

## LEVELS OF AUTHORITY DELEGATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RIVERS STATE

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**ABSTRACT:** The study examined levels of authority delegation and management of higher education in Rivers State. The research design adopted was correlational. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The population for this study was 209 administrators in Rivers State-owned universities. The sample size was 84 respondents which represents 40 percent of the population. The instrument for data collection was the researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "Levels of Authority Delegation and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State (LADMHEQ)". The instrument consists of Section A and Section B. Section A seeks authority delegation in universities involving lateral delegation, horizontal delegation and vertical delegation while Section B elicits information on the management of higher education in Rivers State. The instrument was face and content validated by experts in Educational Management, at Rives State University. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to establish reliability of the instrument which gave 0.76, 0.79 and 0.89. Linear Regression was used to determine the correlation coefficient of variables as well as to test the null hypotheses. In hypothesis testing, when the p-value is less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected and vice versa. The study found that there is a strong positive correlation between lateral and vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The study affirmed a weak relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. It was recommended that administrators of tertiary institutions should allocate responsibility to individuals based on their track records and capabilities.

Keywords: Authority, Delegation, Management, Higher Education

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is considered to be the most potent and active tool that contributes to the integral growth of a whole person as stipulated in (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). That is why higher education is set up to further develop an individual to correspond to the demands of society. Education is the instrument of excellence in satisfying the demands and solving problems of society. Thus, higher education is the education received after secondary education

(FRN, 2014). The policy further explained that Higher Education occupies a pivotal place in every society. Higher education is an organization which has the duty of influencing a big section of society on some values and norms. The prospects of citizens towards the bodily functions of higher education were even higher in the past (Hazelkorn, 2015). Society believes that higher education institutions should educate their students to be great citizens for tomorrow's world, a world which will be characterized by necessarily for more sophisticated skills, by the interaction between research and socio-economic development, and by a continuous cycle of innovation and knowledge transfer from academia to external stakeholders (World Bank, 2000).

One factor that deserves specific attention for its key relevance in affecting higher education institutions' performance and efficiency is the calibre of management (Yukl, 2002). It is the last destination for formal educational activity and learning before the ultimate launch into the creation of work/unemployment or entrepreneurship. UNESCO (2000) described higher education as a role model of innovation and change at large expected to play a critical role in promoting sustainable economic, social and cultural development. This implies that higher education is at the forefront of contributing positively to society. The basic parts of higher education institutions are the transmission of knowledge, and skills and the training of the human mind through teaching and learning, research and rendering community services (World Bank, 2000). Higher education institution plays an important part in building the generation of a state. These objectives of higher education would not be fulfilled if authority delegation within the system is not properly carried out.

Tertiary institution functions as a system in such that all units work simultaneously to achieve a common goal. The synergetic collaboration necessitates all units to perform their assigned roles and responsibilities through delegation of authority. Delegation of authority is significant because it is a procedure in which the authority and power are divided and shared amongst the subordinates (Gaurav, 2010). Delegation of authority is the dynamics of management (Matchpoll, 2018). Delegation of authority and management of higher education is significant in the everyday actions of the school system (higher education institutions). Therefore, a leader cannot do all the work if he proves he will not be successful at leading. Jamaica (2021) stated that the main purpose of delegation of authority is to make certain that no one in an organization should perform all the tasks alone. Adegboye (2013) opined that the first rule of management is delegation, do not attempt to manage everything yourself because you cannot, rather you are putting yourself in a tight corner and it will only be one way to the conclusion of the goal or achieving results.

When the work of a manager gets beyond his capacity, there should be some system of sharing the work. This is how the delegation of authority becomes an important tool in institutional function. Yukl (2002) explained that through delegation of authority, leaders empower their team to achieve developmental goals faster, more efficiently and without exhausting the efforts and resources of any single being. Nwagbara (2015) stated that delegation allows the team leader or manager to enjoy greater freedom to engage with others, sometimes more important or pressing tasks, while still overseeing and retaining responsibility for the delegated task's results. There are various levels of authority delegation in an organization.

