SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMITTEE SYSTEM, DECISION-MAKING AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

Management of Technical Universities in Ghana, to a large extent, entails effective planning and implementing in order to achieve the desired academic goals and objectives. There has been a lot of concern about problems inherent in the current educational paradigm arising from inadequate storage and paucity of information. Committee system is very important in higher educational institutions as it solves about 95% of the myriad of problems that confront the management of Technical universities. This article, therefore examined the significance of committee system, decision making and information dissemination in selected Technical Universities with a view to determining management effectiveness and efficiency. The study was anchored on the functional theory of decision-making using survey and in-depth interviews. Copies of questionnaire were administered on purposively selected final yea Secretaryship and Management students, principal officers and academic members of staff proportionately selected from Accra, Tamale and Kumasi Technical Universities. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while explanation building through thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data. Most of the respondents (85.0%) agreed that executive members might have their own interest and therefore would want to subvert the interest of their colleagues but when committees are properly constituted with the members who are imbued with the requisite knowledge, the outcome of the committee would be outstanding. Tertiary Institution should therefore provide platforms that encourage accessibility to strategic information sources in order to ensure decision-making effectiveness in the running of these universities.

Keywords: *Committee System, Decision-making, Information, Dissemination, Management.*

Background

There is a growing concern over the nature of some decision-making groups in various institutions of learning. The fact remains that membership in the decision-making group is necessary, but not sufficient for effective decision-making. The knowledge and an understanding of the process of group decision-making are essential for effective membership. Hundred of business organisations seek assistance from professional consultants so that their management can function effectively in decision-making groups (Fisher and Ellis, 1990). Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2005) argued that decision-making is more than an act, but the critical point is that it is a dynamic process.

Defleur *et al.* (2005) have argued that the goals of a formal decision-making group (a committee) are to make orderly judgement which fall into the following four categories: allocating resources, evaluating performance, formulating or changing policies, and weighing evidence to teach the truth. They explained that each of these tasks is performed within the context of a small group (committee) (Defleur *et al,* 2005). Rootwell (2000; 284) noted that members of a committee can produce exceptional results because they can share the labour required to research even technical or complex subjects, they can pool knowledge and share information and they can correct errors more readily because there are more heads devoted to spotting mistakes and misjudgements.

In the Technical Universities in Ghana, Academic Board is undoubtedly the highest decision-making body with the Vice-Chancellor as its chairperson. The authority of the Academic Board covers all academic matters. It has the formal authority under the university's statutes to make academic policy. Therefore, for it to take meaningful decisions, it has to create certain committees for effective decision-making with regard to the prudent management of the universities' resources, because scholars contended that committees permit wide participation of opinions in decision making since two heads are better than one provided they are good heads.

Recent developments in polytechnic management (now Technical University) in Ghana have shown that the opinions of members of staff and students in polytechnic management (now Technical University) are ignored when in conflict with the interest of university management. This often erodes trust and confidence among the various segments in the management of the university. Some scholars have argued that the committees do not provide advisory services for Rectors (now Vice-Chancellor). Suffice it to say that because of administrative interest in some matters, the decision taken by these committees are thrown away. To buttress this argument, Martey (2007) also added that very often, the output of the decision-making process produced ends up in the lockers of management, especially when it conflicts with the interests of management. These actions negate the creation of committees, as well as breed distrust in the system. Martey (2007) further observed that for the effective management of university, the intended as well as emergent strategies need to work for the achievement of educational institution's goals, and this called for the efficient and judicious use of resources through planning to ensure excellence performance and goals accomplishment.

Admin (2011) stated that the tendency of Rectors (now Vice-Chancellors) to monopolise all aspects of decision-making has been perfected in the creation of management of Vice-Chancellors whose powers are too broad and continually reduce the Governing Council's influence. Admin, further notes that while tertiary institutions are learning about democracy and are quite vocal about the need for popular participation in decision-making, administrative structure and key educational policy makers are the most undemocratic. Universities are governed on committee system which is usually ridden of politics. Ibekwe (1992) observed that this polarisation in ideas tend to arise and the more frequent the conflict in ideas, the more difficult the management. Peterson, in his study cited in Ibekwe (1992.116) stated that decision-making in Colleges and in the United States of America and other countries of the world is currently in a state of despair. To him, the decision-making process could be:

> Simultaneously labelled as bureaucratic and authoritarian or overtly democratic and permissive; as a collegial community of a divisive entity; as a tool of the establishment or a weapon of the student radical.

