

Utilization of Alumni Association and Their Network towards Improving Quality Education in Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State

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Abstract

The study examined the utilization of Alumni associations and their network towards improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprises all tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Random sampling technique was used to select 5 tertiary institutions in Ogun State; 30 students were randomly selected from each of the chosen schools to make a total of 150 as a sample for the study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. The instrument's reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha, and data collected were analyzed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that the Alumni association provide fundraising for development projects, the Alumni association erects buildings, like toilets, lecture rooms, hostels, etc., in the schools, and Alumni provide education materials for better quality education. They also assist in fundraising for scholarships, infrastructural development, capital equipment, buying of chairs, and other purposes identified by the Association to ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning. Alumni's involvement and contribution is of the categorical imperative and ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning, alumni's involvement and contribution is of categorical. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the government increase budgetary allocation to education. Alumni groups should be more engaged in managing schools in critical areas to promote quality education in the State.

Keywords: Communication, Technology, Utilization, Alumni, Network

Introduction

Education is very fundamental to the development of an individual and society. It is the key upon which all aspects of development rest, and no nation can develop more than the quality of education it can provide (FGN, 2013). Education is the most powerful weapon one can use to change the world. All over the world, education is regarded as the bedrock for a nation's economic, political, and technological advancement. This is why it is often emphasized that no nation can rise above its educational system. Higher education, particularly tertiary education, is being demanded all over the world owing to the fact that economic and social activities are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge being provided by education. In today's technological age, a fundamental function of formal

education is to produce a knowledge-based workforce for national development. In other words, there is no doubt that countries need a critical mass of people with solid higher education in a world characterized by globalization, information and knowledge society (Banka, 2019). Every tertiary institution in Nigeria and Ogun State mainly depends heavily on the government to provide the required resources for school operations. However, the current global economic crises, particularly in Nigeria, have laid a limiting factor to what the government can provide.

Consequently, the government and education stakeholders have realized the great support non-government and voluntary organizations can give the educational sector. Hence National Policy on Education (2013) states that the government welcomes the contributions and participation of voluntary agencies and communities in managing schools and establishing their schools as long as they meet the minimum standard laid down by the Federal Government (FGN, 2013). Upon this premise, many voluntary associations, agencies and companies have recently mapped out programmes to support school activities at the national, state, community and school levels. Alumni associations are one of the significant forces involved in this struggle to enhance teaching and learning activities in schools through support for increasing human and material resources to improve the quality of education processes in schools.

Alumni are former students who graduated from a school. They are the branch ambassadors of the institutions they graduated from. A school Alumni association forms a reflection of its past and a link to its future. Valuable school traditions can be perpetuated through the activities of the ex-students. The current students may need to learn the importance of certain school traditions or the reasons behind them in the locality. Alumni can be powerful motivators for the traditions of the school. In addition, Alumni associations have recently become a powerful asset for school development. Schools are changing the way they see and interact with their Alumni. Nwangwu (2012) identified that old student associations and other voluntary agencies should participate in managing and sustaining qualitative education in the states.

The utilization of Alumni associations and their networks support and management in education are the process which deals with utilizing human and material resources to achieve predetermined goals (Onuselogu, 2012). It is essential, therefore, to assess the extent of participation of Alumni associations in managing tertiary institution education in order to attain the overall goals of quality education in the state.

Alumni associations can participate in many ways in managing and improving the quality education of tertiary education. Indeed many schools have started to harness the power of Alumni through various platforms. They can assist by raising funds towards developmental projects in the schools. The financial contributions can be employed in providing infrastructure such as classroom buildings, libraries and furniture for the school (Osuji, 2002). Financial support to schools can be used to build dormitories, lecture rooms, school hostels etc. Notably, the assistance of Alumni groups to their alma mater can be in the form of mentorship, scholarship to students, career guidance, tutorials, coaching in sports, speakers or resource personnel on career and award-giving ceremonies. They can participate in the management and improvement of the schools through policy formulation and planning, conflict resolution, and monitoring teaching and learning activities to ensure that standard is maintained (Okafor, 2010).

Previous experience shows that providing tertiary education requires a considerable capital investment. Adequate funding is needed to provide the needs of tertiary institutions; adequate human resources are needed for the teaching, learning and research activities; infrastructure and instructional facilities play significant roles in effective teaching and quality education. Alumni Associations as an interest group have representations in the governing council of tertiary institutions. Therefore, the body can contribute to institutions and influence decisions that affect the management of tertiary institutions (Banka, 2019).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the utilization of Alumni associations and networks towards improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Specifically, the objectives are:

- i. To ascertain the areas in which Alumni associations and their network towards utilization and improvement of quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State.
- ii. To examine the extent to which Alumni association and their network contribute to managing and improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State.

