied both school climate and family structure to students' achievement.

Statement of the problem

University worldwide occupy a central point in sustaining educational goal. This was captured by (Federal Ministry of Education 2009) emphasis that academic staff worldwide occupies a central place in driving the core mandate of universities and higher education towards goal attainment. Despite this it observed that the rate of academic staff service delivery decline in universities in Cross River State has been a source of concern to universities management. The lecturers hardly go for lectures. Some courses are thought twice in semester while in some course, the students hardly meet with lecturer till examination. This more frequent with part-time programmes in the universities. The government and university management have provided facility such as offices, lecture hall, whiteboard markers, lightening and ventilation in lecture halls to make them conducive for service delivery. Staff salaries are paid in time and honorarium are paid in time. Promotion exercises are carried out. Other welfare schemes like housing and cooperative organization for staff are approved. Despite all this effort by government, ministry of education, national university commission and university management, the problem of poor service delivery among academic staff in the universities in Cross River State, Nigeria persist. The academic staff most times has pushed the blame to university management, others hold the view that the institution and interwoven characteristics are the major causes. Based on the background above, the research is determined to find out if academic staff service delivery is influence by institutional variables in terms of institutional location, ownership, leadership style, climate, size and culture.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate institutional variables and academic staff service delivery in universities in Cross River State. The study specifically sought to find out the extent to which institutional:

1. Leadership style influences academic staff service delivery in universities;
2. Climate influences academic staff service delivery in universities;

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to serve as a guide to this study:

1. Leadership style of institution has a significant influence on academic staff service delivery in universities in Cross River State.
2. Climate of institution has a significant influence on academic staff service delivery in universities in Cross River State.

Methods

The research design adopted for the study was the ex-post facto research design. According to (Isangedighi, 2012), an ex-post facto design is one which the researcher cannot manipulate the independent variables because their effects have already occurred. The study adopted the design because it investigates a cause – and - effect relationship that could possibly exist between the two main variables of the study by observing the existing conditions of the topic under study, obtaining data on the present status of the subjects in relation to the variables and analysing the data to establish the

possible cause and effect. Thus, in this study, there was no control over the independent variables by the researcher. According to (Salkind, 2010), ex-post facto research designs are used in the majority of social science research studies where manipulating the features of human participants is neither possible nor appropriate. (Salkind, 2010) maintained that it is also frequently used as a stand-in for actual experimental research to test hypotheses regarding cause-and-effect connections or in instances when following the complete procedure of a real experimental design is either impractical or unethical. This design was considered suitable for the present study because the researcher intends to study the service delivery of academic staff which has already occurred. Furthermore, a cause-effect connection was attempted between the selected institutional variables and the academic staff service delivery in universities. Data collected for this study were on two main groups of variables. The independent variables were all qualitative and the dependent variable was continuous. The dependent variables in the study were the two dimensions of institutional variables. 449 university lecturers were used as sample for the study.

Presentation/Interpretation Of Results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of institutional leadership on academic staff service delivery in the university.

In this hypothesis, the independent variable was institutional leadership (categorized into democratic, laissez fair and autocratic). The dependent variable was academic staff service delivery considered under three dimensions, namely; teaching, research and community service. The statistical analysis technique deployed to test this hypothesis was One-Way-Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Tables 1

Table 1

Summary of descriptive statistics for the academic staff service delivery in the university based on institutional leadership style.

S/No	Academic staff service delivery in the university	Groups (Institutional Ownership)	n	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Teaching	Democratic	231	32.6623	12.80721
		Laissez fair	95	32.3579	12.52225
		Autocratic	123	27.7480	10.86926
		Total	449	31.2517	12.40721
2	Research	Democratic	231	33.6190	12.47789
		Laissez fair	95	32.8105	12.08859
		Autocratic	123	29.6341	12.28972
		Total	449	32.3563	12.43492
3	Community service	Democratic	231	26.8009	11.78150
		Laissez fair	95	25.7368	10.39354
		Autocratic	123	25.0813	10.30008
		Total	449	26.1047	11.10784
4	Overall service delivery	Democratic	231	93.0823	27.38386
		Laissez fair	95	90.9053	24.88060
		Private	123	82.4634	22.02059
		Total	449	89.7127	25.83611

SOURCE: Field work 2022

Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of institutional climate on academic staff service delivery in the university.

