

DEREGULATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AS PREDICTORS OF A RESILIENT SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIAN SOCIETY: IMPLICATIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Abstract

The study examined the deregulation and internalization of university education as predictors of a resilient South-South Nigerian Society. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. the design for the study was correlational, the population as 6 federally owned universities and the sample as 390 Heads of Departments, selected using the stratified and census sampling techniques. Two instruments: the validated 38-item University Education Deregulation and Internationalization Scale (UEDIS) and the 27-item Resilient Society Scale (RSS) with reliability indices of 0.92 and 0.85 respectively, were used for data gathering. Simple regression and z-test associated with simple regression were used in data analysis for answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study show that deregulation and internalization of university education predict a resilient South-South Nigerian society while also establishing significant predictions of the concepts on a resilient society and concluded that, deregulation and internationalization of university education are viable instrumentalities for achieving a resilient society, just as deregulation and internationalization have been recommended for university stakeholders with their attendant implications for Latin America and the Caribbean nations.

Keywords: Deregulation, Internationalization, University Education, Resilient Society.

Introduction

Contemporarily, most nations in the international system, especially, developing and third world nations among them, Nigeria and other nations in Sub-Saharan, Central and East Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Oceania, Far East, Middle East among others are in states of restlessness in terms of political, economic, social, psychological, physical and general national development. These are exemplified in the spate and enormity of wars, gangstarisms, terrorist activities, armed robberies, unemployment, extreme poverty, political instability, arising from electrical fraud and institutional self-destruction, ethnic inequality, racial discrimination, clan struggle and excessive domination by the ruling class, who do not wish to relinquish political power, but prefer to die in or be booted out of offices (Macionis, 2009). Also, S. O. Oluwuo (Personal Communication, September 02, 2023) and S. B. Nwideduh (Personal Communication, October 05, 2023 equally corroborate this striking and harrowing presentation from Marcionis (2009).

Following from the foregoing variables and conditions, countries in the identified categories have become politically, economically, socially, physically and generally helpless as their resilient as nations in the international system have been weakened and above all dampened. As Anya (2013) mutes, nations in these development bracket cannot contribute and may find it extremely difficult

to contribute to the development of the international system politically, economically and socially and that when uncertainties surface, they cannot even help themselves. Anya's (2013) explanation tend to show that, nations or societies who have weakened or dampened resilience may be comparable to patients affected by the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV), whose immunity are destroyed thereby exposing them to attacks and destruction as any disease attacks except from efforts that are made to provide anti-viral drugs to the carriers to avoid further spread of the virus in order not to result in full blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) that will finally kill the patients.

Issues such as described in the foregoing cannot be allowed into the fabric of the society without deliberate intervention. Consequently, the education system is considered to be the instrument that can salvage nations and regions in the international system from economic, political and social rigidity, weakness and vulnerability.

Educational institutions are responsible for introducing the younger folks of the society into societies' worthwhile knowledge, skills and values. These descriptions fit into the presentation from Schofield (1990) that education is the introduction of the young into the worthwhile knowledge, skills and values of the societies from one generation to another. An interesting aspect of the discussion in education is that, Afangideh & Befii-Nwile (2016) have added another dimension to the meaning and purpose of education. For the scholars and researchers, educational institutions represent those that introduce societies younger, needing and desiring folks into societies' worthwhile heritage of knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. This latter conceptualization tends to accommodate societies' folks, who needs and desires education after a period of denial which may have arisen from socio-economic conditions and environmental uncertainties.

Arising from the all-important role of education in society, societies consider it appropriate to provide education in stages of what are considered as levels in the Nigerian context. As the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) presents, these are the early childhood, basic, post basic and tertiary levels of education. While early childhood level of education handles pre-primary education, basic education takes care of primary and junior secondary education, post-basic level, taken care of senior secondary education, tertiary education takes of education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, mono-technics and allied institutions. In this study, the universities are the basis for investigation.

Another key component of the present discussion is that the mode of educational operations has been majorly state controlled and following from the national curriculum, are responses to the philosophy of Nigerian education. These in the thinking of modern scholars among them Afangideh (2011) and Uche (2009) do not augur well for society since the education system must produce products, research writings and services that will contribute to the making of resilient society.

