PERISCOPING PARTNERSHIP IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: Universities employ partnership to bridge the gap between university education demand and supply. Therefore, this study investigated periscoping partnership in southwestern Nigerian Universities. The population for the study comprised all staff from the 16 public universities (federal and state owned) in south west geo-political zone of Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select the respondents for the study. Questionnaire tagged Periscoping. Partnership in Southwestern Nigerian Universities Questionnaire (PPSNUQ) was used to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was validated with the assistance of experts in items generation. The reliability index of the instrument used was 0.83. The study found that availability of partner agencies was significantly influence the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria and that there was a significant influence of partner agencies participatory strategies adopted and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. The study recommends that public-private partnership need to be more encouraged in the provision of university education and that the government need to adopt strategies to control the activities and operations of private universities in southwestern, Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: persicoping, partnership, partner agencies, participatory strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges in the Nigeria university sub-system received several attentions in form of various reforms within the past three decades. Some of the noticeable reforms are the fostering of partnerships among public, private and non-governmental agencies, liberalization of university and involvement of private and religious bodies in the provision of university education. The partnership trend began in 1999 during the fourth republic. Prior to this time, university education was generally perceived as the prerogative of the state. However, when it was evidently clear that there is disparity between available and the needed resources such as manpower, facilities and finances which impede the governments' ability to provide university education to willing qualified citizens, the government however recognized the need to employ partnership to bridge the gap created by the disparities in the Nigeria university education programmes.

The role of university in nation's development cannot be underestimated. However, the efforts and potentials of universities in developing countries to bridge the gap is frequently thwarted by internal and external challenges bedeviling the system. Internal challenges are challenges from within the institution while external challenges are those from the government and the society generally. Adebakin and Ajadi (2014) found that university education in developing countries is in travail, it is surrounded with issues of various dimensions and magnitude. A number of multifaceted challenges have inhibited the achievement of the goal set by the university. The consumer of university education are now beginning to ask questions, raise doubts and fears, which suggest that university education in Nigeria is at a crossroad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many definitions and ideas by different scholars about what a partnership is. According to the National Research Council (2009) partnership is a term which evokes much sensitivity with its implicit connotations of sharing and trust. Balley and Dolan (2011) on their own define it as an agreement where two or more people or groups work together toward mutual goals. Partnerships can be formal, informal, or even unspoken as long as they include people or groups working together. Whichever form it takes, a partnership must benefit both sides for it to be truly effective.

In the opinion of Mohiddin (1998) partnership is referred to as the highest stage of working relationship between different people brought together by commitment to common objectives, bonded by long experience of working together, and sustained by subscription to common visions. Moreover, certain characteristics distinguish partnership from other relationships, such as co-operation or collaboration, and present partnership as a more superior working relationship. In support of the above assertion, Fowler (2000) informs that 'authentic' partnership is associated with characteristics such as; long-term, shared responsibility, reciprocal obligation, equality, mutuality and balance of power. Researchers (Wanni, 2010; Dochas, 2010; Crawford, 2003) also emphasized core principles of reciprocity, accountability, joint decision making, respect, trust, transparency, sustainability and mutual interests as characteristics that sustained partnership.

In order to enhance the management quality and performance of universities, the World Bank (2008) suggested the need to urgently imbibe and implement the World Bank's 2008 principles for tertiary education improvement, namely: strategic orientation, autonomy and accountability, governance, financing, relevance, research and development and partnerships. Partnership here connotes the process of involving another provider other than the government (private owners) in the provision of university education. Therefore, by private partnership, it means collaborations among the governments and the private sector in the delivery of high quality university education services to the citizenry. Periscoping however means beaming a searchlight holistically beyond the surface or top of an issue or something.

Education partnership to Belfield (2012) can be described as a situation where at least two parties come together for the common good of a school or to enhance student learning. Education partnership involves partners who are interested in or committed to enriching educational experiences for students, families, schools, and the community. Decisions are made collaboratively within the members of the partnership. Although educational partnerships can be

formed between teachers and students, and also those outside the teacher-student relationships which include entire families, professionals, and the broader educational community. Wanni, Hinz, & Day, (2010) define education partnership as a dynamic collaborative process between educational institutions and stake-holders which brings mutual though not necessarily symmetrical benefits to the parties engaged in the partnership. The partners understand each other's cultural and working environment. Education decisions are taken jointly after real negotiations have taken place between the partners. Each partner is open and clear about what they are bringing to the partnership and what their expectations are from it.