Research Questions

- i. How can Alumni associations and their network utilize and improve quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?
- ii. What is the contribution of the Alumni association and their network in managing and improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprises all tertiary institutions in Ogun State. Random sampling technique was used to select 5 tertiary institutions in Ogun State; 30 students were randomly selected from each of the chosen schools to make a total of 150 as a sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of the study. To ensure the instrument's validity, the researcher gave the questionnaire draft to the experts to restructure the instrument in line with the research questions. A pilot test was conducted to determine the instrument's reliability, and the scores were tabulated. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula was applied, and a correlation coefficient 0.72 was obtained. Based on the corrections done on the questionnaire items and the test-retest reliability coefficient computed, the instrument was judged adequate, valid and reliable to gather relevant data for the study. Data were analyzed using simple percentages, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

Presentation of Data Analysis and Results Discussion

Table 1: How can Alumni associations and their network utilize and improve quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		Mean (\bar{x})	S.D
		Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent		
		(N)	%	(N)	%		
1.	Alumni association provides fund raising for development projects.	108	72	42	28	3.8	.79
2.	Alumni association erect buildings, like toilet, lecture room, hostel, etc. in the school.	81	54	69	46	3.5	.77
3.	Alumni association provides education materials for better quality education.	77	51.3	73	48.6	3.4	.75
Overall Total		Mean (\bar{x}) = 3.57 and STD = 0.79					

Table 1 above shows how Alumni associations and their network utilize and improve quality education in tertiary institution in Ogun State. This finding indicates that Alumni association provides fund raising for development projects ($\bar{x} = 3.8$, $SD = 0.79$), Alumni association erect buildings like toilets, lecture rooms, hostels, etc. in the school ($\bar{x} = 3.5$, $SD = 0.77$), provides education materials for better quality education ($\bar{x} = 3.4$, $SD = 0.75$). This findings reveal that the mean and standard deviation of the items listed above is very high ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, $SD = 0.79$) showing that Alumni associations and their network utilized and improved quality of education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The findings of the study support the views of Okorji (2011) and Nwangwu (2012), who reiterated that old students associations and other voluntary agencies should participate in the management and sustaining education in the states for quality education.

Table 2: What are the contributions of Alumni association and their network in managing and improving quality education in tertiary institution in Ogun State?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		Mean (\bar{x})	S.D
		Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent		
		(N)	%	(N)	%		
1.	Assist in fundraising for scholarships, infrastructural development, capital equipment, buying of Chairs, and other purposes identified by the Association.	101	67.3	49	32.7	3.7	.77
2.	Ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning.	107	71.3	43	28.7	3.9	.78
3.	Ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning with categorical interventions.	98	65.3	52	34.7	3.8	.77
Overall Total		Mean (\bar{x}) = 3.57 and STD = 0.77					

Table 2 shows the Alumni association's contribution and network in managing and improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. This finding indicates that they assist in fundraising for scholarships, infrastructural development, capital equipment, buying of Chairs, and other purposes identified by the Association ($\bar{x} = 3.7$, $SD = 0.77$), ensure

continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning ($\bar{x} = 3.9$, $SD = 0.78$) and ensure categorical imperative interventions ($\bar{x} = 3.8$, $SD = 0.77$). This shows that the Alumni association and their networking contribute to managing and improving quality education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. This finding aligns with that of Menon (2015), who submitted that Alumni and their networking through scholarship not only attract students from diverse backgrounds to universities but help keep them in the universities.

Conclusion

Alumni are former students who graduated from a school. They are the branch ambassadors of the institutions they graduated from. A school Alumni association forms a reflection of its past and a link to its future. Valuable school traditions can be perpetuated through the activities of the ex-students. Funds are necessary to acquire and maintain human and material resources in education. The cost of goods and services embedded in the school system is a sufficient justification for the emphasis commonly placed on school finances. The findings revealed that the Alumni Association funds development projects, erects buildings, like toilets, lecture rooms, hostels, etc., in the schools, and provides educational materials for better quality education. They also assist in fundraising for scholarships, infrastructural development, capital equipment, provision of chairs, and other purposes identified by the Association. They also ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning; alumni's involvement and contribution are of the categorical imperative and ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning.

Recommendations

From the preceding discussion, the following recommendations are made;

- There is a great need for school authorities to involve Alumni and other community agents in the quality of education.
- The government should increase budgetary allocations to the education sector to further enhance the quality of education in Nigeria.
- The school authorities should recognize the activities of the Alumni and other voluntary agencies, and the government should encourage them to give more assistance to the schools.
- The Alumni Associations should collaborate with the school management team to provide infrastructure for the management of educational institutions.

- Alumni associations should do more by increasing their responsiveness in providing instructional materials periodically for institutional tertiary advancement.
- Alumni Associations should maintain discipline by organizing sensitization campaigns on students' conduct in tertiary institutions.
- Alumni Associations' contributions should include quality control measures, such as conducting academic programmes like workshops, seminars, staff assessment by students and getting research grants for effective teaching and learning.

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