Management and Governance of Public and Private Multicampus Universities in a Slippery Higher Education Environment in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This paper analysed the management and governance of public and private sector Multi-campus Universities (MCUs) in the increasingly turbulent and competitive environment of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ghana. University for Development Studies (UDS) and the Presbyterian University College, Ghana (PUCG) were case studied. The robustness of their governance and management systems were critically examined in the light of the intense competition among HEIs in the country. The qualitative research design and comparative case study approach were adopted for the study. Information was collected from eight principal officers of the two MCUs through face-to-face interviews. The information was subjected to content analysis. The results revealed that there are no significant differences in the management and governance of the two HEIs. Both of MCUs do not appoint senior or principal officers to manage their campuses and neither do they statutorily empower the Campus Heads to function effectively. However, they both recognized the need to properly structure the office of the Campus Heads to enable them to effectively participate in the governance system at the top level. The paper recommended that PUCG should appoint a Director of Works and Physical Development (WPD) to handle and manage key issues relating to physical resources and development. In addition, both universities should appoint senior or principal officers (Pro-Vice Chancellors or Vice Presidents) as Campus Heads and place them as top managers instead of lower managers as it exists currently. Finally, the two MCUs should decentralize significant autonomy to the Campus Heads to enable them to effectively manage and coordinate the daily operations and activities of the campuses.

Keywords: Campus Heads, Governance, Higher Education, Management, Multicampus Universities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The insatiable quest and demand for higher education in the 21st Century has led to significant transformation in the governance, delivery, and structure of universities or Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The main objective is to enable HEIs to meet the needs and expectations of prospective students, parents and guardians. The introduction of a crop of Multi-campus Universities (MCUs) across the globe is one important strategy that has been adopted to meet these needs and expectations (Becker, 2015; McGuinness, 1991). Even though the concept of MCUs is not new to most developed countries, it is still an emerging phenomenon on the educational landscape of most developing countries. McGuinness (1991) observed that MCUs appeared in the management of HEIs as early as the turn of the 20th Century, but the development and deployment of the concept was strangled by the adverse effects of the Great Depression. However, the MCUs concept bounced back in the early 1960s (McGuinness, 1991; Lee & Bowen, 1971) and has since been strengthened and sustained over the decades. For example, Gade (1993) observed that MCUs have now dominated the academic space and the horizon of higher education by taking more than half of the total students admitted into public colleges or universities in the United States. The concept is prominent and extensively practised by most of HEIs in USA these days. According to Becker (2015), MCUs is a modern and a 21st Century model of higher education that is increasingly gaining recognition and prominence among public and private universities in both developed and developing countries.

The concept of MCUs is simply described as a university or a college with two or more campuses that is offering higher education and is governed and controlled by a single or centralised management and mission (Wu & Wu, 2013). The Central Management or Administration of MCUs is exclusively responsible for designing the organisational or governing structures and spelling out clear division of tasks for the various
campsuses to ensure goals congruence, cohesion and synergy in the university (Ardis et al., 2013; Gumprecht, 2007). In addition, French (2003) and Willoughby (2003) regard a multi-campus university (MCU) as an HEI with several dispersed branches or campuses that are usually structured or organised around a centralised administration (CA) that is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the entire HEI, with the exception of providing direct teaching and learning services. Clearly, the structure of MCUs represents a complex governance or management situation. Unlike the Single-Campus University System (SCUS), an MCU often comprises the Main Campus or CA and at least two or more campuses that are geographically situated away from the latter. Johnstone (1999) noted that the campuses or branches of the university are often located some distance away from the main campus which is normally referred to as the CA. The campuses are responsible for all teaching and learning activities but they take instructions from and report to the CA. On the other hand, the Main Campus or CA is responsible for managing all the campuses or branches of the university. The individual campuses are responsible for the academic functions (teaching, assessment of students and research) and implementation of decisions or policies of the university. Gumprecht (2007) observed that the main lines of responsibility are clearly drawn between the main campus and the other campuses. Similarly, French (2003) and Ayers (2002) posited that MCUs decentralise academic activities and resources to the campuses according to their specific needs, but centralise or maintain the overall management functions at the Main Campus or CA.

Generally, the MCUs systems are instituted to increase access to education and specifically to meet community needs for education and human resource development. Studies have shown that MCUs in recent times aim to improve access to education for all students, communities and regions in an equitable manner (Greenberg et al., 2008; Deakin University, 2009; Sheth et al., 2013; Harman, 2006; Elson-Green, 2006; Lynch, 2003). They added that MCUs promote diversity among students, staff and community members; eliminate inequity in access to higher education in rural and isolated areas; and improve the lives and economic well-being of the indigenes. The system also provides for the decentralisation of resources, facilities and services to the dispersed campuses or branches as they are geographically departmentalised (Griffith University, 2005; Scott et al., 2007). A number of scholars assert that the MCU model allows for the decentralisation of academic services, human resources and support facilities to the various campuses according to their specific needs, whereas ensuring that the overall management of these resources and campuses is centralised at the CA (American Association of University Professors, 2006; Harman & Harman, 2003; Willoughby, 2003; French, 2003). However, it must be acknowledged that the resources, especially physical, human and financial resources allocated by central governments to public HEIs do not take into consideration the special characteristics and situation of these institutions. It is clear that their structures and needs are not the same. MCUs certainly require more resources than SCUs.

