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INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND INCIDENTAL ENGAGEMENTS AS CORRELATES OF UNIVERSITY ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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ABSTRACT

The study examined institutional research and incidental engagements as correlates of universities' economic resilience in South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The design for the study was correlational, the population as six federal universities and sample as 258 Heads of Departments and Investment Managers, selected using the stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Two instruments: The validated 22-item Institutional Research and Incidental Engagements Scale (IRIES) and the 20-item University Economic Resilience Scale (UERS) with reliability indices of 0.82 and 0.75 respectively, were used for data collection. Simple regression was used in answering the research questions and t-test associated with simple regression for testing the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results of the study show that, institutional research and incidental engagements correlate with universities economic resilience in South-South Nigeria and also establishes significant correlations of the engagements on universities' economic resilience and concluded that, institutional research and incidental engagements of universities are strong variables for achieving economic resilience, just as institutional research and incidental engagements have been recommended for university managers with their attendant implications for Latin American and the Caribbean nations.

Keywords: Institutional Research, Engagements, Institutional Incidental Engagement, University Economic Resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, universities as institutions of higher education, play major roles in the life of global societies. This may be explained in the fact that, universities are international centres of academic excellence, service societies in a variety of ways. In what may be considered as the traditional roles, Obomanu (2008) listed the traditional roles of universities to include teaching, research and community service. Quite differently, Anya (2013), grafting from the Cyber-Encyclopedia, presented the roles of the universities, as encapsulated in the meaning of a university. For the source, the university is an institution of higher education and research, which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects and provide both undergraduate and post-graduate education.

From the foregoing, it is deductible that, universities conduct researches, grant academic degrees in variety of subjects and provide undergraduate and graduate education. In a further presentation by Anya (2013), grafting from Robbins Report, the modern universities play the following roles:

- Instruction in skills i.e., promotion of the professions;
- Promotion of the general powers of the mind i.e. the intellect to produce cultivated men and women;
- Maintaining research in balance with teaching since teaching should not be divorced from the advancement of learning and search for truth;
- Transmitting a common culture and common standard of citizenship – that is why the university can serve as the conscience of the nation.

An analysis of the presentation from Obomanu (2008) and Anya (2013), from Wikipedia and Robbins' report showed that the three academic sources are in agreement that, universities involve themselves in teaching, research and community services. However, Anya (2013) on the meaning and roles of the university, as grafted from Wikipedia and Robbins Report does not accommodate the fact that, universities involve themselves in community services.

Quite interestingly, it is expedient to place on record that Afangideh and Nwideduh (2014), Afangideh and Kpee (2008) and Afangideh and Aleru (2014) have added a new dimension to the roles of universities, as in the case of Nigeria. For these scholars, apart from being involved in teaching, research and community services, universities also perform incidental functions. Incidental functions are those functions of the universities outside teaching, research and community services, which also contribute to the development of the universities and society in general. As Home Work.Com (2013) explained incidental functions are of routine nature and are considered to be supplementary and complementary to other functions of an organization. Using the Nigerian case, universities now get involved in water bottling, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) consulting, Publications, Animal Husbandry like poultry, fisheries and even the raising of mushrooms. Involving in these activities became imperative, because, universities need to raise funds to supplement subventions from government which are considered inadequate for the implementation of university programmes and activities.

Ideally, universities as institutions of higher education should operate as service organization, but, societal metamorphoses have made universities to adopt and implement the dual mode of operation. In this respects, universities now operate as service oriented and profit oriented institutions. As it concerns the former, universities remain to teach, conduct researches

to find solutions to societal problems for the sake of humanity and society in general, whereas for the latter, universities have established and inaugurated business outfits, that are meant to help them to make profits and be able to achieve an appreciable level of self-economic resilience. In order to ensure the implementation of the service oriented mode of operation, university ownership or proprietorship which may be governmental, individual, community, group or organizational and faith-based provide funds for running the institutions, so that, they can provide the needed services to the society and humanity, whereas for the profit oriented operational model, universities are assumed not to have enough to use in running their programmes and activities, to be able to provide needed services (irrespective of sponsorship) and therefore need to start-up businesses and or other activities that make them make some profits.