In this hypothesis, the independent variable was institutional climate (categorized into very tense, tense and not tense). The dependent variable was academic staff service delivery considered

under three dimensions, namely; teaching, research and community service. The statistical analysis technique deployed to test this hypothesis was One-Way-Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Tables 2

Table 2

Summary of descriptive statistics for the academic staff service delivery in the university based on institutional climate

S/No	Academic staff service delivery in the university	Groups (institutional climate)	n	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Teaching	Very tense	198	30.6566	12.02422
		Tense	112	28.1875	11.63757
		Not tense	139	34.5683	12.85316
		Total	449	31.2517	12.40721
2	Research	Very tense	198	32.8283	12.70960
		Tense	112	28.8125	11.74315
		Not tense	139	34.5396	12.04777
		Total	449	32.3563	12.43492
3	Community service	Very tense	198	26.5253	11.19132
		Tense	112	25.6339	11.07549
		Not tense	139	25.8849	11.07293
		Total	449	26.1047	11.10784
4	Overall service delivery	Very tense	198	90.0101	25.42871
		Tense	112	82.6339	25.99099
		Not tense	139	94.9928	25.13283
		Total	449	89.7127	25.83611

Source: Field work 2022

Discussion of findings

The finding as presented here, have provided valuable insight into some of institutional variables that influence academic staff service delivery in the University. The discussions of these findings are presented based on the two hypotheses formulated and tested for study.

The finding of this research hypothesis showed that there a significant influence of institutional leadership style on academic staff service delivery in the university. Institutional leadership style did create any impact on academic staff service delivery in the university as revealed by this study. Institutional leadership style in higher institutions general and university in particular influence academic staff service delivery in the university. The finding confirmed the view of Osborne and Hammoud (2017) which state that leadership plays a key role for an organization to create good relationships among employees as well as management that has a positive impact in the organization, improve service performance and change the outcome of behaviour when used properly. The finding revealed among the institutional leadership style of university, democratic leadership has a higher significant influence on academic staff service delivery in the university than laissez faire and autocratic leadership style universities. This is in line with finding of Arop *et al*, (2018) which says that teachers' job effectiveness was highest in schools where the leadership style adopted as democratic, followed by schools with Laissez-faire leadership style. The study also revealed that laissez faire leadership style universities has a more positive significant influence on academic staff service delivery in the university while autocratic leadership style universities has no influence on academic staff service delivery in the university. This finding is in line with that of Arop *et al*, (2018) which says that teachers' job effectiveness was highest in schools where the leadership style adopted as democratic, followed by schools with Laissez-faire leadership style.

The finding revealed that there a significant influence of institutional climate on academic staff service delivery in the university. Institutional climate did create significant impact on academic staff service delivery in the university as revealed by this study. Institutional climate in higher institutions general and university in particular influence academic staff service delivery in the university. The finding confirmed the view of Battered, Amjad and Macleod (2013) which state that the school climate can be easily manipulated and thus directly influence the behaviour of people associated with the school. The finding revealed among the institutional climate, very tense climate has a higher significant influence on academic staff service delivery in the university than tense and not tense climate universities. This is in line with findings of (Werang, 2018) which state that work load, individual characteristics and school climate partially have a positive significant effect on teaching emotional exhaustion in elementary schools. The study also revealed that institutional climate does not significantly influence academic staff service delivery in the university in terms of community service. This finding is in line with that of (Narad *et al.* 2020) which state the organizational climate and teacher effectiveness of school teachers were significantly and positively related to each other.

Conclusion

On the basis of these findings, firstly, it was concluded that academic staff service delivery of university lecturers in the universities in Cross River State was significantly influence by institutional leadership style and climate. This implies that effective positioning and manipulation of institutional leadership style and climate would adequately and efficiently achieve academic staff services delivery in the university system. In other words, the acceptable local and international standard of teaching, researches and community service would be achieved.

Recommendations

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

1. The universities leadership should practice and lead by democratic principles especially now that university is autonomous. That would give the academic staff a sense of inclusiveness that is motivational and productive.
2. Lecturers on training in universities and the highly ranked lecturers should establish a good working climate that is motivational and encourages mentorship.
3. The universities administration should establish a calm and more positive functioning climate to bring the best for the achievement of university goal.
4. Federal government offer to universities and her ability to pay is very important and must fund education as a matter of its priority and to make it functional in Nigerian universities and for the betterment of academic staff service delivery.
5. Government should see university education as something critical to the survival of the nation's building and make it good for our children development.
6. Effective and efficient leadership style communication is required between the federal government and the university system and should block all the sentiments against academic staff for overall progress.
7. Federal government should intervene on universities matters so as to prevent strike action and to enhance academic staff service delivery.
8. Federal government should wake up to their responsibilities to the implementation of 2009 agreement, payment of Earned Academic Allowance (EAA), payment of promotion arrears and in fact salaries of academic staff should be increase and others request to universities system to spur up their academic service delivery and to improved their leadership styles.
9. Government should partner with NUC to avoid financial conflicts between academic staff so as to boost excellent service leadership delivery in the universities.



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