Based on the foregoing, Afangideh (2011), Babalola & Adegbite (2007), Uche & Ahunanya (2013) among other scholars, make calls for the deregulation and internalization of education based on the understanding of the public interest theory of deregulation and regulation proposed by McFetridge & Lall (1991) and reveled in the theory of internalization of higher education as presented (Uche & Ahunanye, 2013). Consequently, further presentations are based on deregulation and internalization of university education with the intent of achieving a resilient society.

Deregulation of University Education

Deregulation in the education system has often been misconstrued to mean a variety of other concepts and variables. In one instance, J. D. Okoh (Personal Communication, December 20, 2009) considers deregulation to be the same thing as privatization. In the same vein, A. K. Okorosaye-Orubite (Personal Communication, December 20, 2009) corroborated. At this juncture, it is pertinent to unmask the conceptual interpretation of deregulation and put the records straight. According to Afangideh (2011), deregulation refers to the relaxation of control by controlling and regulatory agencies in the provision and management of goods and services. It may also be seen as the removal of government control or regulation in a specific industry (CCFI Team, 2023) and as it concerns education, it refers to breaking the government monopoly of the provision and management of education by free hands to private participation (Afangideh, 2011; Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008; Babalola & Adegbite, 2007; Kenton, 2022).

In the course of deregulation, there are increased investment opportunities, elimination of restrictions, increased competition, encouraging innovations, corporate investments in research and development, development of new products, setting competitive prices, employment of labour from foreign countries, sustainable economic activity, increase market growth, elimination of regulations, directives, guidelines, policies and practices. These fits in the positions of Afangideh (2011), Ajayi & Ekundayo (2008), Babalola and Adegbite (2007), CFI Team (2023) and Kenton (2022), can turn around organization to produce quality products and services for societies resilience.

Internationalization of University Education

Another important aspect of university education variable for consideration is the question of internalization. In the thinking of the man on the street, internalization of university education should simply refer to giving the universities international outlook. This should not be jettisoned for reason that, it conveys the measure. However, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in De Wit (2000) presents a more clarifying conception that, internationalization of education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of institutions. This conceptualization enjoys corroboration from Uche and Atanakak (2013) adding that it is the consequences of responses to the process of globalization. When universities are internationalized, there will be recruitment of international students and faculty offering studies abroad, offering foreign language programmes, alliance development, research partnership, provision of off-shore campus branches and programmes, providing students with holistic learning experiences and attempts to overcome westernization (De Wit, 2000, Elkaleh, 2023; Uche & Atanakak, 2013). Others include good quality education, faculty and academic reputation, sports and extra-curricular activities, good location, accommodation, reviews and ranking, post education opportunities, affordability and what is good for you (Sharda University, 2023).

It is thesis of this academic discuss that university systems that are deregulated and internationalized can produce resilience societies. According to Rand Corporation (2023), community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of the community or society to utilize available resources to respond to, with stand and revise from adverse situations. Burgess (2023) traces the concept of resilience to the field of ecology and that it emerged in 1970's, building on the system's theory and adds that, societal resilience refers to the resilience of society as a whole, rather than specific individual or

groups. However, May Foundation for Medical Education and Research (2022) submits that, resilience means being able to adapt to life misfortunes and setbacks and the ability to adapt to difficult situations.

Resilient societies are distinguished by certain characteristics. The features include strong policies on money, transport, power, water and sanction, ability to manufacture, repair and renovate social amenities, has economic opportunities, diverse range of employment opportunities, income services, financial services, self-flexibility, resources availability, capacity to accept uncertainties, and response to change. The list also includes being knowledgeable, healthy, ability to assess, manage and monitor risks, learn new skills, build on past experiences, can manage national resources, recognizes their values, has relationship with external authors, provide supportive commitment and supply service goods (Prepare Centre, 2023; Resilient Society, 2023).