In this academic excursion, the thesis is on the profit orientation mode of operation, which allows universities to venture into certain activities to make profit and so achieve self-economic resilience. These activities or ventures are institutional research and incidental engagements. Therefore, further presentations will be on the identified variables. Thus;

Institutional Research Engagement

Traditionally, research has always been considered as the major functions of universities, apart from teaching and community development or services. This conception has pre-occupied the minds of people in and outside the academia. Consequently, university academics are considered and addressed as researchers in their own rights, with all rights and privileges. However, quite surprisingly, research activities which used to be the preoccupation of academics have extended and enlarged to accommodate the institutions or universities themselves, hence institutional research engagements.

From a literacy perspective, research engagements may be considered as all efforts and processes involved in the conduct of researches in institutions, so typified as research oriented institutions. They may also be seen as the research involvements of research oriented institutions and whatever procedures, steps and activities they are engrossed in, that lead to research outputs. Differently and from a conceptual position, the University of Sunshine Coast, Australia (2023) sees research engagement as the interaction between researchers and research-end-users outside the academia for the mutual beneficial transfer of knowledge technologies methods and resources. Researchers at the individual and institutional levels get involved in so many activities in the research process. Before these engagements, some key variables are important. For Science Development Network (2014), the researchers or the research institutions have to know how to engage with communities in field research and which include focusing on trust, engaging early, listening, learning, getting to know the participants, using the right communication methods, getting informed consent and ensuring that, the communication does not end with research. In order to ensure proper engagement, Wooley (2023) suggested a list of ten tips to commence engagements. These include and are not limited to not being scared, using the social media, learning to use google scholar, joining an education group that publishes academic papers, not worrying if you have not gotten an article the first time you read, learning to read savvy, joining a university library, reading the biographic sections of books, ensuring that your school sets up a library and starting researches that are based on classroom practices.

In the actual research engagement proper, it becomes expedient to follow the classification from Wehrich and Koontz (2005:5) in Babalola and Ayeni (2009). For the scholars, the following applies:

- **Planning:** Selecting research missions or setting research agenda as well as actions to achieve them;
- **Organizing:** Establishing an international structure of roles for all the stakeholders involved in the research process;
- **Staffing:** Filling and keeping filled the positions in the organization structure;
- **Leading:** Influencing people, so that, they will contribute to research missions and goals; and
- **Controlling:** Measuring and correcting performance to ensure that events conform to plans and best practices.

When the foregoing are adhered to, what becomes important are the research dimensions of the engagements. These, in the thinking of Babalola and Ayeni (2009:5) are as follows:

- Proposing to ensure technically and ethically sound ideas;
- Performing to coordinate field activities and ensure compliance;
- Report to ensure technically acceptable reports;
- Publishing to encourage scientific presentations and publication of results; and
- Patenting to encourage commercial utilization of results.

Engagements in research are important. Little wonder that the University of Oxford (2013) noted that, public engagement can lead to significant benefits for everyone involved, including researchers and students, their institutions and many different publics in society.

Incidental Engagements

As have been established in Afangideh and Kpee (2010), Afangideh and Nwideduh (2010) and Afangideh and Aleru (2014), universities involve or get engaged in what are referred to as incidental engagements. According to Homework.com (2013), incidental engagements or functions are of routine nature and are supplementary or complementary to other function of organizations or schools. In the realm of the universities, incidental engagements are those which universities involve in, to be able to survive in the higher education system, as they veer into other business engagements, to make money for their internal consumption, arising from governments continuous complaints that funds are inadequate. This is possible because, universities are autonomous institutions of higher education (Archibong & Bassey, 2006). The scholars went further by listing the incidental engagements to include poultry farming, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centres and research consultancy outfits. The list also includes Printing Presses, Bigtime investments in stationaries, water bottling, exhibition shows, banking operations and tourism and hospitality management.