Okonjo (2000) argued that management in higher education Institution does not respond adequately to the needs and wishes of those who teach and work in them and as far as the students are concerned, the organisational structure which is a throw-back to the Taylor-Ford-Kaiser mode of production is hierarchical and autocratic in nature. For many students, the management of University is totally inefficient and unable to solve the problems, inherent in the current educational paradigm, just as like the governments of many countries are unable to find solutions to problems of development. Since management of tertiary institutions have shown themselves to be intellectually bankrupt, any problem requiring discussion and decision-making with the participation of the students is treated as an issue for confrontation and repression (Okonjo, 2000).

Some members of staff argued that there are delays with respect to information dissemination owing to administrative inertia especially when the decision taken is not in the interest of management. For instance, delays in payment of claims/allowances of members and piling up of administrative matters cause discontent among members and students, but when a decision is in the interest of management, information dissemination is prompt whereas lack of accurate, appropriate, strategic and intelligent information in form of instructions, recommendation, promotion, acknowledgements and so on is a problem.

Erwart (2004) said access to quality and useful information reduces information problem.

Therefore, various segments of the university communities have observed that committee which have considerable and far reaching influence on decision-making do not develop and or establish a credible, scientific and reliable information base; do not engage in proper assessment and analysis of issues, do not evaluate positive and negative consequences of their outcome and also fail to set appropriate goals and objectives when undertaking a task(s). For instance, a sub-committee was mandated in Tamale Polytechnic (now Technical University) to investigate alleged sexual harassment of female students which ostensibly drew the attention of the media. It took members of this sub-committee about two and half months to conclude their investigation after which they recommended that five lecturers should be dismissed while warning letters were served to four other lecturers on alleged sexual misconduct.

The affected lecturers sued the Governing Council and management of Tamale Polytechnic (now Technical University)

for redress in a court of law and this lawsuit lasted for two and half years. The judge, after a thorough and exhaustive examination of the plaintiffs, the defendant and the evidence made available to him, quashed the decision of the sub-committee to dismiss the five lecturers. His judgement was that the sub-committee had no credible and reliable information to investigate the allegation. But in his own opinion, he would not advise them to go back to work in this Technical university, because according to him (the judge), the environment was too poisonous to have the lecturers reinstated. This further buttressed Martey's (2007) argument that such action negates the creation of committees and also breeds distrust in the system.

The Governing Council and management then resolved to settle the matter out of court after two and half years of legal tussle, having realized that judgement was in favour of these lecturers. The decision to dismiss and to give warning letters was seen by a competent court of jurisdiction and a cross-section of the Technical university community as misleading, irrational, illegal and unethical. One may, therefore, begin to imagine how this poor decision would have affected the psychological, emotional, moral and social standing of these lecturers, their associates and their families. Decision-making is the backbone of administrative functions. These decision direct actions (Erwat; 2004). Erwat (2004) observed that good and effective decisions can only be made when the right information is made available at the right time to the right recipient.

The problem of getting information from the management to all members of an educational institution for maximum effect has become a major concern. Some people have tried to connect industrial actions and other disturbances in business organisations with the inability of employees (Staff) to communicate effectively with the employers and manager. Communication, downward, upward or horizontal has a great role to play in business organisation. To manage a tertiary institution is to manage a business concern. Information acquisition and dissemination is therefore an indispensable tool of management. Information acquisition and dissemination is an important management tool for the smooth running of the Technical (now Technical University). Information is the knowledge obtained from investigation or study. It forms the background for solutions to identified problems, and makes real and potential contributions to serious human endeavours (Ogunmodede, 2000).

Concern has also been raised regarding the staggering amount of money each member of this sub-committee was paid as allowances when indeed this decision could not pass the legal test. The Technical (now universities) just like and other tertiary institutions in Ghana, are subvented organisations with limited capacity to internally generate revenue, and there are budgetary constraints too as well. This paper advocates the need to be more prudent and circumspect in decision-making and efficient resource allocation should be a welcome development in the management of polytechnics (Universities). That credible information is the ingredient that deals with uncertainty.

According to Akinola (1985: 7), the committee system is a very controversial institutional, organisational and administrative device which can be traced back to Greek Roman and other ancient civilizations. Akinola observed that committees are regarded as having democratic origins. They characterize democratic societies and have been known to be popular in Anglo-Saxon communities where democracy reigns supreme.

However, Akinola, further explained that committees have also been known to have been used in authoritarian societies such as former USSR and Communist China.

Akinola (1985) argued that:

> …the committee is one of the most maligned, yet most frequently employed forms of organisation structure, despite the wide criticism, committees are a fact of organisation life…

This paper agrees that the committee system is used as a tool for administration and management in Ghanaian Universities. In spite of suspicions and criticisms against it, universities all over the world and analogous tertiary institutions are attracted to committee system.

But so far, little research has been done to ascertain its influence on polytechnic (University) management. Because of the significance of committee system, it is necessary to examine its significance on the efficient and effective management of polytechnics (Universities) in Ghana in relation to the acquisition and dissemination of reliable, truthful and objective information in their decision-making process.