The concern of the foregoing reviews has been to provide the necessary literature for determining whether the deregulation and internalization of university education can predict resilient societies. Available literatures reviewed have been mostly scholarly and theoretical, finding empirical explanations to the perceived trend will depend on the outcomes of the proposed investigation.

Statement of the Problem

There appears to be a trending conception and assumption that, the deregulation and internalization of university educational provision and management in terms of general administration can predict resilient societies, that can withstand shocks, in the face of turbulent and tough conditions. This preposition may have informed the decision by developing nations of the world to join the developed nations in deregulating the provision and management of university education and also embracing the internationalized approach in general university administration as they may concern personnel, environment, facilities, instructional contents and resources, mode of delivery, policy of admission and the like. Resultingly, these nations now can boast of universities owned and operated by religious groups, individuals, private organizations, corporate agencies and communities and who also adopt and implement the principle of internalization in general university administration. The deregulated agenda and internalization policy should bring about resilience in the life of the university and by implication translate to the society. Surprisingly, research findings, popular opinions, scholarly positions, general observations, book opinions, comments and remarks by stakeholders in university show that, most nations and regions of the world appear to be unbalanced, feel victimized and overwhelmed by political and economic conditions, making them to turn to policies and programmes, that do not have much social, political and economic advantages, since they appear to be unable to adapt to national or regional misfortunes, setbacks or difficult situations, which are all signs of the absence of resilience. Arising from these conditions, the researchers were bothered, whether the deregulation and internalization of university education provision and management do no longer have the efficacy for producing products that can help turn societies into resilience entities. As a result, the researchers drew the natural inspiration to conduct a study to establish whether a deregulated and internalized university education system can predict a resilient society, hence, the study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined the deregulation and internalization of university education as predictors of a resilient South-South Nigerian Society: Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean. In specific terms, the study sought to

- i. determine the extent of prediction of deregulation of university education on a resilient South-South Nigeria Society
- ii. establish the extent of prediction of internalization of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society

Research Questions:

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- i. to what extent does the deregulation of university education predict a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.
- ii. To what extent does the internalization of university education predict a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho₁ There is no significant prediction of deregulation of the university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.
- Ho₂ there is no significant prediction of internalization of the university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.

Methodology

The design for the study was correlational and the population as the six federally owned universities in –South-South Nigeria, at Benin, Calabar, Effurun, Otuoke, Port Harcourt and Uyo. These universities have a total number of 395 Heads of Department, from which 390 were selected as sample, using the stratified and census sampling techniques. The subjects of the study responded to two (2) sets of instruments. These were the validated 38 item University Education Deregulation and Internalization Scale (UEDIS) and the validated 27 item Resilient Society Scale (RSS), designed by the researchers in the modified Likert scale model of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) for UEDIS and strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for RSS with reliability indices of 0.92 and 0.85, respectively, obtained using the Cronbach Alpha procedure. Simple regression was used in answering the research questions while z-test associated with simple regression was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results:

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

Research Question One: To what extent does the deregulation of university education predict a resilient South-South Nigerian Society?

Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis on the Extent to which the Deregulation of University Education Predicts a Resilient South-South Nigerian Society

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R. Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R. Square</i>	<i>Decision</i>
I	.802 ^a	.643	.601	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 to which the deregulation of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian Society, with the model as I, the Regression score at .802^a, the Regression Square as .643 and the Adjusted Regression Square as .601. The extent of prediction is determined from the co-efficient of determination which is got from the multiplication of the Regression Square by 100% and which resulted in 63.4% and from the scale of measurement, 63.4% falls between 0.51 and 0.76 i.e. to high extent. Following from these observations, the deregulation of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian Society to high extent as the variance of 35.7% percent on resilient South-South Nigerian Society cannot be accounted for by the deregulation of university education.

Research Question Two: To what extent does the internationalization of university education predict a resilient South-South Nigerian Society?