A good number of MCUs have been established in Ghana in recent times. An example is the University for Development Studies (UDS) which was established in 1992 by the Government of Ghana to “blend the academic world with that of the community in order to provide constructive interaction between the two for the total development of Northern Ghana, in particular, and the country as a whole” (PNDC Law 279, Section 2). According to Effah (1998), UDS was “borne out of the new thinking in higher education which emphasizes the need for universities to play a more active role in addressing problems of the society, particularly in the rural areas”. UDS has four campuses, seven Faculties, one Business School, one Medical School, one Graduate School, and three Centres. These campuses are spread across the three Regions in Northern Ghana. Specifically, Wa Campus is located in the Upper West Region; Navrongo Campus is situated in the Upper East Region; and Tamale and Nyankpala Campuses are in the Northern Region (UDS, 2016a). However, this paper focuses on the CA which is located in Tamale and the Wa and Navrongo Campuses which are located in Wa and Navrongo respectively. The authors of this paper hereby acknowledge that the two campuses of UDS case studied in this paper were made autonomous universities in 2019 and renamed respectively as S.D. Dombo School of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS) and C.K Tandem University Technology and Applied Sciences (CKT-UTAS).

The Prebyterian University College of Ghana (PUCG) was established in 2003 in fulfillment of the decision and initiative of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in 1996. The PUCG was created in “response to the challenge presented by the high demand for student admission in Ghanaian Universities (low access), the perceived lowering of academic standards and the erosion of moral and ethical values in the Ghanaian Society” (PUCG, 2016a). As part of its mandate, PUCG would tailor and “relate its programmes to the developmental needs of Ghana in the 21st Century and beyond, in terms of training, research and extension services. It will identify and fill important niches in the development of higher education in the country” (PUCG, 2016a). It has five campuses which are dispersed across three regions in southern Ghana: Okwahule and Akwapem Campuses both in the Eastern Region; Asante-Akyem and Kumasi Campuses both in the Ashanti Region; and Tema Campus, in the Greater Accra Region. This paper case studied the PUCG’s CA which is located in Abetifi-Kwahu, the Tema Campus located in Tema, and the Asante-Akyem Campus which is sited in Agogo.
II. PROBLEM UNDER INVESTIGATION

As has already been indicated, MCUs is a 21st Century model of higher education that is increasingly gaining recognition among public and private universities in both developed and developing countries (Becker, 2015). French (2003) and Willoughby (2003) noted that the campuses report to a centralised administration or office which is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the entire university with the exception of providing educational or teaching services. Seemingly, the MCU is mostly adopted and operated by public or private universities for the purposes of maximising the use of the available limited resources; making higher or tertiary education accessible and closer to rural communities and students; expanding educational facilities and market share; and also for depopulating the main campus. Harman (2006) also posited that the MCUs encourage and promote diversity, specialisation, national integration and cohesion, and ensure regional balance in the provision of higher or tertiary education. The centralised administration or management of MCU ensures that unified quality standards are maintained and applied across all the campuses without recourse to urban and rural segregation. Thus, the successes, benefits and impact of MCUs to students, staff, management, society and the state can be very significant.

In spite of the numerous and diverse benefits associated with MCUs, both the public and private ones in Ghana are yet to tap their full benefits basically because of the teething difficulties and complexities relating to governance and management structures. A number of broad structural and management constraints tend to impede the realisation of the core objectives and intended benefits of MCUs. Some of these challenges arise because MCUs are usually new; their campuses are located far apart and managed by central administrations from a distance; and inadequate funds. Lee and Bowen (1971), Ezarik (2009), Greenberg et al. (2008) and Hlengwa (2014) explicitly noted that the MCUs governance system is a complex scenario and success depends highly on charismatic leadership and aggressive management of the units, schools and faculties on the various campuses. In other words, the success of the MCUs is largely dependent on the nature and quality of governance policies and management structures that are in place. These challenges and the volatile and slippery higher education environment in Ghana triggered this case study on the management and governance of two MCUs: the University for Development Studies (UDS) and the Presbyterian University College in Ghana (PUCG).

III. OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAPER

The main objective of the paper is to conduct a comparative case study on the management and governance of public and private MCUs in a highly changing higher education environment in Ghana. The paper specifically examined the current management and governance systems of the two MCUs; their inherent challenges; and the adoption of appropriate management systems to effectively translate their objectives into concrete results and benefits for all stakeholders of higher education and human resource development. The paper provided recommendations for reshaping of the management and governance structures of the two MCUs and other existing or future MCUs in Ghana. Most importantly, the study is a significant contribution to literature and knowledge on the management and governance of MCUs in Ghana.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition of Multicampus University System

