

Promoting Partnership between Universities and Industries in Business Education Programme

Paul Binaebi Igbongidi, Ph.D

Department of Vocational and Technology Education Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the collaboration between academic institutions and corporate sectors in advancing business education programs. The researcher came to the conclusion that universities and businesses should collaborate in areas like curriculum development, student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) improvement of practical training, knowledge transfer, financial support for universities' development projects, scholarships, and career guidance initiatives among others to improve graduate skills and ensure a seamless transition between the academic and business environments. Regarding collaboration, advantages, methods for enhancing partnership, and obstacles facing universities and companies in promoting business education programs, there was no discernible difference in the mean evaluations of respondents from industries and universities. The research fervently advocated, among other things, that the government create and put into effect strong laws to promote collaborations between academia and industry. Universities must demonstrate a strong commitment to investing time and money in knowledge transfer to industries, and the government should provide universities with enough funding for Research and Development to forge a strong connection with industries. The Association of Business Education of Nigeria (ABEN) should organize seminars, workshops, and conferences for businesses and business educators on the advantages of partnership.

Keywords: Partnership, universities, industries, Business Education, Sustainable Development.

INTRODUCTION

Governments all across the globe have promoted collaboration between universities and businesses. This idea has gained popularity recently and is now considered crucial to promoting economic growth. Policymakers want to inspire universities to embrace an entrepreneurial attitude and engage with the private sector of the economy more frequently on all continents. These relationships are particularly crucial in Nigeria, where the majority of colleges were established with the aim of attaining one or more of the following goals:

- Contribute to the development of the country by offering highly relevant workforce training.
- Establishing the proper values is essential for the survival of both society and the individual.
- Enhance people's capacity for understanding and appreciating their immediate and wider environments (NPE, 2004).

One of the goals of the National Policy on Education is to help people acquire the skills, abilities, and competences they need to live and contribute to the advancement of society on a physical and intellectual level (2004). One way to react to this need for relevance is to promote deeper partnerships between academic institutions and the corporate world. The predicted advantages of higher education for Nigeria's social and economic development are incalculable. Universities are primarily driven to develop new information and to educate, but commercial firms are mostly driven to amass valuable knowledge that may be used to achieve a competitive advantage. One of the degrees offered by universities in Nigeria is in business education.

Business education is a specialized field of vocational education that gives students the information and skills they need to be successful in the workplace as qualified instructors and office workers. Universities in Nigeria provide the following options to the business education curriculum: secretarial/office, accounting, marketing/distributive, entrepreneurship, and computing. Its primary objective is the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for successful employment in their fields of competence. According to Orifa (2004), business education programs are the sort of academic courses that put a priority on knowledge and skills that aid students in developing physically and mentally before preparing them for independence.

Partnerships between the public and private sectors are known as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and are agreements that allow the private sector to participate in the design, development, ownership, and/or administration of public buildings and services. Resources from the public and private sectors are pooled in this type of partnership, and responsibilities are distributed to ensure that the partners' efforts are complementary (Egbewole, 2011). According to Okoye and Okwelle (2013), the term "public-private partnership" (PPP) is a general term for the alliances formed between the public and private sectors, frequently with the goal of utilizing private sector resources and/or expertise to aid in the provision and delivery of public sector assets and services. According to Okoye & Okwelle, the public-private partnership (PPP) in technical and vocational education recognises the existence of other possibilities for providing educational facilities and services besides public finance and public delivery.

University and Industry Partnership (UIP), according to Rossi (2010), is a broad range of interaction or communication between universities and businesses that links diverse activities for the exchange of knowledge and technology. In order to commercialize university discoveries and innovations, start-up businesses are formed. This also includes the presentation of joint research conducted by academic and industrial institutions, contract research, academic consulting, graduate school cooperation, higher education for business personnel, and researcher exchanges between universities and industries.

Aina and Akintunde (2013) claim that a connection described as a public-private partnership in education involves the free pooling of public (government) and private resources together primarily for educational goals (PPPE). They made the argument that since the government cannot solely bear the cost of functional education in Nigeria, the private sector needs to play a more active role. The effectiveness of PPPE depends on the cooperation of both people and non-governmental groups. The government bears the risk alone since it is the primary or the only active participant in the industry. There are a number of risks connected to education that might cause wastes in the nation's educational system. Engaging other market participants will lessen the risks and perhaps even eliminate them.