Duranberg (2013) posited that education partnership is needed to provide the best education possible for all children. In reality, education partnership is created for a variety of reasons among which are enhancing public relations and academic standard, seeking additional funding, and working toward a particular cause or issue. Some education partnerships are developed within a formal structure, and others are developed based on an unwritten understanding or handshake. Many school districts include partnerships with students' home and community within their mission statements or educational goals. The importance of education partnership led Joyce (1999) to create a Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland in an effort to inform and promote community partnerships to enhance education for students and families.

The rise in global knowledge economy is one of the reasons for town-gown relationship and collaboration between universities and industries. This might be why Belfield (2012) informs that the world-class universities are at the fore-front of strategic partnership. This transforms the role of the research university for the 21st century anchoring it as a vital centre of competence to assist in reducing social menace and drive economic growth. In Nigeria, the vital role of universities in economic and social development has been highlighted by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004). In the interests of revitalizing and democratizing Nigeria higher education, government has engaged partnership in the provision of university education.

Presently in Nigeria, universities are owned by both government and private organisations. However, Salako (2014) concluded that public universities are confronted with several challenges such as human capital, student – teacher ratio, funding, teaching facilities, space to cope with increasing population of potential students and the cost of university education. In support of this, Ajadi (2014) concluded that school plant facilities such as lectures rooms, offices, laboratories, library, studios, workshops, students' hostels, recreation centers and so on are grossly inadequate in Nigerian Universities and under funding has led to neglect of its provision. In addition, Adeyemi (2007) concluded that the challenge of under-funding still persist in Nigerian educational institutions right from the primary school level to the university.

Presently all over, it seems that the attainment of sustainable development requires the genuine participation of the public; the organized private sectors; individuals; religious bodies and civil society in the provision of university education. World Bank Working Paper (2008) suggested that the successful implementation of university education is largely dependent upon quality of

the on-going interplay among government and international and external stakeholders such as: governments, partners, ministry and institutions. The government should concentrate on consultations, economic growth, poverty reduction, legislation, planning, accountability, financial regulations, development and research, scholarships, collaborations and so on while development partners are to be concerned with recognition, expansion, special programmes, donations, ICT, equipment, instruction and leadership.

It is now becoming more evident that the private sector is becoming an essential partner in providing university education. A large number and variety of public and private partnership initiatives are being carried out in many different countries. Over the past few years, the number of UNESCO's partners from the private sector has increased to several hundred, ranging from multi-national companies to small and medium sized enterprises, philanthropic trusts and foundations, economic and business associations and individuals (Joseph, 2014).

In Nigeria, several reasons were raised in favour of partner agencies partnership in the delivering of services. These arguments include gross inefficiency in the delivery of services in various sectors. According to Ubogu (2011) partner agencies, development partners and other donor agencies are veritable sources of funding university education in Nigeria. There are multitudes of partners that are willing to invest in the development of universities by participation, management and funding within and outside the shores of Nigeria. The range of collaborative activities of these development partners cut across purely philanthropic, academic, research and development-based initiatives to full-fledged venture capital based economic activities. However, the missing gap is the capability of the university managers to fully explore and utilize this seemingly veritable inexhaustible source of resources.

The justification for partnership is also to be explained by the fact that it represents a mix of skills, attitudes and resources (including experiential resources) from everywhere, that if appropriately applied could supplement the effort of government, non-governmental and community–based organisations, towards the realization of university education goals (Brent and Guibert, 2006). Again, the private sector operations are more often than not, infused with an overriding concern for standards, which invariably forces the sector to constantly evaluate and implement new ideas, which are hard to come by in the public sector which tends to be reluctant to shift paradigms and to consider new solutions.

The private sector seems to be an under-utilized resource for addressing the challenges in education and there appears to be considerable scope for win-win situations. Public-Private Partnerships are a promising way of combining the financial resources and the expertise of both parties. Cooperation with the private sector will only succeed if firms are willing to cooperate with the public sector on development issues. This raises the questions why firms should take any interest in strategic alliances in the first place. Partner agencies partnership can complement and enhance the role of the government in the provision of education. The task that each player is expected to provide includes financial provision, pedagogical development, human resources development, service delivery, infrastructure, facilities management, among others. For these

reasons, it is critical to assess the impact and extent of partnership in university education in Nigeria. The issue of quality university education in Nigeria has been highlighted in the literature (Ajadi, 2013), and efforts to improving it are particularly challenging in light of fund, facilities and the poor working conditions of lecturers, militating also against their recruitment and retention for quality university education. The demand for employable graduates has risen dramatically as a direct result of increase in the role of human capital for economic development