These include lateral authority delegation, horizontal authority delegation and vertical authority delegation. Lateral authority delegation takes place when authority is provided to a subordinate to complete a task; the subordinate may require the help of several other teammates. Singh (2017) further explained that it may lead some to formally receive the aid of these teammates, and the subordinate may indirectly ask these teammates for their aid to discharge the

task and in this way cut short the time required in the formal delegation. Consequently, when a delegation of authority is done informally, it is known as lateral delegation. If the management in higher institutions follows this type of delegation, it will increase their output in the institution. Hence, tasks will be accomplished on time.

Horizontal delegation of authority is a type of delegation which involves delegating to peers or others over whom you have no formal authority. More or less people believe that since they have no formal authority, they cannot delegate effectively, which sometimes is not the case (Singh, 2017). A subordinate can delegate tasks to fellow subordinates when there is a good relationship in the workplace and can likewise join another team to attain organizational goals. Delegation of authority and management in higher education will want to accomplish their goals by ensuring subordinates deliver tasks on time and efficiently by encouraging horizontal delegation in the institution. In vertical delegation of authority, the task is passed down to subordinates from top to bottom. Historically delegation was a vertical process, flowing down through the chain of command from one superior to his or her staff. Vertical delegation followed the flow of formal authority through the organization. Singh (2017) stated that this type of delegation is practised by managers today because some management staff believe that every task must follow due process which most times delays task accomplishment in an organization.

Delegation of authority and management in higher education institutions have come to understand that waiting; to follow vertically in today's pattern of management will only lead them to achieving little of their target but in some occasions, this type of delegation is followed. According to Okai and Kelvin (2023), who established that when a superior delegates tasks to subordinates in organizations, three major factors are implicit; there is delegation of authority, assignment of responsibility and creation of accountability. Therefore, effective delegation helps educational managers spend less time on specified technical activities or routine decision-making and concentrate their efforts on other strategic management problems. This form of delegation has made management of higher education understand that waiting to follow vertically in the day-to-day pattern of management will only lead to achieving little of their target but in some occasions, this type of delegation is followed by the institution (Matchpool, 2018). The present study will establish the connectivity between this hierarchical delegation of authority and the management of higher institutions in Rivers State.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Delegation of authority is one of the core concepts of management leadership. If the management of higher institutions delegates authority properly, it will facilitate the service delivery and the achievement of the set goals of the institution. However, it has been observed that delegation of authority has not been practised properly by management. This has been so because of a lack of confidence in their subordinates, fear of not being able to deliver tasks, fear of being shown up, especially in the use of modern electronic technology, subordinates becoming proud etc. This has caused stress and disorder to the human body bringing about health challenges and can also lead to death. Institutions with poor management who have a weak relationship with the subordinates always perform below expectations. They lack vision adequate understanding of the institution, and good communication skills. Some managers also feel that subordinates make mistakes and hold out the delegated tasks badly since powers are presented to them. It is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to establish the correlation between delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study investigates the relationship between the levels of delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- Determine the relationship between lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.
- Determine the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.
- Examine the relationship between vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

- What is the relationship between lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant relationship between lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design adopted for the study was correlational. Correlational design is the design that measures a relationship between two variables thereby researchers assess the statistical relationship between them with little or no effort to control extraneous variables (Nwankwo, 2016). The population for this study was 209 administrators comprising the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Registrars, Librarian, Dean, Heads of Department, and Directors amongst others (RSU Establishment 2019 and IAUE Establishment 2019). The sample size was 84 respondents which represents 40 percent of the population. The instrument for data collection was the researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "Delegation of Authority and Management