A business and institution relationship is an affiliation between academic institutions and commercial organizations, according to Wikipedia (2012). When two or more parties concur to define goals and build a plan to reach those goals, it is developed. A business-institution partnership offers programs like staff in-service training, facility use, student-led projects, software development, or necessary research. With the use of the knowledge and innovative ideas of the personnel of participating enterprises, they also assist universities in improving their academic performance and enhancing the educational experience.

TYPES OF UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRIES PARTNERSHIP IN PROMOTING QUALITY BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Seppo and Liles (2011) identified four categories of interactions between academic institutions and business:

- (a) Research Support: This refers to the funding and supplies that businesses donate to universities. These donations may come in the form of unrestricted gifts from endowment trust funds, which the universities can utilize to modernize their laboratories, award scholarships to deserving students, or finance innovative new initiatives.

(b) Individual researchers or consultants who work with a single company on a specific research project are included in cooperative research.

(c) Knowledge transfer is a broad category that includes highly interactive activities such as ongoing formal and informal encounters, collaborative training, curriculum development, and staff exchanges. Knowledge transfer strategies include hiring recent graduates from universities, offering internships to students, having university and industry company personnel collaborate on research papers, among other things.

(d) Activities involving the transmission of technology are very participatory. University-driven research and industrial know-how contribute to the development of marketable technologies that the market requires. Technology is transferred through contractual arrangements for technological consultancy; businesses employ university extension services and jointly owned or run firms.

In Panarina (2015), Frank and Smith divided university and industry collaborations into four categories, as follows:

(a) Consultation Partnership: This type of cooperation seeks public feedback on proposed changes or gathers suggestions for policy.

(b) Contributory Partnerships: They are established to aid a group or the community.

Operational Partnerships: This type of work-sharing agreement assigns certain partners with different parts of a given assignment.

(d) Collaborative Partnerships: They are designed to allow for the sharing of resources, risks, and decision-making.

OBJECTIVES OF UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRIES PARTNERSHIP IN PROMOTING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

According to Schartinger, Rammer, Fisher, and Fronhlich (2002), universities have transformed into engines for national growth due to their participation in technology transfer, R&D, innovation, and human capital formation. They have three major roles to play in collaborations with business. First, to conduct a thorough scientific research procedure, and then, over time, to affect the technical frontier of industry. Lastly, universities should contribute considerably to industrial innovation processes in terms of human capital, either via the training of business education graduates who become industry researchers or through people mobility from universities to enterprises. Producing information that is specifically relevant to industrial technology is the first two objectives.

According to Timuti, Wander, and Theruwa (2013), partnership between academic institutions and industry fosters a higher level of learning, including knowledge of cutting-edge technologies, techniques for creating new technologies, and how new technology could affect existing firms. It is a powerful tool for building an environment that supports technological innovation and boosts global competitiveness, ultimately working to advance the interests of companies and universities. Ayomike, Igberadja, Igberaharha, and Okeke (2014) state that the main objective of PPP is to urge the private sector to use its ability to generate finance, create projects, and budget for the welfare of technical vocational schools without having to give up its profit motivation. The vocational institution will still be in charge of providing items, though.

The aim of university and industry collaborations, according to Aina and Akintunde (2013), is to carry out or participate on projects with the idea of dividing the rewards and risks. Second, it is a cooperative venture with a commitment to furthering educational goals that brings together public and private resources.