Broomfield (2014) conducted a study on University-community global partnership. The study found that university education is more available and accessible where the communities are involved in its provision. Stephen (2006) suggested that for partnership in university education to be successful, it must be entered into voluntarily, partners must perceive themselves to be equal in power and accountability, have equal access to and openly share information and knowledge, be equally valuable, look for opportunities to discover when they are wrong and seek out and support success for others. Chapman (2008) in a study concluded that management of university when there is partnership was more successful because all the partners have been involved in the designing and planning from the onset. Their involvement was seen as a vehicle for successful university partnership, it was found that partnership did not only have influence on university management, they also have influence on the curriculum and student development positively. This is perhaps because the partnership is driven by the society's high need for high-quality, well-educated graduates who are extremely in high demand.

However Georgina and Roseline (2005) on their own found that partnership has no influence in university management because, the management of university is separated from ownership. The partners are owners who employ the services of manager to manage the institution for a purpose. In addition, Janny and Landern (2014) concluded that there is no significance influence of partnership on university management in developing countries because of the absence of partnership manager who is responsible for relationship management and communication, business development responsibilities, quality responsibilities, complaint and termination of partnership.

Partnership in university education has been considered worthwhile. This might be why Steets and Thomse (2009) informs that partnership in university education pave way for university to develop new funding streams, re-thinking of the role of research in the university, assist the university to be strategic in its role delivery. In addition, Belfield (2012) posited that partnership in university education keeps the system steady, gives the university autonomy to operate effectively, encourage more partnership and assist the university to strive for excellence. In the view of Newlands (2015), it was pointed out that every business partnership is confronted with management styles, personal habits financial issues and equity, setting boundaries, commitment levels and disparities in skills and roles. However, Sharon and Esther (2012) pointed out that the development of an appropriate mode of collaboration remains a challenge for successful partnership in university education.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, sustaining university education standard has been a subject of concern in recent research activities. It is well known fact that the university education sub-system is faced with series of challenges which include inadequate funds and facilities, poor state of the school plant, limited spaces to cope proportionately with the increasing population of students, cost of university education and so on.

In other to address these problems, government advocated and encouraged partnership with private, religious and international agencies with different strategies so as to pool resources necessary together to ensure quality university education. This was because it has been recognized that the solution to these problems cannot be resolved where government is solely responsible for the provision of essential university educational resources that will translate to quality university education. To this end, there have been mix reactions as regards the effectiveness of partnership to resolving the associated problems. Hence, the study examined the periscoping partnership in Nigerian University system.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

H_{o1}: Availability of partner agencies will not significantly influence the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

 H_{o2} : There is no significant influence of partner agencies participatory strategies and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria

Ho₃. There is no significant influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The population for this study comprised of all the staff (academic and non-academic) from all the 16 public universities (University of Lagos, Lagos State University, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Olabisi Onabanjo State University, Ago-Iwoye, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, The University of Ibadan, The Technical University, Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomoso, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State University, Osogbo, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, University of Medical Science, Ondo, University of Science and Technology, Okiti-Pupa, Federal University Oye-Ekiti and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti) in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University been the states with the first generation universities in the southwest geo-political zone. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select one university each from the three states selected. Simple random technique was used to select faculties and 300 respondents which cut across all staff at the selected faculties.

Three instruments were used to collect data from different categories of respondents. Academic Staff Partnership Benefit Assessment Questionnaire (ASPBAQ) was used to collect data from the academic staff. Non-Academic Staff Partnership Benefit Assessment Questionnaire (NASPBAQ) was used to collect data from the non-academic staff and the Checklist on Partnership Projects/Programmes (CPP) was used to collect data on all various projects and programmes executed through all various forms of partnership available in all the universities used in the study. The checklist was administered in Planning, Students Affairs, Bursary and other related units as established by the universities visited. The validity of the instruments were determined by given the instruments to experts in educational management and test measurement, based on their comments, recommendations and suggestions. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through test-retest. The reliability co-efficient of 0.85 and 0.76 was yielded respectively for the instruments. The reliability co-efficient were considered high enough for the reliability. Chi-Square was used to test the three hypotheses raised at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hol: Availability of partner agencies will not significantly influence the development and

management of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

Table 1: Chi-Square analys	s showing	availability	of	partner	agencies	and	development an	nd
management of unive	sities							