The thrust in this article is to examine the political aspect of committees' decision-making in the management of polytechnics (now Technical Universities) in Ghana. That is, who says what to whom, where, when, why and with what effects and in whose interest. In other words, who or what determines the authoritative allocation of resources in the management of these Technical universities?

Statement of the Problem

As discussed earlier, there has been a lot of concern for Ghana and especially educational Institutions/organisations in the country to solve problems inherent in the current educational paradigm arising from inadequate storage, flow and use of information. The inadequate access to or possession of relevant information has negative impact on the effectiveness of committees' decision-making process. These lack of information and cries negate effective management of higher institutions in Ghana. Educational Institutions experience management problem which are information related. For instance, the dismissal of lecturers on alleged sexual harassment on lack of truthful and correct information by the committee, and the non-implementation of committee decision because it conflicts with the management/Vice-Chancellors' interest. At the time of this study, there were speculations that the structure and management patterns of the Polytechnic system in Ghana (now Technical University) were getting complex by the day.

Literature Review

The term 'committee' has been variously defined by scholars, Adam, cited in Olutade (2005) observed that meetings which are held to convey information or give opportunity for discussion or listen to orders from a superior are not properly described as committees. He, therefore, defined committee as a body of persons to whom some charge, trust or function is committed. In his observation Kontz, cited in Olutade (2005) argued that it is sometimes difficult to draw a sharp distinction between committees and other group meeting. He argued that the essential characteristics of committee are that it is a group charged with dealing with specific problems. He further

explained that committee is a group of person to whom, some matter is committed. It is this characteristic of group action that sets committees apart from other organisational devices, though not all committees are involved in decision-making.

As observed by Hicks, cited in Olutade (2005), committee is a group of people who meet by plan to discuss or make decision on a particular subject. This view was corroborated by Amacon also cited in Olutade (2005) that a committee is a body of people who meet on a continuing basis to accomplish an assigned mission corroborating this view. Little, cited in Olutade (2005) defined a committee as a small body of people appointed by a parent body of people body to discuss certain matters with a view to making group decisions on behalf of a group. Hogdgetts and Kuratko (1991:280) defined committee as a sub-system of a system and a form of organisation of people with delegated authority, established either to advise or to make decision. Luthans cited in Laninhun (2000) also observed that committees may be referred to as teams, commissions, boards, groups or task forces. Harkens cited in Rootwell (2000; 278) defined committee as 'a group of the unwilling, picked from the unfit, to do the unnecessary'. Then there is this anonymous contribution. "Trying to solve a problem through group discussion is like trying to clean up a traffic jam by honking your horn" (Roothwell, 2000: 278). The argument is that committees investigate issues and solve problems through social interaction.

This paper, therefore, adopted Little's definition cited in Olutade (2005) as a working tool and also contended that one fundamental factor that appears to run through these definitions, advanced for the term 'committee' by various schools of thought is that committee is a multi-purpose machinery by which the polytechnic management (now Technical Universities) can achieve institutional successes when effectively employed in the management and administration of the polytechnics (Technical Universities) with regard to their decision-making process and information dissemination effectiveness.

The functions of committee include investigation, fact-finding, deliberation, problem solving, reconciliation, advising, initiating goals and objectives, decision-making recommendations and decision implementation in some instances (Olutade, 2005: 72). Most often, as observed by Kreitner, also cited in Olutade (2005) committees serve as fact-finding and problem-solving bodies with the resulting decision made and/or implemented by a responsible manager. Modern (2004) observed that committees are structural, verbal, and representational forms of communication and information processing. In Morden's view, the roles of committees within the communication and decision-making process include representation, consultation, and information dissemination. A committee may be established to receive, collate, summarise or synthesise information, prior to transferring it elsewhere. Similarly they may be required to co-ordinate the dissemination of information throughout the organisation. Organisations may use sub-committees, departmental briefing groups, quality circles, or trade union or staff association meetings to continue the onward transmission of information. Committee may act as channels for feedback from the rest of the organisation, which they receive, collate and communicate to the required destination (Morden, 2004: 101 – 102).

Laninhun (2000) also argued that one of the many functions of a committee is that it serves as a focal point for the exchange of different points of view and information, and that it is also task or problem-solving oriented. Barker, cited in Laninhun (2000) corroborated by identifying three different types of problem-solving groups; fact-finding, evaluation and policy making groups. This article contends that most educational institutions appoint fact-finding committees to investigage particular incidents or problems, for example, fraud, examination malpractices, students' unrest, acts of gross insubordination and so on. In the same vein, Ogunmodede (2000) asserted that committees promote discussion and cross-examination/fertilization of ideas, classification of issues and development of new ideas. Committees can therefore be invaluable for bringing a broad range of opinions and experience to bear upon a problem.

