Challenges and Strategies in the Implementation of Civic Entrepreneurship in the Governance of the University of Zambia

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*Abstract-*This paper is an extract from the master's study which was investigating the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of public universities with a focus on the University of Zambia. Therefore, this paper focuses on exploring the challenges encountered in the implementation process of civic entrepreneurship and suggests strategies that could address such challenges. The study followed a qualitative case study design. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 56 respondents who were sampled using snowball and convenient sampling. Document analysis was equally employed in the collection of data. Data analysis was done on the basis of themes that emerged from the study. The findings of this study indicated that lack of financial resources and strong financial framework for funding public universities was a major challenge in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the university governance system. The study further indicated that there was a lot of bureaucracy in the governance of the University of Zambia. The study therefore recommends that there was need to re-engineer the governance system at the University of Zambia. The university management should devise and adopt less bureaucratic systems of governing the university. The government is implored to devise a financial framework for funding public universities in order to enhance effective delivery of education services and good governance of public universities in Zambia.

Keywords: Civic entrepreneurship, Governance system, public universities

I. INTRODUCTION

The advent of globalization and neo-liberalism in the 21st Century has profoundly transformed the nature, purpose and values of higher education as well as the global knowledge economy. These transformations have imposed increasingly dynamic demands and changes, not only on the governance and funding of higher education institutions, but also in the logic guiding academic and non-academic activities (Carlos and Daniel, 2002).The neo-liberalization ideology which favors free market economics and advocates for privatization, marketization and performance as well as the shift of the cost of higher education from the state to the individual has a major effect on the traditional roles of universities and their management practices (Sifuna 2014, Byaruhanga 2002). Neoliberal principles, according to Carlo and Daniel (2002) have become hegemonic in many parts of the world and as a result, many countries have undergone changes in financial arrangements in which accountability mechanisms have compelled universities to reconsider their social missions, academic priorities and organizational structures.

In countering the dynamic transformations occasioned by globalization and neo-liberalism, the notion of civic entrepreneurship has risen to prominence much to the benefit of institutions across and beyond the higher education landscape. As epitomized by Edwards et al (2002) whose views are equally supported by Patricia and Christine (2008) the public sector is increasingly utilizing the concepts of civic entrepreneurship given the unpredictability and complexity surrounding the sector. As a result of the effects of neoliberalism on the education system, universities around the world have adopted different governance strategies. Carlos and Daniel (2002) contend that universities have undergone restructuring involving serious changes in the governance. This is why, Leadbeater and Goss (1998: 18) advance that, "civic entrepreneurs are at work throughout the public sector, at all levels of many kinds of organizations, large and small, local and national."

The productivity of civic entrepreneurship on whichever landscape it is deployed, operationalized and enacted lies in its composition as well as its orientation to improving an organization's performance in service delivery to the public. Thus, according to Leadbeater and Goss (1998:18), it constitutes three distinctive elements which distinguish it from any related forms of entrepreneurship. These elements are civic innovations, collaborative leadership and political leadership. Arising from this view, Lead beater and Goss (1998) look upon Civic entrepreneurship as the renegotiation of the mandate and sense of purpose of a public organization, which allows it to find new ways of combining resources and people, both public and private, to deliver better social outcomes, higher social value and more social capital". The indispensability of civic entrepreneurship then, given its intricacies and in light of the present study is to be conceived of as a governance strategy involving application of a set of civic innovations, collaborative leadership and political leadership in public institution management to improve performance in service delivery. Therefore this paper seeks to discuss the challenges and strategies in the implementation of

civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia

The Problem and Objectives Underpinning the Research Paper

While elements of civic entrepreneurship are evident in the governance of Zambia's flagship university, University of Zambia also known as "UNZA", the University continues to face challenges in the delivery of its mandate as evidenced by the University of Zambia Mid-Term Review Plan of the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. The situation, if left unchecked, might result into staff brain drain, loss of international disposition, and a drop in enrolment levels of the students. Further, the performance and general governance of the university through the University of Zambia Strategic Plan 2013-2017 and UNZA Strategic Plan 2018-2022 acknowledge the threat by emerging private universities whose new products and projects have advanced the commodification of higher education. Therefore, the mismatch existing between the implementation of civic entrepreneurship agenda as manifested in the university strategic plans and the achievements as well as the performance of the university in service delivery has prompted the need to investigate the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia.