Statement	Ν	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	X^2
Availability of	272	24.92	3.70	12.00	30.00	221.81ª
Partner Agencies						
Development and	272	14.93	2.58	7.00	24.00	158.59 ^b
Management of						
Nigerian Universities						

From Table 1, the results showed that there is an appreciable difference in the mean value of availability of partner agencies (\bar{x} =24.92) and the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria (\bar{x} =14.93). It was revealed that the mean value of availability of partner agencies is greater than that of the development and management of universities (\bar{x} =24.92 >14.93). Also, the value of the standard deviation of availability of partner agencies is greater than that of the development of universities (SD =3.70 > 2.58). Furthermore, the Chi-square analysis revealed that availability of partner agencies (221.81^a) was significantly influence the development and management (158.59^b) of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. It can therefore be concluded that availability of partner agencies had a significant influence on the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. This was in line with the findings of Broomfield (2014) who found that university education was more available and accessible where communities are involved in its provision. It was also in line with the findings of Chapman (2008) who concluded that university management was more successful where there was partnership because all the partners were involved in the designing and planning at the onset. However, it was not in line with the findings of Georgina and Roseline (2005) who found that partnership had no influence on university management. This was anchored on the fact that management of the university was separated from the ownership.

- H₀₂: There is no significant influence of partner agencies participatory strategies and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria
- Table 2: Chi-Square Showing influence of Partner agencies participatory strategies and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria

Statement			Ν	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	X^2
Partner Participatory		Agencies Strategies	272	23.70	3.35	12.00	32.00	179.81ª
Adopted Development Management Universities	of		272	14.93	2.58	7.00	24.00	158.59 ^b

According to the result obtained from Table 2, it was observed that there was a huge difference in the mean value of partner agencies participatory strategies adopted ($\bar{x} = 23.70$) and the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria ($\bar{x} = 14.93$). However, the value of the standard deviation of partner agencies participatory strategies adopted was greater than the standard deviation of development and management of universities (SD = 3.35 > 2.58). Furthermore, the Chi-square analysis showed that partner agencies participatory strategies adopted (179.81^a) had significant influence on the development and management (158.59^b) of universities in southwestern Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there was significant influence of partner agencies participatory strategies adopted and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. This was in line with the findings of Steets and Thomse (2009) who concluded that partnership in the university pave way for the development of new funding streams, rethinking of the role of research and assist to be strategic in role delivery. Ho₃. There is no significant influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-Square analysis showing influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities

Statement	N	Mean	SD	Minimu	Maximum	X^2
				m		
Government	272	10.03	2.36	4.00	23.00	247.62 b
Partner Agencies	272	24.92	3.70	12.00	30.00	221.81 a

Table 3 shows the summary of results on the significant influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. It was observed that the mean value of Government was less than that of partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria ($\bar{x} = 10.03 < 24.92$) as well as the value of the standard deviation (SD= 2.36 < 3.70). Furthermore, the Chi-square analysis indicated that Government (247.62^{b}) had no significant influence on partner agencies in the development and management (221.81^{a}) of universities in southwestern Nigeria. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there was no significant influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. This might be because government in Nigeria did not perform any other obligation for the partner agencies than granting approval for its establishment. In addition, there was no formal collaboration between the government and partner agencies. This was in line with the findings of Sharon and Esther (2012) who found that the development of an appropriate mode of collaboration remains a challenge for successful partnership in university education.

CONCLUSION

The paper investigated periscoping partnership in southwestern Nigerian Universities. It also found out the influence of availability of partner agencies on the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. The study also found out the influence of partner agencies participatory strategies on the management of universities in southwestern Nigeria and in addition, found out the influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria. The findings showed that there availability of partner agencies had a significant influence on the development and management of universities and that partner agencies participatory strategies in southwestern Nigeria. However, the study found that, there was no significant influence of government on partner agencies in the development and management of universities in southwestern Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

The University supervisory agency and the government should provide enabling environment to attract public-private partnership in the provision of university education in southwest Nigeria.

The partner agencies should adopt strategies that will guarantee smooth operation and management of private universities in southwestern Nigeria.

Government should look for ways of encouraging private individuals or religious bodies to establish private universities in southwestern Nigeria. This could be by providing tax relief and land at subsidized rate within the study area.

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