Olutade (2005) in his study "The Committee System in the administration of some selected universities in South-West Nigeria" argued in his findings that there was a significant relationship between the committee system and effective administration (X^2 = 2296, t = 1.43, value = 1.645; P < 0.05). That committee system had a significant influence on students' participation in decision-making for effective administration on (f – ratio = 142, 61, P < 0.05). In addition, his study indicated that there was a significant difference between the effectiveness of the committee system and leadership adopted in selected universities, (t = 15.0. df = 1348, P < 0.05).

Admin (2011) described universities as International Communities engaged in the daily business of the search for knowledge and truth. Admin in his study, explained that the management authority of Nigeria's Universities come from an outside source. According to him, the visitor is always the President in the case of the Federal University and the Governor for State University. Admin further observed that the management of such complex organisation, requires the participation by the committee system because of the bureaucratic, collegial and political models that are applicable in them. Hodgets *et al* (1991: 282) observe that like authority, committees are important in coordinating activities. Admin (2011) in his study, "Impact of the management committee in Benue State University, Nigeria the result of the first hypothesis clearly indicated that the committee system encouraged participation of a large number of staff. He suggested that leadership must evolve styles that can ensure effective staff and student participation in decision-making that affect them. Admin maintained that full participation is a process where each member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of the decision. This means that the use of participation system of governance in the university system is important. It is, therefore, worthy to mention that members of staff participation in the decision that affects the working lives and for students with their learning lives is essential for effective management.

Further findings revealed that the committee system though controversial, is a vital tool for improving the governance of tertiary institutions. With regard to the various views expressed on the functions of committees in Olutade (2005), Morden (2004); Ogunmodede (2000) and Laninhun (2000), it is essential that managers; (Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Deputy Registrar, Heads of Department, Deans of Schools/Faculties and students leadership of Technical Universities make effective use of the committees when the occasion arises for institutional attainment for there is a synergy between strategic governance of Technical Universities and the various committees relative to the availability of truthful information.

Olutade cited in Adam said that the corollary to the definition of committee is that different criteria are used to identify committees. Factors such as status, nature, power, type of organisation and career are often used to classify committees into groups. Some scholars using "status" as criteria have been able to identify two major types of committees and these are Standing Committee" and Ad-hoc committee. Buttressing the observation, Oduneye (2000) pointed out that, essentially, there are two major types of committees. These are standing or structural committee and Ad-hoc committees. Standing committees are permanent and they usually draw members from the top level of organisations. In contrast, Ad-hoc committees are usually temporary committees existing only to address specific tasks and terminate on completion of such assignments.

This paper maintains that the success of the committee system in any institution largely depends on the effectiveness of entire membership with the requisite knowledge and information. Information is needed to manage efficiently and effectively other resources in our universities namely, personnel; materials, machines and energy. Managers in our educational institutions need appropriate information to carry out efficiently and effectively management functions, that is, planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling. This makes information apparently the most important strategic operational weapon (Opeke, cited in Erwat, 2004) and information is the basis for everything a person does Norton, cited in (Lrwar, 2004)

Nwanko cited in (Erwat, 2004) argued that the ability of managers to acquire appropriate information (ie. Relevant, timely, accurate and current) is important in efficient and effective decision-making. Daft; Hodge *et al* cited in (Erwat, 2004) stressed that managers of educational institutions should not only have access to large amount of relevant information, they should also receive information that is 'rich'. Richness of information pertains to the "information carrying capacity of a particular method of conveying information. Some data cues are extremely informative to the recipient while others provide understanding. Information richness is influenced by the medium, which is communicated. Face-to-face is the richest medium because it conveys several information cues simultaneously, including the spoken message, body language (gestures), and facial expressions. It also provides immediate feedback, so that understanding can be checked and misinformation corrected. The richness of face-to-face communication was illustrated in a study found that 93% of meaning conveyed was by tone of voice and facial expression (Daft, cited in Erwat. 2004).

In policy-making, innovative decision-making process should be adopted to inject new ideas for development (Ibekwe, 1992). Ivancevich *et al* (2005), observed that values pervade the decision-making process. To a large extent, a decision maker's willingness to make ethical or unethical decision will be influenced by his or her value. Well publicized scandals and investigations involving numerous organisations have heightened awareness of the critical role that values play in decision-making. In the decision-making process, the application of ethics by committee members in the administration and management of Technical University in Ghana is important. This paper argues that values and ethics are inextricably connected with regard to making rational decision in the administration of the Technical Universities. This paper adds that when examining a situation, the decision maker should consider doing what is legal, doing what is right, being fair, and

answering the question, "could the decision meet the 'Sunshine' test, or if it is published in the newspaper would the reader consider the decision ethical?" (Ivancevich *et al*, 2005).