Lee and Bowen (1971) define the MCUs system as one that has a well-coordinated management to govern the peripheral institutions and campuses being operated to provide community-oriented higher education. Wu and Wu (2013) define MCU as a university or a college with two or more campuses offering four-year higher education and is governed and controlled by a single or centralised management. Similarly, Charles (2009), Scott et al. (2007), Griffith University (2005) and French (2003) also define MCUs as a university system that has more than two geographically dispersed campuses where each of them holds a considerable student population. Other scholars define MCUs as a system where academic services, human resources and support facilities are decentralised to the campuses based on their needs, whereas the overall management of all the resources is centralised at the Central Administration (Dhliwayo, 2014; American Association of University Professors, 2006; Willoughby, 2003). Again, Johnstone (1999) and Dengerink (2001) posit that the basic distinguishing characteristic of the MCUs is the centralised governing or management structure located at the Central Administration. Also, Creswell et al. (1985) identified the following characteristics of MCUs: a) it is a public or private controlled system; b) a single or one governing board; c) campuses are multiple type institutions; and d) the management and coordination of the entire university is the responsibility of one Central Administration. The working definition of MCUs adopted in this paper is a public or a private university with two or more campuses or branches that are geographically
dispersed and are governed and controlled by a central management. The main aim of MCUs is to provide easy access to higher education to various target groups and communities.

B. Deployment of Management Patterns by MCUs

MCUs are normally governed through the deployment of a management pattern. Jin and Wang (2010) describe a management pattern as a management model. They identified three types of these models used in managing MCUs: a) article management model; b) block management model, and c) article and block combination model. Some authors also describe and classify the management models to include a) university-city model; b) satellite model; c) across-regional-type model; d) train model; d) business-type layout pattern; and e) mixed type. Fei (2015) uses the management pattern instead of the management model to describe and explain his categories of management theories suitable for MCUs as centralised management pattern, decentralised management pattern, and centralised and decentralised management pattern. Fundamentally, there are no differences between the two management theories proposed by Jin and Wang on the one hand and Fei on the other hand. As illustrated in Table I, the two theories express the same concepts and contents.

This paper prefers Fei’s management pattern for MCUs over that of Jin and Wang management model because it supports and facilitates internal management, external coordination as well as the realisation of education and research objectives.

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<td>Article Management Model</td>
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<td>Article and Block Combination Model</td>
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1) Centralised and decentralised management patterns

This pattern is a combination of the centralised and decentralised management patterns deployed for campuses that are established as dedicated management agencies. Essentially, the management system of the campuses is in line with that of the main campus system. The campuses are normally under the direct leadership of the main campus through management agencies known as management committees responsible for managing the daily activities such as students’ affairs, logistical support, and administration. However, activities such as teaching, scheduling of programmes and resource utilization must be executed in accordance with the main campus management directives. Some of the advantages of this pattern include maximum use of limited human resources and efficient management. This pattern however has some disadvantages which include the presence of only one-fold of students on campuses and less contact between different grades and different majors (Fei, 2015). In addition, the intention of this pattern is not only to benefit the unified management system, but also to give full play to the campuses to take their own initiatives (Jin & Wang, 2010). They stressed that much emphasis should not be placed on the distinct responsibilities and rights of the central administration and the campuses as this may derail management control and thereby reduce the efficiency of management and the development of the entire university.

2) Management structure of multi-campus university system

Gumprecht (2007) observed that the MCUs system places the responsibility for designing the organisational structures and spelling out clear division of tasks for the various campuses entirely upon the central management of the university. Besides, locating the overall management responsibility of the MCUs on the central administration (CA), implies that the latter is responsible for the determination and apportioning of responsibilities and tasks among the various campuses (Ardis et al., 2013). Similarly, French (2003) and Willoughby (2003) state that the MCUs are normally structured around a CA whereby the responsibility for the overall coordination and management of the university, including the campuses, generally resides in the CA, whilst academic and teaching services are delegated to the campuses. In other words, the campuses take the responsibility for all academic and teaching services but take instructions and directions from the CA and report to it. The CA’s overall responsibility for the entire university include appointing staff; formulating policies; allocating resources among campuses; appointing campus heads and other heads of units in consultation with faculty; and approving missions and academic programmes of the campuses usually through the academic board (Johnstone, 2005). However, Nel (2006) argues that since the campuses are geographically dispersed and separated from one another and the main campus, they need to be granted some reasonable level of autonomy to manage and coordinate their daily operations and activities, whereas remaining committed to the central and superior management or governance system.

3) Decision-making in multi-campus universities

Decision-making has a significant influence on organisational or management structure (Dougherty, 2001). He posits that a highly differentiated organisation is more susceptible to control than a hierarchical one that is less innovative. On the contrary, a highly integrated organisation will be more innovative and...
responsive but may have control challenges (Dougherty, 2001). According to Nadler and Tushman (1999), an ideal organisational design features both integration and differentiation that generate ability to connect various units across functions in the organisation.

The decision-making process in MCUs like most organisations depicts the top-down and bottom-up approaches in terms of the relationship between the CA and the campuses (Morgan, 2003; Wheatley, 2003). Generally, the University Council is the highest decision-making organ in the university; it is responsible for making policy proposals for management to formulate and implement appropriate policies. Decisions bordering on policy and management issues such as policy formulation, resource allocation, approving programmes, recruiting and staffing, and admitting and certifying students are the preserve or responsibility of the central management or administration (Massarik & Pei-Carpenter, 2002). On the other hand, decisions relating to operational and implementation issues such as academic activities (teaching and assessment), mounting of programmes, internal or local operations and implementation of management decisions are relegated to the campuses (Vroom, 2000; Kerr, 2001). Through their management committees, the campuses operationalise or implement the formulated policies and report to the central management. However, the campuses also make proposals on new programmes to the central management for consideration and approval for their faculties and departments. This allocation of responsibilities allows the distribution of the decision-making function at all levels in the university (Worley et al., 1996).