The research was anchored on the following two main research objectives:

i. Identify challenges encountered in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia.
ii. Suggest alternative strategies in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the   governance of the University of Zambia.

Key Definitions on Civic Entrepreneurship

As a distinct form of entrepreneurship, civic entrepreneurship has elements manifested and practiced in public institutions. Etzkowitz(2013) conceptualizes civic entrepreneurship as, "the free contribution of time and effort to a project for the greater good of society without expectation of financial benefit."Leadbeater and Goss (1998) also have a slight distinctive conception of the term. They contend that civic entrepreneurship is, "the renegotiation of the mandate and sense of purpose of a public organization, which allows it to find new ways of combining resources and people, both public and private, to deliver better social outcomes, higher social value and more social capital."Leadbeater and Goss(1998) further notes that civic entrepreneurship is a concept that constitutes diverse activities or elements. These elements are civic innovations, collaborative leadership and political leadership. Therefore, civic entrepreneurship in this paper is best described as *the application of a collection or set of civic innovations, collaborative leadership and political leadership in public institution management to improve their performance in the delivery of public services.*

Goals and nature of Civic Entrepreneurship

The ultimate goal of civic entrepreneurship is to improve the delivery of services in public institutions. It aims at fulfilling public interest rather than to pursue profit with regard to provision of public services. It is about provision of services to the public in an efficient and effective manner. Leadbeater and Goss, (1998) argue that civic entrepreneurship is about creating public consensus about how to re-organize resources, often public and private, to deliver better social outcomes, higher social value and more social capital. As advanced by Etzkowitz(2013) civic entrepreneurship is both for oneself and other social groups, and both for social impact/ value and also for individual and community improvement. It focuses on finding a better way of delivering public services through harnessing the skills of various individuals within and outside the organization. For this reason, civic entrepreneurship encourages invention of new ideas that would place an institution in a position that would enable it to serve the people better. Civic entrepreneurship is collaborative and service-oriented in nature; it is not a heroic and individualistic activity. Civic entrepreneurship is not an application of private sector management techniques to public sector organizations. It is simultaneously a political and a managerial activity. It is a political activity in the sense that it takes place in public institutions where political leadership (government) is the major stakeholder. Leadbeater and Goss, (1998) asserts that for civic entrepreneurs to be successful, they need to renegotiate with politicians, regulators, users and staff an institution's mandate and sense of purpose. It means winning support from politicians, staff and users for the risks that have to be taken in pursuit of a more effective approach, building a consensus around a new strategy.

II. SELECTED LITERATURE ON THE ELEMENTS OF CIVIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Civic Innovations in the Governance of Public Universities

Brennan et al (2014) look at innovations in higher education with the intent to generate information that would give a better understanding of new developments affecting higher education. The study explores how innovations can support higher education in times of change. Among other overarching questions the research addresses is; what are the core challenges higher education is facing and driving innovation. The findings of the research show some major challenges higher education is facing. Pressures from globalization, the changing supply and demand for higher education and changes in higher education funding are the challenges the research highlights. Brenan et al (2014) strongly argue that these challenges determine the development and implementation of various innovative practices in higher education. Though this research shows that innovations are employed in higher education, it does not shed light on how innovative practices are implemented and help higher education to meet the changing needs of the society. Another significant revelation of this study is the argument

that more autonomous higher education institutions which have control over financial resources and distribution of these resources develop bottom-up practices while less autonomous higher education institutions tend to have a more top-down, state driven approach innovation which might timescale for implementation longer.