Empirical studies have shown that behavioural scientists have focused attention on the occurrence of post-decision anxiety, such anxiety is related to what Festinger (1957) termed Cognitive Dissonance. Cognitive Dissonance Theory states that there is often a lack of consistency or harmony among individuals various cognitions (attitudes beliefs and so on) after a decision has been made. That is, there will be a conflict between what the decision maker knows and believes and what was done, and as a result the decision maker will have doubts and second thought about the choice that was made. In addition, there is likelihood that the intensity of the anxiety will be greater when any of the following conditions exist:

(i)   The decision is an important one psychologically or financially,

(ii)   There are a number of forgone alternatives.

(iii)   The forgone alternatives have many favourable features (Ivancevich *et al*. 2005).

This study agrees with the observation made by (Ivancevich *et al*, 2005) in that post-decision anxiety is a common occurrence in management decision-making process especially when decision makers and policy implementers (the Governing Councils, Academic Boards, Committees) do not apply ethics and values that are profound and responsible for making rational decision in the management of educational institutions for which this study has investigated.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In examining the significance of committees' functions relative to the availability of accurate and rich information in decision making in the management of Technical Universities in Ghana, this discourse is anchored on Dewey's Functional Theory of Group Decision-Making/Group communication.

The Functional theory of group decision-making is a human communication theory which was first developed in 1910 by Dewey, an American Philosopher in his book, *How we Think:* a reflective thinking sequence for use in group discussion. The theory views the process of group communication as an instrument by which groups make decisions, emphasizing the connection between the quality of communication and the quality of the group's output. This theory postulates that informed or quality decisions can only be made or flourish in an atmosphere of knowledge and information flow.

In a psycho-cognitive sense, between the time of contact with the 'alpha numeric' data of value for decision-making and the point at which decision is made, if accurately processed, the information would have enhanced some changes which must occur within the decision makers before a decision is made (Erwat, 2004). In relation to the significance of committee system on decision-making, information acquisition and dissemination in the management of Technical University for which the study is being examined.

Reviewed Literature on the Management of Higher Institutions

Polytechnic (now Technical Universities) management is turning into a scientific management as the world itself has

metamorphosed into a global village. There have been new breakthroughs in the areas of information technology which is facilitating communication. Buttressing this new development, Tamuno (1998) observed that the era of Information Technology (IT) – the revolutionary mix of electronics, computing and telecommunications – constantly rings the bell: knowledge is power.

Corroborating this assertion, Nokoe (2006) argued that there is a firm belief in polytechnic (Technical Universities) education and in the unique role of Technical Universities in the development of any nation. Polytechnics are fashioned to produce high quality, efficient, and readily available middle-level manpower that are capable of generating own enterprises as well as supporting existing business and technological ones. The uniform spread of polytechnics throughout the country attests to this need.

Nokoe's (2006) position provided a logical background to the theme of managing academic, human and financial affairs, in the polytechnics, and apart from the unique roles and responsibilities of various tertiary institutions, there are no perceived, imagined or real differences between running academic affairs in both traditional the universities and the polytechnics (Technical Universities).

What then constitutes academic affairs? It covers all programmes and activities, plans, material and human resources targeted towards the achievement of desired academic goals. It is an intricate web of several of these and their constituent bodies. It is indeed the institution itself. Managing academic affairs in the view of (Nokoe, 2006) includes both the human resources directly involved in the delivery of academic programmes and those that are there to facilitate their implementation. In other words, managing requires both academic and non-academic members of staff.

Decision-making and problem solving without structure will usually waste enormous amount of time and produce negligible results for group decision-making (Roming, cited in Roothwell, 2000). Without a structure for decision-making, groups often leap to consideration of solutions before adequately discussing and exploring the cause of problems. This leads to ineffective decision-making Hirokawa, cited in (Roothwell, 2000).

Nokoe (2006) suggested that in managing academic affairs, management needs to be clear on the definition and the responsibilities of members of academic staff. There are those directly involved in teaching, and those involved in practical and tutorial sessions. Indeed, there are those qualified to set an examination and mark scripts, and those who by nature of responsibilities and qualifications should not be allowed to examine candidates.

He further argued that academic staff member needs to be upright, transparent, and fair and must take his assignment of teaching and research with all seriousness. Non-academic staff members complement the running of the institution by engaging in activities that are not incompatible with the smooth running of the academic programmes. Such incompatible activities include processing of examination leakages, unauthorized release of transcripts, admission racketeering among others.