Based on this study, institutional research and incidental engagements are made to advantaged points where universities should be resilient in their institutional economy. Resilient economies and organizations, are those ones that have the ability to adapt to crises and unexpected events and still be able to achieve their purposes. As Degerman (2023) explained, it

is the ability of a system or an organization or society to adapt to be able to achieve its goals despite varying circumstances, crises and everything that does not fit into this framework. Organizational economies are considered resilient if they possess strong economic business base, innovative business base, diverse business base, a skilled workforce, strong level of labour participation, strong personal characteristics-like urbanization, infrastructure, and environmental, community strength to include, lower level of poverty and inequality and social capital, sense of communalism, good governance (WordPress.Org, 2023). Others include strong housing, transport, power, water, sanitation and ability to maintain, repair and renovate social amenities among numerous others (PrepareCentre.org, 2023).

The foregoing varying literatures were put together, so as to enable the establishment of the correlation of institutional research and incidental engagements on the economic resilience of universities. The result of the investigation will therefore be determined by the results of the proposed empirical examination in the proceeding sections of this presentation.

Statement of Problem

Arising from the contemporary states of national and international economies, as they have implications for societal institutions among them universities, by weakening their economic resilience, it is widely believed that, universities involvements in institutional researches and incidental functions can raise the tempo of economic resilience of the universities in the face of biting economic conditions. Following from the foregoing proposition, the management of universities have embarked on deliberate involvements in institutional research activities and incidental engagements, to make additional monies to add to grants and subventions from institutional proprietors and therefore raise their revenue base and by implication their economic resilience.

Quite surprisingly, the researchers were bothered that, while the universities have been involved in research activities and incidental engagements and have been making additional monies, the economic resilience of these universities appears to be weak or declining as universities appear to be unable to provide the necessary work conditions necessary for quality in universities. These are exemplified in their inability to provide good office accommodation for staff, constant power supply, equipping the universities with teaching and learning facilities of international standards, the recruitment of international staff among others as research findings, book opinions, personal observations, comments by stakeholders in universities management have shown. These bring to question whether universities involvements in institutional researches and incidental engagements do no longer have the efficacy of attracting more funds and patronages for the universities when national economic conditions appear not to be favourable to the institutions wellbeing. In order to find empirical explanations to the foregoing trend, the researchers draw the national propensity for a study on institutional research and incidental engagements as predictors of universities economic resilience in South-South Nigeria, as they may be implications for Latin America and Caribbean.

Aims and Objectives

The study examined Institutional Research and Incidental Engagements as Correlates of Universities Economic Resilience in South-South Nigeria: Implications for Latin America and Caribbean Universities. Specially, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the extent of correlation of institutional research engagements on economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities.
- To establish the extent of correlation of institutional incidental engagements on economic resilience in South-South Nigerian Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- What is the extent of correlation of institutional research engagement on economic resilience in South-South Nigerian Universities?
- What is the extent of correlation of institutional incidental engagements on economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- There is no significant correlation of institutional research engagements on economic resilience in South-South Nigerian Universities.
- There is no significant correlation of institutional incidental engagements on economic resilience in South-South Nigerian universities.

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study was correlational and the population as the six (6) federally owned universities in South-South Nigeria (University of Benin, Calabar, Effurun, Otuoke, Port Harcourt and Uyo). These universities have a total number of 515 Heads of Departments and Investment Officials, from which 285 were selected as sample, using the stratified and purposive sampling technique. The subjects of the study responded to two (2) sets of instruments. These were validated. The 22-item Institutional Research and Incidental Engagements Scale (IRIES) and the validated 20-item Universities Economic Resilience Scale (UERS), were designed by the researchers along a modified 4-point Likert Scale model of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) for IRIES and strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for UERS, with reliability indices of 0.82 and 0.75, respectively, obtained using the Cronbach Alpha Statistical procedure. Simple regression was used in answering the research questions while t-test associated with simple regression was used in testing the hypotheses at .05 level of statistical significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study came from the answers to the research questions and test of hypotheses. Thus:

Research Question 1: What is the extent of correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities.?

Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis on the Extent of Correlation of Institutional Research Engagements on the Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square	Decision
I	.819 ^a	.670	.665	High Extent

Legend

M, Model
 R. Square = Regression Square
 Adjusted R. Square: Adjusted Regression Square

Scale

0.00 – 0.25 Very Low Extent
 0.26 – 0.50 Low Extent
 0.51 – 0.75 High Extent
 0.76 – 100 Very High Extent

Data on Table 1 show simple regression analysis on the extent of correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities. With the model as 1, the Regression score as .819^a, Regression Square as .670 and Adjusted Regression Square as .665, the extent of correlation is determined from the co-efficient of determination which is the multiplication of the regression square by 100% and which resulted in 67% as the co-efficient of determination. From the foregoing observations and with reference to the scale of measurement, 67% co-efficient of determination is in between 0.51 to 0.75 (high extent), hence, the correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities is to a high extent and that the variance of 33% on economic resilience is not accounted for by institutional research engagements.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of correlation of institutional incidental engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian universities?