4) Campus autonomy

The campuses of an MCU would operate effectively and efficiently with or without unnecessary interference from the CA (Dhlawiayo, 2014). He adds that although the campuses, like any subsidiary unit, are likely to operate effectively when the CA issues directions and instructions to the lower institutions, it should be done with circumspection. Thus, a reasonable level of institutional autonomy for the campuses is important for their smooth operations. However, this autonomy should be limited to decisions that the campuses have the power and authority to make and apply at their level. It is evident that granting autonomy to the campuses would lead to high responsiveness, quick decision-making, and flexible operations, and hence make them highly effective and efficient. (Johnston, 1993; French, 2003; Harman & Harman, 2003).

5) Leadership

Effective leadership is vital for the success of MCUs, both at the CA and at the various campuses. Leadership describes the issuance and demonstration of unambiguous goals or ideas and the provision of a strategic direction with the aim of achieving institutional and organisational cohesion in an organisation (Northouse, 2007; Doyle & Smith, 2001). Relating leadership to decision-making, Eisenhardt (1999) observed that in the past decision-making was deemed to be the ability of executives or management to critically analyse the organisation and its environment. However, she argued that strategic decision-making should not be restricted to only the top management or executives of the organisation. Proper distribution of strategic decision-making in an organisation provides the opportunity for staff at all levels to contribute effectively to the decision-making process (Worley et al., 1996). However, Massarik and Pei-Carpenter (2002) posited that leaders play a vital and crucial role in determining whether to maintain or change existing cultures of their organisations.

Scholars of leadership identify three fundamental elements or components of leadership: a) relationship-building skills; Wheatley (2003) and Morgan (2003) emphasize the importance of acquiring and building relationship skills as leaders need to ensure effective interactions and decision-making in the organisation; b) management of participatory decision-making; Eisenhardt (1999) stressed that leaders must have the ability and skills to effectively manage participatory decision-making and its relational facets; and c) management of paradoxes; Smith and Berg (1987), Stringer and Hudson (2008), and Johnson (1992) noted that leaders should have the ability and skills to effectively manage paradoxes or divergences in their organisations. For instance, the leadership of MCUs must be able to resolve conflicts between campuses that want autonomy and those that prefer centralisation.

C. MCU's Management Challenges

Effective management is vital for the efficient operation of MCUs and their various campuses that are dispersed geographically (Steedman et al., 2006). In other words, the campuses must be managed by efficient staff referred to as campus managers, heads, or PVCs appointed by the CA and mandated to oversee and manage all campus activities through the implementation of strategic plans of the university; ensuring the achievement of regional and local needs; and maintaining standards and the prestige of the university (Allison & Eversole, 2008; OCUFA, 2009). Again, the campus managers, who are usually senior or principal officers in the university, have to report directly to the VC (Davis & Kelly, 2006). A key challenge of MCUs is associated with the fact that campus heads or managers are obliged to take instructions and directives from the CA which tends to slow their ability to expedite actions whenever necessary.

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In such a situation, the structural arrangement of MCUs is likely to result in a number of management and leadership related challenges (Johnstone, 1999; Nicolson, 2004). Routine interference from the central administrations in the management of the campuses may weaken the latter’s leadership and management and thereby render them ineffective (Dhlwayo, 2014). Even though the regular interference of the CA is meant to ensure the maintenance of unified standards and quality on the campuses, it often lowers the morale of the campus leaders or managers and makes them uninnventive (Joyce, 2010). Singh and Khanna (2011) also observed that it is extremely difficult for the management of campuses that are located in remote rural areas to develop structures that will ensure the maintenance of the same or similar standards and quality achieved by the main campus which is mostly located in an urban setting. This demand on campus managers or heads, whose campuses are less developed and ill-equipped, may frustrate and demotivate them. In addition, the campus managers do not normally have the powers to recruit, promote and fire employees of their respective campuses. They equally do not have oversight responsibility for formulating and developing policies for their campuses. As has already been explained, due to the centralised nature of the MCUs system, the CA is responsible for all issues relating to recruitment, promotion and dismissal of staff and all policy issues of the university (Massarik & Pei-Carpenter, 2002). Therefore, campus managers may not get very competent employees for their campuses and may also not be able to control and discipline uncooperative staff. Again, the campus managers may also face difficulties in operationalising or implementing general policies, as they may not be applicable to their specific campus context.

V. METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The Central Administration (CA) of the Navrongo Campus and the Wa Campus of UDS and the CA of PUCG and its Asante-Akyem Campus and the Tema Campus were purposely selected, and case studied. The qualitative research approach was employed for collecting and analysing data from these entities. The four campuses were purposefully selected because they are remotely located away from the Main Campuses. The comparative case study research design was adopted for the study. Campbell (2010) and Kaarbo and Beasley (1999) observed that this research design systematically examines and compares in detail the context and features of two or more specific phenomena. Structured interviews solicited opinions and responses from eight respondents from the two universities including one Pro Vice-Chancellor, one Vice President, two Registrars, and four Deans-in-Charge/Deans. Using Miles and Huberman (1994) three-stage qualitative data analysis, the data collected were reduced, displayed, and conclusions drawn and verified.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Comparative Analysis of PUCG and UDS Principal Officers

The results of the analysis of the collected information indicate that the composition of principal officers in PUCG includes “the Council Chairman, President, Vice President, Registrar, Librarian, Finance Director, Deans of faculties and students, and Heads of Department (HODs)” (PUCG, 2016b). On the other hand, UDS classifies the Chairman of University Council and the VC as principal officers and the PVC, the Registrar, the University Librarian, the Finance Officer, and the Director of Works and Physical Development (WPD) as other or key officers (UDS, 2016b). Thus, on record, PUCG has an extended composition of principal officers compared to UDS. The composition of the principal and key officers of the two MCUs is presented in Table II and the responses of the respondents analysed and compared. From the table, it is clear that both universities, to a large extent, have the same composition of principal and key officers with the exception of the Director of WPD which is included in the case of UDS. In other words, the constitution or design of the principal and key officers of the two MCUs is fundamentally the same.

| TABLE II: COMPOSITION OF PRINCIPAL AND KEY OFFICERS IN UDS AND PUCG |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| **UDS** | **PUCG** | |
| Council Chair | Council Chair | |
| Vice Chancellor | President | |
| Pro-Vice Chancellor | Vice President | |
| Registrar | Registrar | |
| Finance Officer | Director of Finance | |
| Internal Auditor | Director Internal Audit | |
| Director of WPD | Director of Library | |
| Librarian | | |

Source: Fieldwork (May, 2016)

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In practice however, the responses of all the eight respondents revealed that the distinction between the principal officers and the key officers is not often highlighted. For instance, one of the respondents from UDS, the Registrar (RRU) states that:

(...) the key officers of the university apart from the Chairman of Council, the key officers are the VC, PVC, and the Registrar, but management can be extended to include the Finance Officer, University Librarian, and the Director of WPD.

Similarly, a respondent from PUCG, the Dean, Asante-Akyem Campus (RDA) also states that:

(...) the President, the Vice President, the Registrar, the Finance of Director, the Director of Library and the Director of Internal Audit and the University Council constitute the highest decision making body (…).

B. Management Structure

The responses of the interviewees indicate that the management structure of the two MCUs is not entirely different from that of the SCUs. RRU corroborates this issue thus:

Generally, this is the structure for almost every university; it does not matter whether it is a one-campus university or an MCU.

Majority of the respondents expressed the above view. The only difference between the two MCUs systems is the extended management responsibility of the campuses. Thus, the principal and key officers who constitute the core management of the MCUs are responsible for the coordination and management of the various campuses to ensure congruence with the objectives and mission of the entire university (Ardis et al., 2013; Gumprecht, 2007; Willoughby, 2003). With regard to the question on the management structure of the MCUs, all the respondents recognised the campus management as part of the entire structure. One of the respondents described the management structure of UDS as follows:

It involves so many, if you like, set-ups: we have the VC’s Office, Registry, Finance Office, Internal Audit Unit, WPD Unit all these comprise management. Therefore, when we say management these are the units and of course, the PVC is in the VC’s office. So when you go down from the managerial level you have the [Deans-In-Charge] (DICs) for all campuses and the Deans before you get to the HODs. So for me, that is the structure.

This management system includes all the Principal Officers at the centre and the Campus Heads as well as the HODs at the campuses. Similarly, another respondent, the Dean, Tema Campus (RDT) describes the management structure of PUCG with respect to the lines of reporting thus:

(...) we have the CA at Abetifi where we have the President, the Vice President, the Registrar, the Deputy Registrar; and then on the campuses which are now corresponding to faculties we have Deans, so all these Deans report to the Vice President, to the President and then on each of the campuses is an Assistant Registrar and also an Accounting Assistant. The Assistant Registrars report to the Registrar and the Accounting Assistant reports to the Director of Finance who is located in Abetifi. Now, within each faculty or campus we have a number of departments which are headed by HODs. So that is the management structure.

The Principal Officers represent the central management unit which controls most management decisions and functions in the two MCUs. Thus, the Principal Officers are responsible for the overall management of the universities. RDT explained the management structure in the following words:

At the management level, we usually have the President, the Vice President, the Registrar, the Finance of Director, the Director of Library and the Director of Internal Audit, that is, when you go to the head office. However, when you want the decision making at the entire campus management level then you will add the Deans and HODs, they are also part the management team.

Fig. 1 is a synoptic representation of the management structure of the two MCUs as described by the respondents. It describes the relationship between the principal or key officers of the two MCUs which the Dean-In-Charge, Wa Campus (RDW) described below:

It starts from University Council [or Council Chair] down to the VC, the PVC, and then we have some other officers directly answerable to the VC and the PVC: Internal Auditor, Librarian, Director of Works, Registrar and Finance Officer. Then, below the PVC we now have the Deans and they are all responsible to the VC, if it is academics through the PVC, if it is administrative straight to the VC (…) The DICs [or Campus Heads] like the other Deans are of equal status(…)Then, below the Dean you have the HODs down to the students.

In explaining the functional relationship between the principal or key officers in the management structure, RRU posits that:

(...) top management is here [CA], but they work with the DICs of the various campuses. The DICs of the various campuses are coordinating the activities of all the faculties on those campuses that is the decentralisation. Faculty Deans also have HODs so there is further decentralisation down. So, the HODs are also responsible for running the departments with the help of the lecturers.