The criteria for leadership of a department and the process for the appointment or election of a Dean must be clearly spelt out. Conflicts often arise if these are not well spelt out and lack of

transparency. Heads must serve or be seen as models in effective academic programme deliveries. They will usually be those members of staff who are disciplined and have excelled in the academics, viz through patents, inventions, peer-reviewed publications, technical know-how manuals and general acknowledgement by both members of staff and students of teaching skills and commitment. Tenure of headship is another area that needs to be given due consideration. Rigid application of tenure rules (duration) eliminates 'sit-tight syndrome' of some heads. However, rigidity must not be sacrificed in the absence of inadequate personnel. When members of staff have exceeded the period allowed by statute or policy, acting appointments of very short duration may be considered. The success of the administration of academic affairs is very much linked to decisions governing headships and tenure.

Most institutions have the Academic Board as the highest academic organ of the institution, charged with the responsibility for wide-ranging decisions on academic programmes, staffing, external linkages and, students and to make necessary recommendations to the Polytechnic Council. The importance of this board, requires that membership must be made strictly in accordance with the statues, and tenure must be clearly defined. Often, heads of institutions (Rectors/Vice-Chancellors) commandeer the activities of the board to their offices, or ensure the membership of cronies who are simply placed to approve actions taken executively by the head on behalf of the board. Such ratification of executive approvals maybe minimized if the academic boards meet regularly at pre-determined periods, and the whole polytechnic/university community is made aware of relevant provisions in the statutes that call for the holding of academic meetings by selected members of staff. Issues discussed under the academic board equally apply to committees of the board or other bodies. It must be stated categorically that a committee of the board (ad-hoc or standing) is not higher than the board, and that it is responsible to the board that it belongs. The recognition of this structure, its constitution, authorities and responsibilities is a first and major step to ensuring orderliness, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of academic programmes.

Whether it is a department, faculty/school or academic board, Nokoe (2006) observed that it is important for roles and limitations to be clearly delineated with respect to:

1) Day-to-day management of academic affairs
2) Admission of students
3) Maintenance of standards (minimum National Accreditation Board standards)
4) Relationship and compliance with Professional bodies
5) Appointments and promotions
6) Discipline of students and academic staff
7) Creation and phasing of courses/programmes, among others
8) Public relations/institutional collaboration

Nokoe (2006) argued that polytechnic programmes should ensure effective balance between theory and practice with practical attachment in private and public enterprises be strongly encouraged. Indeed, models for enhancing polytechnic-industry partnership through regular evaluation of polytechnic programmes, graduates-on-the job performance and industry needs should be put in place. These models and programmes should be monitored to ensure that standards are at least maintained. Programme monitoring involves putting in place mechanisms for ensuring

course curricula are current and in line with expectations, examination questions and marking schemes are vetted and of desired standards, and that there is an independent 'third-party' involvement in the quality assurance process. Quality assurance also enables the right members of staff are in place, and that members of staff training needs and institutional requirements are readily identified and rectified. There is no doubt that adequate and well trained members of staff will enhance academic delivery (Nokoe, 2006).

In Fabunmi and Akinwumiju, cited in Babalola and Adedeji (2003) management means the use of resources through team efforts to accomplish the organisational goals. Fabunmi *et al* (2003) contended that the elements of management are planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling. In their view, management can also be referred to the team of elites who administer an organisation. Fabunmi *et al*, cited in Babalola *et al* (2003 observed that human resources are the different categories of personnel. In the school system, it includes students, while human resource planning is the process of preparing a set of decisions about the management needs of an establishment in a manner which will enable the realisation of the available resources. Every organisation needs to effect functional human resources planning so as to avoid unpleasant crisis. Hayble, cited in Babalola *et al* (2003) argued that "administration" and "management" are integration of human and material resources for the attainment of organisational goals. He contends that management is a process by which responsible persons in an organisation combine resources to achieve the desired ends.

Westbumham, cited in Babalola *et al* (2003) reflected that the principle, processes and skills of human resource management are among the most neglected and misunderstood aspects of educational management. The effective management of teaching staff has been regarded either as a low priority or activity denied. There has been little recognition or understanding of the rights of teachers as employees and they are not usually seen as adults with needs, expectations and aspirations. One of the issues that emanates is who "cares for the carers" (Hayble, cited in Babalola *et al* 2003: 343). The great demands upon teachers have reflected in the concerns about stress, morale, and motivation which are indicative of the lack of infrastructure and appropriate management process and skills. Ogunmodede (2000) in her view, management of tertiary institution should involve planning, coordination and periodic evaluation of the human and material resource of these institutions for tasks accomplishment.