The article by Moore and Hartley (2008) explores innovations in governance which they refer to as a special class of innovations in the public sector. In their argument Moore and Hartley contend that these innovations in the public sector are distinctive from the innovations in products, services, and production processes. They involve networks of organizations as well as the transformation of social production system. Furthermore, these innovations also focus on the ways in which productive activity is financed, processes used and standards employed to weigh performance and social production system. Generally, Moore and Hartley (2008) attempted to classify and differentiate the innovations that are undertaken in the public sector from any form of innovations in other sectors. The article acknowledges the ability of innovations to bring about transformation in the public sector. But Moore and Hartley looked at innovations in a broad public sector and not necessarily innovations in specific public institutions. Thus, this research is distinctive from Moore and Hartleys' study because it seeks to investigate innovations in public universities which forms an integral part of the wide public sector.

Collaborative Leadership in the Governance of Public Universities

The article by Vigoda(2002) sought to establish a theoretically and empirically grounded criticism of the present state of new managerialism which overshadows the significance of citizen action and participation by promoting the idea of responsiveness. The article presented and highlighted some developments towards enhancing collaboration and partnership among governance and public administration agencies, citizens, and other social players such as the media, academia, and the private and third sectors. According to Vigoda collaboration constitutes negotiation, participation, cooperation, free and unlimited flow of information. It also involves innovation, agreements based on compromises and mutual understanding, as well as a more equitable distribution and redistribution of power and resources. Vigoda in his article laments that while greater collaboration is not a new idea in public administration such as public university administration, it has never fulfilled its auspicious potential, partly due to informal competition with businesslike strategies. He further argues that collaborative approach calls for widespread responsibilities and involvement of the members of the public which could probably take a form of individual initiatives that look for greater participation in administrative decisions and actions. Vigoda clearly shows the need for collaborations in public administration even though he concentrates much on the general public administration. He has highlighted what constitutes

collaborations, but whether these ingredients are implemented or not is not addressed in the study.

Clark (2001) in his article notes that in order for enterprising universities to enhance their achievements, they have to take a different dimension from highly personal leadership to highly collective or group-based leadership. Thus, a university transformed in this way takes an inclusive approach to management of the university affairs. Clark further states that personalized forms of leadership does not endure in universities and cannot be a long-lasting feature in entrepreneurial universities. The article reveals that collegiality or collaborations looks to the future and becomes biased towards change to the extent that would ensure that faculties are involved in institutional transformation. Therefore, collegiality or shared responsibility promotes a collective sense. Clark focuses on university transformation and has emphasized the need for collective efforts in the university which he refers to as collegiality. Nevertheless, the researcher has not discussed collegiality in practical sense, perhaps giving an insight on how collegiality is handled within and outside the university.

*Political Leadership in the Governance of Public Universities*

Sifuna (1998) conducted a study on the governance of Kenyan public universities with much focus on investigating issues in public university governance that contributed to the rapid expansion of university education and its impact on the quality of education as well as the effect of government involvement in the management of universities. One of the critical issues the study focusses on is the university autonomy and academic freedom. Sifuna posits that universities' autonomy and academic freedom hinges on the conditions prevailing in the political system and acknowledges that universities not entirely independent from government control. He further contends that the government is involved in the management of the university affairs. For example, he states that government appoints and nominates key university administrators and members of university councils, government involvement is highlighted by directives on the number of students to be admitted to universities, ordering closures, the determination of terms and conditions of service for university staff and in some cases the censoring of academic staff members research, teaching and travel agendas by requiring them to obtain official research and travel authority. This study is significant as it shows that political leadership which manifests itself broadly as government in the article influences the governance of public universities and gives an insight on the effects of politicizing universities. However, it does not spell out the specific roles of the government in governance of public universities and the extent such roles are implemented have not been explored.