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis on the Extent of Correlation of Institutional Incidental Engagements on the Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square	Decision
I	.814 ^a	.663	.662	High Extent

* The legend and scale for Table 1 apply.

Data on Table 2 show simple regression analysis on the extent of correlation of institutional incidental engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities. With the model as I, the Regression Score as .814^a, Regression Square as .663 and Adjusted Regression Square of .662, the extent of correlation is determined from the co-efficient of determination, which is the multiplication of the regression by 100% and which resulted in 63% as the co-efficient of determination. From the foregoing observations and with reference to the scale of measurement, 63% co-efficient of determination is in between 0.51 and 0.75, hence, the correlation of institutional incidental engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities is to a high extent and that the variance of 37% on Economic resilience is not accounted by institutional incidental engagements.

HO₁ There is no significant correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Correlation of Institutional Research Engagement on the Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.130	.874		2.437	.016
	institutional research engagements	.833	.025	.819	37.170	.000

Data on table 3 revealed that, the t-test associated with simple regression is 37.170. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities.

HO₂ There is no significant correlation of institutional incidental engagements on economic resilience in South-South Nigerian universities.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Correlation of Institutional Incidental Engagements on the Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.735	1.286		4.461	.000
	Independent variable	.884	.039	.814	22.441	.000

Data on table 4 revealed that, the t-test associated with simple regression is 22.441. The hypothesis is rejected because the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant correlation of institutional incidental engagements and the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian universities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS

Institutional Research Engagements as Correlates of Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

The first finding of the study is that the correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian universities is to a high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from the test of hypotheses, establishes that, there is a significant correlation of institutional research engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities. These findings are in agreement with Babalola and Ayeni (2009), Weihnich and Koontz (2005) in Babalola and Ayeni (2009), Science Development Network

(2014), Wooley (2023) and University of Oxford (2023). These scholars in their scholarly representations establish a nexus between institutional research engagements of academic institutions and organizational economic resilience. A possible explanation for the trend in the finding may be in the fact that, as stakeholders in the institutional research processes and institutional investments, they have been involved in the management of such programmes and are aware of their advantages in terms of boosting organizational resilience. This implies that, organizations (universities) that involve in institutional research engagements are bound to attain the status of resilience in its internal economy.

Institutional Incidental Engagements as a Correlate of the Economic Resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities

The second finding of the study is that, the correlation of institutional incidental engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities is to a high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from test of hypothesis determines that, there is a significant correlation of institutional incidental engagements on the economic resilience of South-South Nigerian Universities. These findings are confirmatory of Archibong and Bassey (2006), who explained the trend in the findings that the respondents of the study on research and investment managers or administrators are in the know of the usefulness of institutional involvements in incidental engagement as a resilience booster. This implies that universities that engage in institutional incidental engagements are capable of attaining an appreciable level of self-economic resilience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that, institutional research and incidental engagements of universities are strong variables for attaining economic resilience in universities in South-South Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, their educational and business implications and the conclusion, it is recommended as follows:

- Institutional research administrators and investors should continue to employ the existing research engagements strategies while making efforts to identify new ones in order to sustain the tempo of research engagements for institutional economic resilience.
- Universities managements should continue to engage in incidental activities to attract additional resources to boost their economic resilience while also make efforts to expand their incidental engagements for more dividends.

Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean

In the light of the findings of the study, the discussions on the findings and their educational and business implications and recommendations, the following implications are for Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Latin American and the Caribbean nations universities should key into the idea of institutional research engagements as their involvement will attract more funds to complement existing allocations from their proprietors and boost their institutional economic resilience.
- Latin American and Caribbean nation's universities venture into incidental engagements as they will attract more funds, assistance and services that will boost their economic resilience.

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