Bush (1999) observed that educational management as a field of study and practice was derived from management principles first applied to industry and commerce mainly in the United States. He argues that education should be regarded as simply another field for the application of general principles of management. Levacic, cited in Bush (1999) argued that the model of good management practice … is essentially a rationale one. It advocates a system for allocating resources which is directed at the explicit achievement of institutional objectives. This requires clarity in the specification of objectives, gathering and analyzing information on alternative ways of attaining objectives, evaluating alternatives and selecting those actions most likely to maximize the achievement of the objectives. He, therefore, concludes that self-management has become an international movement predicated on the assumption that school-based leaders (Rectors/Vice-Chancellors and management of polytechnics in Ghana) must be able to make better decisions for their students than national or local politicians/officials. This study suggests that educational management requires a new sense of direction to enable it to meet the needs of teachers, students and educational institutions in the new millennium in Ghana.

Levacic, Glover, Benefit and Crawford, cited in Bush, Bell, Bolam, Glatter and Ribbins (1999) argued that a major development in educational management in the last decade has been much greater emphasis on defining effective leadership by individuals in management posts in terms of the effectiveness of them; organisations which is increasingly judged in relation to measurable learning outcomes for students. They submit that in the United Kingdom both major political parties have pursued educational policies which seek to diminish the traditional ambiguity and lack of coupling between inputs, processes and outcomes in educational organisation. This, they argue, require a national-technical approach to the structuring of decision-making. They content that technicism-strategic planning, development planning, efficiency in resource management, monitoring and evaluation for efficiency and effectiveness is important for task accomplishment in educational institutions.

Robson (1997) argued that strategy of organisation is only one of the functions of management. It may be the most significant form of management decision-making. Her further states that the complexity of modern business ensures that strategic management is at least partially the responsibility of all Managers/Rectors, Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Heads of Department, Deans of Schools and students, hence all managers require an awareness of the business direction of the whole organisation. That is, its corporate strategy. He adds that in thinking of management, one is concerned with a decision-making process often called planning and a product often called a strategy. Thinking about both is often called strategic management.

Robson (1997:3) observed that no organisation can apply strict rules. In other words, the 'best' strategy does not emerge from cookbook approaches, and there certainly are no formulae for calculating the strategy. Rather strategic management is about the reading of signs and portents of the future and interpreting them in order to choose an appropriate direction for the future development of the organisation. Whilst this art does not lend itself to rigid mathematical or logical rules, it is by no means impossible. Argenti, cited in Robson (1997) called changes in the environment 'strategic elephant' so any competent manager should have no trouble spotting them if they stop to look. Ansoff, cited in Robson (1997) asserted that strategic management is a systematic approach to a major and increasingly important responsibility of general management to position and relate the firm to its environment in a way which will assure its continued success and make it secure from surprises. Glack and Junch, cited in Robson (1997) argued that strategic management is a stream of directions and actions which leads to the development of an effective strategy or strategies, to help achieve corporate objectives. Greenley, cited in Robson (1997) observed that strategic management is concerned with the overall long-range direction of organisations and consequently also provides a framework for operational management. Rowe *et al*, cited in Robson (1997) argued that strategic management is the decision process that aligns the organisation's internal capability with the opportunities and threats it faces in its environment. Johnson and Schools, cited in Robson (1997) argued that strategic management is concerned with

deciding on strategy and planning how the strategy is to be put into effect.

Suffice it to say that strategic management encompasses the entire polytechnic and looks beyond day-to-day operating concerns in order to focus upon the polytechnics long term prospects and development. This study submits that the responsibility for doing this will lie with different people (Rectors/Vice-Chancellor, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Heads of Department, Deans of School, and Students. Committees that are open, integrative and all-embracing would make effective and transparent management of academic programmes and associated issues achievable. Management should be free and fair to all and sundry including perceived enemies and should be bold within the law (Nokoe, 2006).

For Ghanaian Polytechnics/Technical Universities to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, it is incumbent on Polytechnic/Technical Universities managers to continually review the existing system of management. Springer (1988) lamented that the speed of change and the growth in population that are so characteristic of our times have affected the university community no less than other sections of human society of which the polytechnic community is part. Christodoulous (1988) explained that the poor management of the education system has been considered by many to be the number one constraint towards making progress in attaining educational goals.

The modern trend is moving towards effective management of information procedures of which various offices, departments, sections, or units in various institutions should possess the characteristics of making decisions on matters referred to them. The good decisions made are invaluable assets and must be based on objective, correct, accurate, usable and valid information. These decisions are contents of communication which must be carefully planned and handled by experts (Folarin, 1998).

Organisation have been studied for many decades by specialists in many disciplines such as management, economics, social psychology, sociology and anthropology.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: Information gathered by Committees, Academic Boards etc.; will not significantly influence decision of governing council in the management of Polytechnics (Technical Universities) in Ghana?

Methods

This paper adopted the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type aimed at investigating the influence of committee system, decision-making and information flow in the management of polytechnics (Technical Universities) in Ghana.