of Higher Education in Rivers State (DAMHEQ)”. The instrument consists of Section A and Section B. Section A seeks the delegation of authority in universities while Section B elicits information on the management of higher education in Rivers State. The respondent mainly indicated their level of agreement in the area of the study by ticking (✓) the rating scale based on a modified four (4) point rating scale of Strongly Agree-4.00, Agree-3.00, Disagree-2.00, and Strongly Disagree-1.00. The instrument was face and content validated by experts in educational management. Cronbach Alpha reliability was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which gave 0.76, 0.79 and 0.89. This indicates that the instrument was reliable for the study. Linear regression was used to determine the correlation coefficient of the variables as well as to test the null hypotheses. According to Amadi (2020), when the r-value obtained is between 0.1-0.49 is termed a weak relationship, 0.50-0.59 is termed a “moderate relationship”, 0.60- 0.89 is termed a strong relationship while 0.90-0.99 is termed very strong relationship. In hypothesis testing, when the p-value is less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected and vice versa.

## RESULT

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between lateral delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Regression Analysis on the Relationship Between Lateral Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities

A: Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.647 <sup>a</sup>	.418		.416	.12611	
a. Predictors: (Constant), lateral delegation						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.148	.093		23.147	.000
	lateral delegation	.398	.026	.647	15.449	.000

Table 1 shows the regression analysis on the relationship between the relationship between lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. The findings reveal that there is a moderately weak and positive relationship between the two variables (Beta=.647). The R-square value of .418 in Part A showed a 41.8% contribution of lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education. The regression equation  $y=2.148+398x$  shows that an increase in lateral delegation will lead to an increase in authority and management of higher education.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Regression Analysis on the Relationship between Horizontal Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities

**A: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.324 <sup>a</sup>	.390	.388	.12918

**a. Predictors: (Constant), horizontal delegation**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.204	.095		1.183	.056
	horizontal delegation	.385	.026	.624	1.019	.056

Table 2 shows the regression analysis on the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. The findings reveal that there is a weak positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=.324$ ). The R-square value of .390 in Part A showed a 39.0% contribution of horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education. The regression equation  $y=2.204+.385x$  shows that an increase in horizontal delegation might lead to slight managerial effectiveness of higher institutions.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between vertical delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State?

Table 3: Regression Analysis on the Relationship between Vertical Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities

**A: Model Summary**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R
1	.621 <sup>a</sup>	.586	.384	.12957

**a. Predictors: (Constant), Vertical delegation**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.204	.095		23.283	.000
	Vertical delegation	.385	.026	.624	14.559	.000

Table 3 shows that the regression analysis on the relationship between vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities is described as high correlation ( $r=.621$ ). The R-square value of .586 in Part A showed a 58.6% contribution of vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education. The regression equation  $y=2.233+.377x$  shows that an increase in vertical delegation might lead to an increase in management of higher education.

## HYPOTHESES

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between lateral delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State

Table 4: Regression ANOVA on the Relationship between Lateral Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.796	1	3.796	59.312	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.280	82	.064		
	Total	9.077	83			

Table 4 shows the ANOVA regression analysis on the relationship between lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The findings reveal that there is a moderately weak and positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=.647^a$ ). The result of the p-value ( $0.000^b$ ) shows that there is a significant relationship between the lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. Since  $F_{1, 83}=59.312$ ,  $p(0.00) < .05$ , hence null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 alpha level.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Regression ANOVA on the Relationship between Horizontal Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.537	1	3.537	2.911	.056 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.540	82	.017		
	Total	9.077	83			

Table 5 shows the ANOVA regression analysis on the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The findings reveal that there is a weak positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=.324$ ). The result of the F-statistic shows that there is no significant relationship between the horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. Since  $F_{1, 83}=2.911$ ,  $p(.056) > .05$ , the null hypothesis was not rejected at 0.05 alpha level.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between vertical delegation of authority and the management of higher education institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: Regression ANOVA on the Relationship between Vertical Delegation of Authority and Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.537	1	3.537	52.791	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.540	82	.067		
	Total	9.077	83			