As can be deduced from the synoptic management structure presented in Fig. 1, the University Council (Chair) is responsible for providing leadership, making policy proposals, and overseeing the overall operations of the organisation. The Council Chair and the VC or President are the key officers responsible for contractual engagements and thus represent the Executive Management.

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Then, the Central Management or Administration, which represents the top management, is charged with the overall management function of the entire university and the campuses (Ardis et al., 2013; Gumprecht, 2007; Creswell et al., 1985). On the other hand, Campus Management, which represents the lower management, is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the campus and the coordination of teaching and learning activities on the campus (Fei, 2015; Jin & Wang, 2010).

All the respondents confirmed that the management system of the two universities is a combination of the centralised and decentralised management models. This is in consonance with Fei’s (2015) third management pattern which is a combination of both centralised and decentralised management patterns discussed under the theoretical framework. In other words, the management systems of both universities is mixed—that is they blend the elements and features of both the centralised and decentralised management patterns. For instance, a respondent, the Registrar, PUCG (RRP), described the management system of the MCUs thus: “I will say it is a mixed type of arrangement.” Similarly, RDW also noted that the management system of the MCUs is mixed because the features of the centralised and decentralised management systems are applied concurrently. He added that certain management decisions are taken at the campus level, but that most decisions are taken at the CA level.

**Fig. 1. A Synoptic Organogram of the Management Structure of UDS and PUCG. Source: Authors’ Own, Fieldwork (May 2016).**

Hence, the assertion of the Dean-In-Charge, Navrongo Campus (RDN) and RDW that the campuses are given limited decentralisation or autonomy to operate. RDN observed that:

*There is very little decentralisation in the sense that every little thing you have to go to the centre, even though the Deans can take certain decisions on behalf of the VC within their faculties. The DIC is also given some level of freedom of operation within the campus, but most of the times he needs to seek approval from the VC and the PVC.*

Furthermore, all the respondents acknowledged that there is some level of decentralisation in the management structures of their respective universities, but the amount of it granted to the campuses is the contention. RDT and RDA therefore concluded that the management system of the MCUs is partially decentralised:

*It has features of the two, it is not wholly decentralised. The campuses are not as of now wholly decentralised (...) The campuses run an imprest system monthly. (RDT, 2016)*

With respect to the day-to-day spending and operations, RDA stated that the management system of their university is not wholly centralised because some aspects of decision-making and governance have been ceded to the campuses. He asserted the following:

(...) they have given us some of the powers, they have given us an account that we only operate on imprest basis. Therefore, our day-to-day spending on fuel is within the power of the campus, but major payments are forwarded to the head office for processing. Yes, it is a mixed management system.

This explanation is in line with the views of many scholars regarding the management structure of MCUs that provides for some level of decentralisation of academic services, resources, and daily administration.
to the campuses and reserves the overall management of the entire university to the CA (Dhliwayo, 2014; American Association of University Professors, 2006; Harman & Harman, 2003; Willoughby, 2003; French, 2003). Again, the explanation equally confirms Nel’s (2006) view that the geographically dispersed campuses, which are separated from one another and the CA, are granted some reasonable level of autonomy in managing and coordinating their daily operations and activities, but they are expected to remain committed, as subordinate units, to the central management or governance system.

1) Benefits of PUCG and UDS management structure

The respondents identified innovation, coordination, participation, effective decision-making and governance as the benefits and strengths of the MCUs management system. An RVP echoed this issue thus:

(…) the reason why we do semi-decentralisation is to empower the other campuses: so that they can take control of activities of their work such as teaching activities; so that they can be very innovative, but if you want to make everything centralised then they cannot be very innovative.

With regard to the benefits or strengths of the management structure in relation to participation, he argued thus:

It promotes participatory kind of governance, so that everybody takes part; and efficiency – with the mixture, you get the advantages of centralised and mix with the advantages of decentralised you are in the midway and that is very good.

He also underscored the importance and significance of the decentralised management system in promoting integrated and participatory governance in the MCUs. He observed that contributions are drawn from the campuses whenever major decisions are made in the MCUs:

(…) different campuses contribute to achieve one kind of goal where the Deans and DICs play very significant roles. So, it makes the work even much smoother rather than management getting people to go to Navrongo or Wa to find out their problems.

Clearly, the MCU management structure promotes effective decision making by involving all the key officers located at the various campuses. This helps to ensure that the decisions are well-informed and represent the views of all the relevant stakeholders in the various management levels of the two MCUs. RRU believes that contributions from the lower management enrich the quality and effectiveness of management decisions:

(…) having the DICs of the various campuses being part of the management structure or feed into the management structure, the reason is that you cannot have adequate and very reliable information at the top that will help you take effective decisions if you do not have the inputs from those who are on the ground.

Besides, coordination of daily operations in the MCUs is effective because of the appointment of Campus Heads to manage the day-to-day affairs of the campuses on behalf of the VC and the President of the two universities. Thus, the Campus Heads take full responsibility for managing their campuses and report directly to the appropriate officers at the CA. The respondents stressed that the management of the MCUs aims to promote and facilitate effective coordination of the entire university in terms of development, administration, and financial management.

