

Full Length Research Paper

The Role of Research and Development in Higher Education

Peace I. Amala¹, Raymond C. Ukaegbu²

¹ Senior Lecturer, English/Communication- Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

² Publisher/ editor-in-chief, Supreme Magazine

Accepted 10th, November, 2019.

Abstract

The role of research in higher education remains a vital source of knowledge, development, and sustainability of any nation, at the present moment of rapid advancement in information and capacity building. So, capacity building is a continuous process to enhance persons, establishments and societies. Research in higher education provides us with our heritage and values. Accordingly, through research, students can enhance their knowledge on a particular topic and clarify the issues around that subject. This paper describes the role of research and development in higher education. This is achieved by analyzing four studies on the importance of research in education. The institutional theory was applied as it helps explain how people perceive the value of higher education according to the activities they carry out via research and development. Some of the roles of Research in higher education include helping researchers to take part in the development and policymaking process since they have the facts to help come up with a better solution. Besides, research in higher education has facilitated technology innovation and medical solutions, which improves the growth of a society. Lastly, but not the least, research in higher education allows students to experience the real-world. Hence, they are able to articulate themselves after concluding with their schooling. The paper concludes that research promotes the enhancement of knowledge and innovation in higher education at the individual, organizational and societal levels.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Development, Globalization, Higher Education, Research

INTRODUCTION

In a globalized planet, the role of research in higher education is critical for the tenability and development of universities (Pramodini & Sophia, 2012). It is necessary to have knowledge-steered growth anchored on innovation. The benefits of research go beyond having an impressive undergraduate degree. Through extensive research, learners unfold critical thinking competence, as well as effective communication, research, and analytical skills that are universally sought-after and incredibly helpful (Eid, 2014). Research is vital to the social and economic advancement of our globalized society, creating the groundwork for governmental policies across the globe. The search for knowledge is the fundamental doctrine behind the research. The promotion of study in higher education helps countries to transform as knowledge reservoirs in the global stage. It is well acknowledged that academic research has contributed considerably to getting solutions to several problems faced by our industries and society. There have been multiple occurrences when industries have turned to academics for answers to critical matters. The importance of research in our society is evident, and institutions of higher learning are investing heavily in this field. However, the role of research and development in higher education has not been clearly defined, remain many unanswered questions. Therefore, this research sought to find

a solution for this gap and elaborate on how research and development facility on the effectiveness of higher education.

Research Objective

This paper aims to examine the role of research and development in higher education.

Research question

Do research and development impact the effectiveness of higher education?

Theory

An institutional theory emphasizes the normative influence of the environment on organizational activity. Higher institutions exist within an institutional surrounding in which external parties determine in part, the expectations for corporate behavior and practices (Cai & Mehari, 2015). Therefore, the institutional theory was applied in this research to help external stakeholders understand how research and development activities determine the effectiveness of higher education.

Methodology

A meta-analysis research design was used as it helped combine data from different research studies to come up with more consistent results. It involved collecting and analyzing various

studies on the importance of education in universities (Smith, Fernie, and Pilcher, 2017). It involved searching for reputable online databases such as Science Open, which provides over twenty-eight million articles. The research used HERDSA'S journal Higher Education Research & Development (HERD) to get relevant materials related to the role of research and development in higher education (Jones, 2019). The researcher chose a sample size of four articles to elaborate on the purpose of research in higher education and its implication to human and social development (Jones, 2019). The research aimed to capture studies that highlight present-day research in universities, given the recent advancements in technology.

Findings

The first finding is that research enhances knowledge. According to Eid (2014), the moment students in higher learning institutions research any subject, and they get to know comprehensive information regarding the topic. In other words, the moment learners do research; they get to study how to create a balance between the work they do and the work that has already been carried out by the previous researchers. Besides, Vessuri (2008) argues that research in higher education can facilitate human and social development in the future in terms of technology, economic benefits, curing of chronic diseases. Nevertheless, he cautions that researchers must take part in political roles to help bridge the gap

between scientific endeavors and social concerns (Vessuri, 2008).

Research and development promote innovation in higher education (Pramodini & Sophia, 2012). Research in the science field, such as engineering, has fostered a culture of innovation within the institutions of higher learning. Academic institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the U.S.A advances research in the fields of engineering (Pramodini & Sophia, 2012). According to Smith, Fernie, and Pilcher (2017), higher education research and researchers play an essential role in policymaking. When strategy making is based on facts, and someone who can interpret data is available, a working policy will be developed, which will be useful and realistic when implementing it.

DISCUSSION

People perceive a research-intensive academic institution to be a center of learning due to the role of its operations and are the foundation of its reputation and the groundwork for further advancement. Learning needs critical inquiry, discovery, and research.

Whereas some education can happen through the simple conveyance of information, skills, and practice, learning occurs through deliberation and questioning (Pramodini & Sophia, 2012). This implies that learners are not perceived acceptors of information but active givers-in their

relationships with one another as much with the academic and staff. Notably, research helps a student to get practical knowledge which plays a significant role in their future since they have the necessary experience of fieldwork. Therefore, research is vital in higher education.

Research has ensured that the purpose of higher education is not to produce learners to move into a specific type of job or career but to prepare learners to live in an unpredictable and complex world. Research enhances their knowledge, and as such, they react to opportunities, challenges, and situations and take advantage of them (Eid, 2014). Thus, research ensures that institutions of higher learning produce resilient graduates who have self-believe and flexible to take charge of their deeds in the future (Pramodini & Sophia, 2012). To sustain this, institutions of higher education need to continue with their willingness to invest in research in various fields. More importantly, influential research culture is vital since it allows institutions of higher learning to focus on learning instead of teaching and find solutions to social concerns.

With technological advancement, the world needs to take advantage of technology to find solutions to its problems. As such, research at universities has promoted the culture of innovation, which has allowed students to think outside the box (Jones, 2019).

The solutions in mobile banking and health care have been initiated at the university level

attracting the attention of the corporate world to invest in such innovations (Vessuri, 2008). Nevertheless, researchers must take charge of the government and in the policy development process to discuss issues that affect researchers when conducting the research.

CONCLUSION

Researching beyond a senior design venture allows learners at universities and other academic institutions to start thinking and put all portions of their education together. The role of research in higher education is to reflect critically on the potency of professional and personal practice. If countries across the world can invest a considerable amount in research in higher education, then they can be able to leverage the benefits of innovation and economic advancement. It is also important to urge the developing countries to invest in research to boost the lives of its people, especially in the medical and technological aspects.

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