A study by Knott and Payne (2004), focused on establishing whether the state governance structure of boards of higher education affect the way university managers allocate resources, develop sources of revenues, promote research and

undergraduate education. The research classified higher education structures and shows the differences in these structures and how they affect the university management and performance. In this research Knott and Payne argue that elected political leaders have different preferences about agency's governance structures and management. But their research does not explicitly state the specific preferences of political leaders. It would be insightful if the researchers had revealed some of such preferences. Besides, the study does not show the extent to which political leaders' preferences influence the governance and performance of universities. Furthermore, the researchers state that political actors shape the governance of higher education through the political process. As much as this suggests that political leaders play a role in the governance of higher education, the research does not clearly state what their roles are and how they are implemented.

III. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

This research paper employed a case study research design. As a matter of data collection instruments, the interview schedule and document analysis were used to collect qualitative data. In data analysis, data was analyzed based on the basis of themes that emerged in the study. The study consisted 56 participants who were sampled using both convenient sampling and snowball sampling. These participants were distributed as1 Vice-Chancellor, 1 Registrar, 1 Bursar, 1 Librarian, 13 Deans of schools, 13 H.O.Ds of largest departments in Schools, 20 Lecturers, 1 UNZA Quality Assurance Director, 3 UNZASU leader and 2 Key Informants from the Ministry of Higher Education. The sample break down is shown and categorized on the graph in the pie chart below:

Sample Breakdown
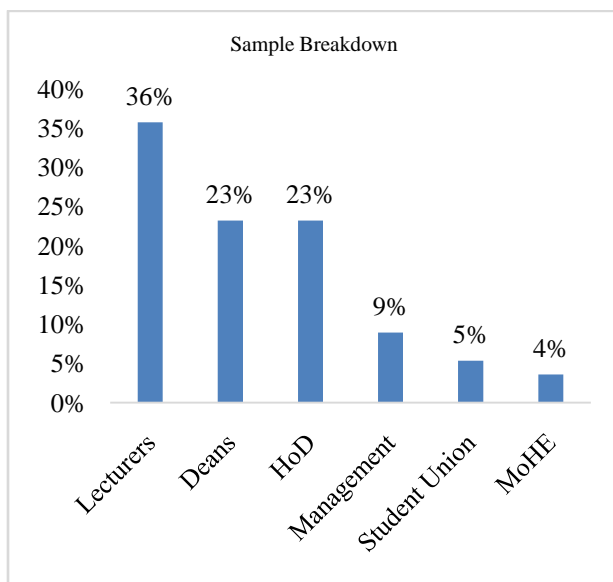
The pie chart indicates that the majority of respondents were lecturers represented by 36 percent, the deans were presented by 23 percent, and the Heads of Departments (HoDs) were represented by another 23 percent. Management which

consisted of Vice chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, and Quality Assurance Director were all represented by nine (09) percent. Student union leaders were represented by five percent (05).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges

The first objective of this study sought to ascertain the challenges the University of Zambia faces in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in its governance. While it is obvious that the political leadership should be involved in the governance of any public institution, the extent to which they are involved need to be scrutinized. Through the findings of this study it was discovered that the university faces strong interference in its governance. One respondent pointed out that:

> *There is a strong feeling among the university community that we are not allowing the governance systems put in place to run the institution. For example, The university council carried out a study to reevaluate the accommodation rates in public institutions. The council resolved for an upward adjustment of accommodation rates, however, the ministry opposed.*

It was noted by respondents that the University of Zambia is not autonomous in its governance. This finding is consistent with the finding of Sifuna (1998) who argued that universities' autonomy and academic freedom hinges on the conditions prevailing in the political system and acknowledges that universities are not entirely independent from government control. The same challenge is echoed in the University of Zambia Strategic Plan of 2018-2022. The university ought to operate without any form of interference from the government. Too much interference of the government with the governance of the university would frustrate the systems of the university and consequently stifle the implementation of the university programs.