Under the MCU management structure, the roles of Principal Officers are clearly defined, and the line of authority established to ensure that the responsibilities and authority of all officers are clear. This arrangement promotes effective delegation and reporting at the various levels of management. Hence, a RDN asserted thus:

Given the enormity of the workload, the VC has a representative on each campus to take care of certain [campus or] faculty business, but serious university business is referred to the CA or to the VC for approval.

The responses of the participants clearly support the benefits of the combined management pattern or model suggested by scholars like Fei, (2015) and Jin and Wang (2010). These benefits include maximum use of limited resources, easy and effective management, unified and coordinated management, and as well as provision of allowances for the campuses to take their own initiatives.

2) Challenges of the MCUs management structure

In spite of the benefits of the MCUs management structure, the respondents identified a number of challenges constraining their operations. The responses of the interviewees indicate that there are no significant differences in the challenges experienced by both MCUs. For instance, all eight interviewees identified slow decision-making, difficulties in coordination and high operational costs as major challenges of the management structure. Other challenges identified by the interviewees included commuting time and costs between the campuses and the CA, uneven distribution of resources, communication difficulties, ambiguous functions and grave role conflicts. Analysis of the information provided by the respondents of the interviews indicated that the challenges hampering the effective and efficient management of both public and private MCUs are the same.

For example, RPV noted thus:
Yes, sometimes the roles and functions are not clearly defined. It brings misunderstanding and conflicts, it leads to delays in taking decisions, and it is also expensive due to the movement and transportation.

An important result of the data analysis is attempts by the CAs to restrict the autonomy and authority of the campuses impeded the ability of the Campus Heads to take and implement key decisions quickly. The Campus Heads are often required to obtain approval from the centre before taking any major action. According to RDW, this practice poses operational difficulties to the managers of the campuses:

(…) you have to consult the centre, I mean the autonomy isn’t there, we are not given any might to operate everything financially, even promoting your programmes you have to refer to the centre. Unequitable allocation of resources is a major something [challenge] because leadership often uses discretion without regard to other issues.

It was also the contention of RDT that the major management challenges that militate against the efficient operations of their university include:

(…) uneven resource distribution, it makes administration expensive, and slow decision making because of the involvement of an expanded group of people.

RRP identified the challenge of implementing the right decisions, the duplication of staff, and high cost as the fundamental setbacks confronting efficient management of the MCUSs. He asserts that:

Implementation of the decision becomes a problem; you cannot be there all the time to see whether they are doing [implementing] the right decisions. It is also costly to operate in terms of finance, and then the need for infrastructure. Staff numbers are unduly increasing because of duplication in a way.

The results of the data analysis indicate that the lower management at the campus level is often incapacitated by the above challenges as compared to the top management at the Centre. Jin and Wang (2010) caution that the mixed or combined management pattern or model often emphasises hierarchy, structure, and responsibilities thereby affecting effective management control and as well reducing efficient management at all levels. The top management need to grant a reasonable amount of autonomy to allow the lower management to operate efficiently.

3) Decision making in the two MCUs

All the respondents noted that the main actors in decision-making in both MCUSs include the principal and the key officers and to some extent the lower managers. They acknowledged that the decision-making process in both MCUSs is participatory as stakeholders at various levels are often involved in the process. This confirms the view of Womack and Podemski (1985) that equal participation of all the campuses in the planning process of the MCUS is very important for effective decision-making. Similarly, Morgan (2003) and Whealey (2003) observed that the decision-making process in MCUs depicts the top-down and bottom-up approaches of the relationship between the CA and the campuses.

Responding to a question on the category of officers responsible for decision-making in the university, RRP stated that:

(…) of course, the President is the overall principal decision making body, and the chief disciplinary officer in the system.

However, RDW believed that the VC or the President is not the only overall principal officer engaged in the decision-making process:

In every university there are two principal officers. The two principal officers are the ones that can commit the university that is, the Council Chairman and the VC. Now, in addition to these principal officers we then have other key officers the Registrar, PVC, Director of WPD, Librarian, and Finance Officer and to some extend the DCs.

Another respondent, RRU underscored the importance of participatory decision-making and the bottom-up decision-making approach in his university thus:

So, if you have Deans and DIC of the various campuses feeding into your management decision is good for you because they will be bringing to you issues that are right on the ground so your decisions will be decisions that are informed by the real situation on the ground.

Similarly, RDT acknowledged and confirmed that decision-making in their university is participatory. However, his description reflects the top-down approach:

(…) critical management decisions are made by the President, the Vice President, the Registrar, and the Director of Finance depending upon the nature of them (…) If the decision has to do with a specific campus, then the Dean of that campus will be brought in.

The responses of the participants are also in agreement with Massarik and Pei-Carpenter’s (2002) assertion that the university council is responsible for making decisions on policy proposals whereas the top management is responsible for the overall decision-making function of the entire university.

Decisions relating to operational and implementation issues are handled by the lower management at the campuses (Vroom, 2000; Kerr, 2001).
The respondents of both MCUs unanimously stated that decision-making is participatory and is either the top-down or bottom-up approach depending on the issues under consideration. However, these approaches to decision-making in the MCUs pose a number of management challenges. For instance, The Vice President, PUCG (RVP) lamented that:

> At times taking a decision is very slow–people travel from all these places [campuses] to [the CA] work on something because of our multicampus nature.