Table 6 shows the ANOVA regression analysis on the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The findings reveal that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=.621$ ). The result of the F-statistic shows that there is no significant relationship between the horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. Since  $F_{1, 83}=52.79$ ,  $p (.001) < .05$ , the null hypothesis was rejected at .05 alpha level.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Lateral Delegation of Authority Influences Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities**

Table 1 shows the correlation between the lateral delegation of authority and influence management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. It showed that there is a strong positive relationship between formal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The null hypotheses showed that there is a significant relationship between the lateral delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities. The null hypothesis was rejected at .05 alpha level. The findings of the study are in agreement with earlier findings of other scholars. Singh (2017) in his study stated that when authority is provided to a subordinate may require the help of several teammates. He further explained that it may lead some to formally receive the aid of teammates the subordinate may indirectly ask teammates for their aid to discharge the task and in this way cut short the time required in formal delegation. Wadi (2009) in his study that investigated the impact of delegation of authority on managerial performance which targeted at managerial job performance of Sudan University of Science and Technology established that when the delegation of authority is done informally, it is known as lateral delegation and so the management of higher education following their output in the institution which means tasks will be accomplished on time. He went further to stress in his findings that delegation of authority strengthens human relations among members in the workplace, enhances self-confidence among subordinates' increases the degree of achievement in tasks assigned to staff and speeds up implementation.

### **Horizontal Delegation of Authority Influences Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities**

Table 2 shows the relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The finding of the study showed that horizontal delegation of authority has a low positive relationship with the management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. When put to statistical test the result from Table 5 shows no significant relationship between the horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities ( $F_{1, 83}=2.911$ ,  $p>.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at .05 alpha levels. The present finding is consistent with an earlier finding of another scholar Singh (2017) who established that horizontal delegation involves delegating to peers or others over whom you have no formal authority. A subordinate can delegate tasks to fellow subordinates when there is a good relationship at the workplace and can join another team to



attain institutional goals. The finding is also in line with Wadi (2009) who stressed that if the delegation of authority and management in higher education want to accomplish their goals, the management should ensure that subordinates deliver tasks on time and efficiently by encouraging horizontal delegation of authority. Deyi (2011) in his finding established that other subordinates can use their skill and knowledge to enable other subordinates to carry out tasks to achieve set goals of the institution.

### **Vertical Delegation of Authority Influences Management of Higher Education in Rivers State Universities**

Table 3 shows the relationship between vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. The finding of the study showed that vertical delegation of authority has a highly positive relationship with the management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. When put to statistical test the result from Table 6 shows a significant relationship between the vertical delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State-owned universities ( $F_{1, 83}=52.79, p(0.001) < .05$ ). The finding is in agreement with the earlier finding of Singh (2017) who established that vertical delegation of authority flows downwards through the chain of command from one superior to his or her staff. He supported the finding by explaining that vertical delegation is practised by managers today because some management staff believe that every task must follow due process which most times delay task accomplishment in the institution. Matchpool (2018) in his finding discovered that vertical delegation has made the management of higher education understand that waiting to follow vertically in the to-day pattern of management will only lead to achieving little of their target but in some occasions, this type of delegation is followed by the institution

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that lateral delegation and vertical delegation of authority have a strong relationship with the management of higher education in Rivers State Universities. On the other hand, the study concluded that a weak relationship between horizontal delegation of authority and management of higher education in Rivers State Universities.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study, it was recommended that:

- Administrators of tertiary institutions should allocate responsibility to individuals based on their track records and capability if no chain of command is to be followed. This would enhance the consideration of productive individuals to sensitive positions.
- Tertiary institution management should discourage delegation of authorities between colleagues without official approval from the authorities. This will help to reduce authority misuse and misconduct.
- Delegating responsibilities and authority from top to bottom should be given utmost approval by the administrators in higher institutions as it shows a high level of dedication to ensuring responsibilities are precisely carried out.

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