Universities are made up of different units which coordinate in carrying out day-today activities of the institution. Units such as departments play a major role in the governance of the university. They ought to be efficient and effective in carrying out their mandate. However, the findings of this study suggest that some departments are inefficient and as a result of their inefficiency the information flow to the stakeholders within and outside the university is delayed which subsequently affect the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the university governance systems. Departments are the key units that anchor the university and they play an important role in ensuring the smooth running of the institution. Therefore, their inefficiency would hinder the progress and productivity of the university. There is need for the university management to devise a monitoring mechanism which would compel departments to work hard and drive the vision of the university efficiently and effectively.

In the globalized society, innovations undoubtedly are cornerstone of any institution be it public or private institution. The survival of any organization depends on how much they innovate. This is because the needs of the people are changing day by day, hence the need to find new ways of doing things. However, in this research it was noted by some respondents that the biggest challenge the university was facing was the lack of innovations. The university lacks tangible innovations to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services. This was testified by one respondent who said:

> The biggest challenge is "everybody knows something. Leadership does not allow for new innovations from people who are deemed lower than them academically. Generally the way of thinking of staffs is the main challenge the university faces.

Lack of innovations in the university was attributed to the top leadership not taking up the innovative ideas of members of staff. This propensity by leaders discourages junior staff from being innovative in their work. It kills the morale and commitment of workers to achieving the goals of the university. The junior officers might lose interest in taking part in the implementation of programs for which they were not part on the basis that their view or ideas are not given due attention. Lack of innovations would make the university less competitive and productive. It might result in poor delivery of services and reduction in the clients consuming the services provided by the university. In the contemporary world, it is either an organization 'innovates or it perishes' hence, it is a must for an organization that desire to be counted in society to innovate and always improve in performance.

The governance structures of the University of Zambia are underpinned by bureaucratic core values and principles, hence there is rampant red-tapism in the operation of the university. Therefore, in this study bureaucracy was pointed out by the respondents interviewed as one of the major challenges the university faces. It was clearly stated that things do not happen as quickly as possible and this frustrates the operations of the University. Implementation of civic entrepreneurship is affected by bureaucracy. The governance structures of the university are not flexible to do things quickly, especially in this competitive and busy world where people are demanding a lot from institutions. For this reason, the researcher argues that if the UNZA is to attract more students both local and international ones, they need to re-engineer the governance systems and adopt systems that would increase efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. There is need for the university to shift from the traditional way of running a university and adopt modern governance systems which are less bureaucratic.

Lack of finance to implement civic entrepreneurship was cited by almost all the respondents who participated in the study as the major challenge. One of the respondent revealed and lamented that:

> No, the university has been facing financial challenges. Funding is not adequate to ensure that university runs in the best way.

The research findings showed that the university's major challenge is lack of adequate funding to ensure that the university runs in the best way. This is also pointed out in the university Strategic Plan of 2018-2022 as a major hindrance to the institution effective delivery of education services to the public. The findings of Mulenga (2003) also revealed that UNZA experiences inadequate funding from the government, shortage of teaching staff and accommodation for both members of staff and students. This perennial challenge hampers on the performance of the university and can lead to staff brain drain and many other related issues. For the university to function properly and address its challenges, it requires enough funding. Therefore, there is need to address this matter as soon as possible in order to enhance good governance of the university and subsequently ensure its improved productivity. UNZA should overcome financial dependency syndrome on government and begin to explore various avenues from which an institution can generate income.

Information barrier between the university and the beneficiaries of the services provided by the university was revealed as a challenge faced in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship. Students have limited access to information because some channels of communication the university uses students are not there, for instance the use of emails. This finding is similar to the finding of Mulenga (2003) who pointed out weaknesses of the university management. His study alleged that there was a lacuna in the institution's internal and external communication which has consequently led to the mistrust of the university management by the workers.