In addition, the Pro Vice-Chancellor, UDS (RPV) equally bemoaned that there are often delays associated with the decision-making process in the University:

> Sometimes too it delays because the centre taking a decision before it reaches the periphery [campuses] there is some amount of delay.

The views of the respondents are in congruence with the observations by Johnston (1993), French (2003) and Harman and Harman (2003) regarding granting a considerable amount of autonomy to the campuses so as to make them more responsive, flexible, and above all decisive in managing their affairs and operations effective and efficient.

4) Campus heads

Allison and Eversole (2008) and OCUFA (2009) indicate that campuses need to be managed by efficient staff who may be referred to as Campus Managers or Heads, or PVCs, or Vice Presidents. They are normally appointed by MCUs’ governing councils and mandated to oversee and manage all the activities of the campuses. The Campus Managers are usually senior or principal officers in the university and thus report directly to the VC or the President (Davis and Kelly, 2006).

Although all the respondents of both MCUSs agreed that their Campus Heads are normally appointed from the Deans, where they are more than one, they proposed different designations for their Campus Heads. Thus, in the case of UDS Campus Heads are referred to as DICs, whereas PUCG refers to them as Deans. In contrast to Davis and Kelly’s (2006) views, the respondents indicated that both MCUs do not appoint senior or principal officers to manage the campuses. Therefore, the Campus Heads do not report directly to the VC or President in most cases. Besides, it has been noticed that both universities have not included the position of Campus Heads in their respective statutes. A respondent’s view on this issue is as follows:

> DIC is not in the university statutes. So, once it is not there, there is no clear-cut methodology in getting that position. So, people [management] use their own discretion.

RDT in his response also explained that:

> The university is still evolving and as a result, the campuses are now corresponding to faculties and the Deans who are appointed for the faculties serve as the Campus Heads.

Currently, the PUCG has one faculty and one Dean per campus with the exception of the main campus where there are two faculties and two Deans. Thus, under the single-faculty campus situation, the Dean becomes the Campus Head by default. The PUCG needs to draw some lessons from the UDS with respect to transiting from a single-faculty campus to a multiply-faculty campus. The view of RDW on this issue is as follows:

> Now, we have a MCS, when we had one Dean per campus it was not complicated, but now we have multiple Deans per campus that has necessitated the introduction of the DIC. But the interesting thing is that the other Deans are not answerable to the DIC. The DIC like the other Deans are of equal status, it is just for convenience that they think that one dean should be coordinating the affairs of the campus (...) So, it is an arrangement of convenience.

We also observed that both MCUs acknowledged the need to appoint senior or principal officers to manage the campuses in future. For instance, RDA indicated that:

> If you look into our statutes, it is stated that every campus in future should have a Vice President so that the President can be at the head office.

Similarly, another RDW also stated that:

> We just say that the campuses should be turned into colleges with just a Provost [as the Head], so that even the local Deans should be responsible to him and only the Provost will now be responsible to the VC, I think that will be the best solution.

The current arrangement at both MCUs does not give the Campus Managers or Heads sufficient authority and power to enable them to manage the campuses effectively and efficiently. This is partly due to the fact that the Campus Heads are not senior or principal officers or members of top management team.
VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper established that despite the differences in the ownership and governance systems of UDS and PUCG, there are no significant differences in their management structures. In practice, both universities have similar compositions of principals and key officers. However, unlike the UDS, PUCG does not have a Director of WPD responsible for effective and efficient management and development of physical resources in the university. Secondly, the management structure of the two MCUs is not entirely different from that of Single Campus Universities (SCUs); it is a general structure used by almost every university in Ghana. The management structure of the two MCUs is challenged by slow decision-making, coordination difficulties, high operational costs, uneven distribution of resources, communication difficulties, ambiguous functions and serious role conflicts. In both universities, Campus Heads are normally appointed from the Deans where they are more than one. Both universities do not appoint senior or principal officers to manage the campuses and as such the Campus Heads do not report directly to the VC or President in most cases. Moreover, the universities have not stated the position of Campus Heads in their respective statutes. Thus, the current arrangement system is based on discretion and convenience. Both universities have acknowledged the need to appoint senior or principal officers to manage the campuses.

To effectively address these challenges and improve the managerial efficiency of the two MCUs, the governing Councils need to implement the following recommendations. First, as is practiced in UDS, PUCG should appoint a Director of WPD to handle and manage all issues relating to physical resources and development in the university. This would ensure effective and efficient planning, management and development of physical resources and infrastructure in the university. Secondly, the Campus Heads in both MCUs should be moved from the lower management level to the top management level to increase their independence and authority (see Fig. 1). To achieve this, the MCUs should appoint senior or principal officers (PVCs or Vice Presidents) as Campus Heads and to report directly to the VC or President. Thirdly, the two MCUs should formalise the position of Campus Heads in their respective statutes. Finally, they should decentralise some reasonable level of autonomy and authority to the Campus Heads to enable them to effectively and efficiently manage and coordinate the daily operations and activities of the campuses.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This article is an extract of a Master of Philosophy thesis submitted to the University of Ghana Business School by the Corresponding Author. As researchers, we declare that we have conflict of interest.

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