Panarina believes that institutions and businesses may collaborate to develop a knowledge-based economy by accelerating and extending technology transfer initiatives (2015). The allocation of investments, risk, responsibility, and reward among partners defines a partnership. In her description of the business-education collaboration projects, Panarina listed the following items:

1. a) Workshops, Conferences, Tours, and Exchange Programmes, Classroom Visits, Seminars, and Presentation.
2. b) Work experience programs, internships, tutoring, skills development, and career-building activities;
3. c) Mentoring, job-shadowing, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training.
4. d) Recruitment, instruction, information about a professional path, and direction.
5. e) Support for curriculum, training for teachers, and teacher placement

Panarina said that the goals of a business-education relationship may

1. a) Boost workplace quality
2. b) Provide staff members educational opportunities and a fresh perspective on the educational system.
3. c) Provide students the chance to explore their career options
4. d) If you want to improve the educational environment, upgrade your facilities or equipment.
5. e) If you want to integrate young people into the workforce, involve them in cooperative education experiences.
6. f) If you want to connect schools with local businesses.
7. g) If you want to help with curriculum development, new learning opportunities, and skill development.
8. h) Satisfy the demands of business and industry on the labor market.

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CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY AND INDUSTRIES PARTNERSHIP IN PROMOTING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

1. There are cultural disparities between universities and the commercial sector. According to some academics, the business community lacks a conceptual knowledge of university structures and operations. Universities place more emphasis on long-term collaborations, whereas businesses are more focused on finding quick fixes that have financial repercussions.
2. Lack of Trust and Confidence in Universities: Businesses have little faith in academic institutions to make meaningful contributions to challenges facing the real world.
3. Consumer over-reliance on foreign innovation and technology: This is a barrier to the growth of university-industry partnerships since industries feel that consumers rely more on foreign innovation and technologies.
4. Absence of knowledge: Colleges lack the staff with the necessary skills to collaborate effectively with businesses.
5. Absence of infrastructure: Colleges lack the necessary infrastructure to satisfy industry expectations.
6. Corrupt practices: Corruption and poor governance in universities breed mistrust, which has an impact on collaborations between institutions and business. Poor resource management; misuse of public monies for private benefit.

7. A national policy and innovation framework connecting universities and companies should exist. There are currently no government policies addressing university-industry relations. Moreover, the policies must be put into practice.
8. Funding: Financial difficulties and funding of R&D initiatives for both academic institutions and businesses.
9. Lack of sustainability: As management changes, certain innovative methods that had been in place may be abandoned.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRIES PARTNERSHIP IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

1. Government support: There must to be a national framework for innovation and research. Government spending on research and development has to be increased.
2. Strong institutional capacity: University administrators should encourage and foster an atmosphere that fosters collaboration between academia and industry. ensuring consistency, teamwork, trust, and shared responsibility among employees. Leaders need to be very devoted.
3. Research and Training: Universities must give their graduates the best possible preparation for the positions they will have. Interdisciplinary studies on how to resolve regional issues for national growth that involve students, professors, and industry representatives. Businesses should communicate more information on the state of their country. Industries must to communicate more details about their ongoing initiatives and technical advancements.
4. Good interaction between academic institutions and business. The creation of curricula has to engage businesses that could recruit program graduates. Also, there is a need for a forum for sharing curricular ideas, similar interests, and openness between colleges and businesses.
5. Bridging the theoretical-practical gap. In order to assist students develop the essential skills and abilities required for employment, the gap between theory and practice must be closed. Introduce flexible class schedules, give lecturers and students the chance to work in industries, include businesspeople in the management and training process, familiarize themselves with technologies, comprehend the culture and specifics of small and medium-sized enterprises, and take an active role in the training

CONCLUSION

The university and industry should work together in areas like curriculum development, bettering practical training through SIWES, knowledge transfer, financial support for universities development projects, scholarships, and career guidance initiatives, among others, in order to improve graduate skills and ensure a smooth transition between the academic and business worlds through partnerships. Then, among other things, students have the chance to work in industries, gain new skills, meet market demands, progress research, and train more efficiently. This would promote economic growth in Nigeria and efforts for business education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should develop strong and efficient policies to encourage academic and industrial partnerships.
2. The Association of Business Education of Nigeria (ABEN) should regularly host conferences, workshops, and seminars on the benefits of partnership for companies and business educators.
3. Academic institutions must show a strong commitment to devoting time and money to knowledge transfer to industry.
4. To create strong ties with industry, the government should give colleges enough funding for research and development.

5. Universities should encourage corporate partners in transdisciplinary research programs.

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