Strategies

The second objective of the study was to suggest alternative strategies in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia. In the quest to achieve this objective, respondents were asked to suggest alternative strategies that could be put in place to counteract the challenges stifling the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia. The findings showed that the institution faces challenges with finances. In order to counteract this challenge, the study established that there was need for the government to deliberately put in place a financial framework for funding public universities in Zambia. It is high time the government disengaged itself from funding universities haphazardly, avoiding waiting for worst times for funds to be released. A proper funding plan should be devised. In the same vein, it was noted that decentralization through university colleges should be implemented to allow colleges to generate money and grant them financial autonomy. This will compel schools that do not generate any revenue for the university to become

more innovative. Besides government devising financial framework, there is need for the university to have a well-outlined financial framework which would address issues of salaries for the workers, teaching and learning materials.

It was noted in the findings that the university should become more inclusive and allow various stakeholders within and outside the institution to participate in decision making and general governance processes. Some respondents felt that some stakeholders such as students and lecturers were not consulted on the number of issues bordering on the best ways of running the institution. For example, the change from semester system to term system and now back to semester system was not done based on consultations. (*One respondent said in an interview*). Mulenga (2003) also established similar finding through his study that students recommended that the management should involve all stakeholders or interest groups in the planning of various projects of the University. The UNZA Mid-Term Review of Strategic Plan of 2013-2017 revealed a similar finding to do with parents not being consulted on the university abrupt closures. This makes one to wonder if the university hold general meetings with parents to share its challenges and discuss how best the institution can be governed.

The study also revealed that there is need to re-engineer the governance processes of the university to adapt to the demands of the late modern society. This entails the revision of the governance systems at the university to suit the demands of the competitive global society. It was also suggested that all the administrators should be exposed to management workshops were they can upgrade their management skills.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of civic entrepreneurship in the governance of the University of Zambia, specifically exploring the challenges and strategies. The study established that lack of funding, government interference, information barrier and bureaucracy are the major challenges the University of Zambia encountered in the implementation of civic entrepreneurship. It was also noted in the findings that some departments are inefficient. These constraints have the potential to negatively affect, not only the implementation of C.E, but also the general governance of the university. These challenges would stifle the development of the university because they are quite detrimental, especially in the globalized society where these challenges are less expected to be an integral part of public institutions and competition is predominant. Lastly, the findings of this study reveals that there is need to devise a financial framework for funding public universities in the country in order for the institutions of learning to run to the expectations of the public. It was also pointed out that the University of Zambia should undergo a paradigm shift and re-engineer the governance systems to

adapt to the modern society. It is worthy stating here that the roadmap for funding public institutions is cardinal to ensure sustainable and productive functioning of the institutions. This is because it might guarantee availability of financial resources in the university from the government. In the context of the suggested strategies above, it would be prudent to argue that the funding of UNZA is poor and unsustainable. The university is funded occasionally and haphazardly which hinders its productivity and good governance.

Recommendations

i.   This research paper highly recommends that the government should devise a deliberate financial framework for funding public universities in the country so that funds could be made available in good time and avoid the disbursement of funds on an ad hoc basis. This could propel effective delivery of services universities are mandated to provide and enhance good governance of universities.

ii.   It was noted in the findings that the university needs to be more inclusive in approach to decision making. Hence, this study recommends that the University of Zambia should begin to hold annual consultative meetings with the parents of students and members of staff to reflect on the successes and challenges encountered during the course of every academic year and discuss the future and agree priorities on how best the university can be managed to meet the rapidly changing demands of the society. This will create consensus and sense of commitment among the parents and the university.

iii. The University of Zambia should conduct an overhaul of its governance systems and adopt less bureaucratic systems which could enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services to the public. The University of Zambia should devise a monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to control and evaluate the performance of all schools and departments in every academic year. This will enhance the productivity of the university and its generic good governance.

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