Study Population

The population was made up of eight hundred and forty-three (843) final year management students in the ten polytechnics (now Technical Universities) two hundred and thirty (230) academic staff, 10 Rectors (now Vice-Chancellors) 10 Registrars, 10 Heads of Department of Management Studies, 10 Deans of School of Business, 10 Deans of Students Affairs, 10 Planning Officers, 10 Students Union Presidents. These are shown on the table below;

Table 1.

SN	Study Population	
1.	Rectors (Now VC)	10
2.	Vice-Rectors (Pro VC)	10
3.	Registrars	10
4.	Dean of School of Business	10
5.	Planning Officers	10
6.	HOD, Management Studies	10
7.	Dean, Students Affairs	10
8.	Academic Staff	10
9.	Student Member Union President	10
10.	Final Year Students	843
	TOTAL	1,153

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

These categories of members of staff are regarded as academic managers who were purposively selected in accordance with Nwankwo's (1980) suggestion that:

> …deliberate selection of sample cases from a population becomes sensible or justifiable when within a population there are some elements or cases that have certain characteristics crucial to the study, and the alternative open to the investigator is to include these crucial elements…

Table 2: Sample size and Sampling Technique. Sample size of subjects (interviewees and Respondents)

Final year Students	Rectors/Vice-Chancellors	Vice-Rectors/ Pro Vice-Chancellors	Registrars	Deans, School of Business.	Deans, Student Affairs	Heads, Management Studies	Planning Officer	Academic Members of Staff	SRC Presidents
432	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	62	3
	Total 518								

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Research Instruments

This paper employed in-depth (0ne-on-one) interview and the administration of questionnaire bearing in mind the variables in this research endeavour. The combination of these research approaches is referred to as triangulation (Berg, 2001). This is an anthropocentric research and the justification for choosing the in-

depth interview was that, it afforded the respondents extra latitude in the manner responses were made.

Discussion of Findings

There is a significant relationship between effective information/communication and the quality of decision made by committees in the management of Technical Universities in Ghana ($X2$ Calculated (9) = 281.06 was greater than X^2 critical (9) = 16.9 at P = O.000 < 0.05)

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

This paper argued that effective management practice and the establishment of committees in the various institutions of learning is a sine qua non. That information itself is a resource which should be treated expertly. Therefore from this theoretical standpoint, educational planners, administrators, managers and stakeholders in the management of Technical Universities in Ghana ought to apply the functional theory of group decision-making when committees are mandated to undertake a task(s) during felt difficulties. Management as a matter of desirability and obligation, should make strategic, constructive, scientific and informed decisions, decisions that are legal, that can pass the sunshine test, even if published in the mass media, it would be morally acceptable and more receptive to global audience and in order that conflict of interest, confrontation or post-decision anxiety might be curbed or minimized, thereby creating a more acceptable friendly and harmonious administrative culture and good climate in the Technical Universities. Management should learn to avoid the polarisation and the perceived poisonous nature of the working environment.

In addition, for lack of processed, accurate, verifiable and credible information at the Tamale Polytechnic (now Tamale Technical University) a sub-committee tasked to investigate alleged sexual harassment of female students received slams from Tamale High Court for wrongful dismissal of five lecturers. Valid information is a key resource in decision-making. Every day, every hour, heads of tertiary institutions; Provosts, Rectors, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors are busy making decisions and this cannot be done by rule of thumbs, highly isolated guesswork hunches, but through intelligent and acceptable decisions that are made possible by research and that can stand the test of time.

Now that the Government has converted the ten public polytechnics into Technical Universities, it is only but important that the Technical Universities make prudent and judicious decisions, decisions that can pass a legal test if they want to navigate higher currents in the management of these institutions.

This paper revealed that even though the committee system is dated centuries back and can be traced to Greek Roman and other ancient civilizations, it is still relevant as an integral part of the Technical Universities educational life as it was relevant and popular in Anglo-Saxon and authoritarian societies such as former USSR and Communist China. This article found that a research on the management of tertiary institution as critical and important, this is so because there is a growing concern over the nature of decision-making groups in various institutions of learning.

The institutions increase in complexity day-by-day and in a state of despair. This research also revealed that management and decision-making as a matter of empirical research currently receives insufficient attention and the argument is that there is a need for researchers to study how best to govern tertiary institution to their desired state for national development.

For instance, in both Accra and Kumasi polytechnics (now Technical Universities) students' representative attends Academic Board Meetings whereas in Tamale polytechnic (now Tamale Technical University) students have no representation in the Academic Board. In Accra Polytechnic (now Accra Technical University), committees solved problem of students such as acts of indiscipline among the rank and file of the students, problem of examination malpractices, poor academic performance and so on and so forth. In Tamale Polytechnic (Tamale Technical University), students have no representation at the academic board (at the time of this finding (2016/2017).

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