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis on the Extent to which the Internalization of University Education predicts a Resilient South-South Nigerian Society

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R. Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R. Square</i>	<i>Decision</i>
I	.866 ^a	.749	.741	High Extent

* The legend and Scale for Table 1 apply

Data on Table 2 show simple regression analysis on the extent to which the internalization of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian society. With the model as I, the Regression Score as .866^a, the Regression Square as .749, and the Adjusted Regression as .741, the extent of prediction is determined from the co-efficient of determinism which is got from the multiplication of the Regression Square .749 by 100% and which resulted in 74.9%. From the scale of measurement, 74.9 falls within 0.51 and 0.75 i.e. to a high extent. Following from these observations, the internalization of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian society to a high extent, as that the variance of 25.1% cannot be accounted for by the internalization of university education.

H₀₁: There is no significant prediction of deregulation of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society

Table 3: Summary of z-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Prediction of the Deregulation of University Education on a Sustainable South-South Nigerian Society

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	3.030	.911		1.761	.016
regulation of university	.811	.032	.802	3.870	.000

Data on table 3 revealed that, the t-test associated with simple regression is 3.870. 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 prediction of the deregulation of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian society.

Ho₂: There is no significant prediction of the internalization of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society

Table 4: Summary of z-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Prediction of the Internalization of University Education on a Resilient South-South Nigerian Society.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	5.123	1.322		2.053	.000
Independent variable	.860	.041	.866	4.555	.000

Data on table 4 revealed that the t-test associated with simple regression is 4.555. 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 prediction of internationalization of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.

Discussion of Findings:

The discussion on the findings of the study is presented thus;

Deregulation of University Education as a Predictor of a Resilient South-South Nigerian Society

The first finding of the study is that, the deregulation of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian society to a high extent. In the same tone, a corresponding finding from test of hypothesis, determines that, there is a significant prediction of the deregulation of university education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society. These findings confirm the contributions and positions of Afangideh (2011), Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008), Babalola and Adegbite (2001) CFI Team (2023) and Kenton (2022). These scholars and researchers are of the position that, the deregulation of university education or any organization is capable of enhancing internal self-resilience. A possible explanation for the trend in the finding may not be unconnected with the fact that the respondents of the study were chosen from university administrators, who are quite knowledgeable in the antics and workings of deregulated systems in higher education and the benefits organizations stand to get

from a deregulated regime. These findings imply that, deregulated university systems can hardly be disassociated from internal resilience.

Internalization of University Education as a Predictor of a Resilient South-South Nigerian Society

The second finding of the study is that, the internalization of university education predicts a resilient South-South Nigerian society to a high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from a test of hypothesis establishes that, there is a significant prediction of the internationalization of higher education on a resilient South-South Nigerian Society. These findings are jointly confirmatory of De Wit (2000), Elkaleh (2023), Sharda University (2023) and Uche and Atangakak (2013). These scholars and researcher have appreciable stock of information on the nexus between university internalization efforts and resilience in society. These findings may have been the result of prolonged period of involvement in the implementation of the internationalized approach at university organizations on the part of the respondents and as responses to the global trend in all aspects of human endeavours which support internalization. These findings suggests that, institution of higher education, that have internationalized their general approaches to programmes and general modes of handling issues will surely produce resilient societies.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the discussion on them and their educational and business implications, it is concluded that, the deregulation and internalization of university education are viable and veritable instrumentalities for preparing the build up to getting a resilient South-South Nigerian Society.

Recommendations

Following from the findings of the study, the discussion on the findings, their educational and business implication, it is recommended as follows:

- i. Universities' stakeholders should continue to tow the line of the deregulated regimes as their adoptions, adaptations and implementations prepare fertile grounds for self-organizational resilience.
- ii. Universities stakeholders should continue to internationalize their operations and general make up, as internationalizing their operations and processes prepares universities to be able to grapple with uncertainties of whatever dimension and still contribute to self and societal growth and development.

Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean

- i. Latin America and the Caribbean are like other third world nations have a duty to adopt, adapt and implement higher education deregulation as deregulation relaxes state control of education and allows private and diversified operations and curriculum to thrive and produce product with appreciable sense of resilience to handle societal problem.
- ii. Latin America and the Caribbean have duty to fully embrace the principle of Internalization in University Operation and implementation of programmes. This is expedient as internalization dislodges all tendencies of localization and exposes university stakeholders among them students and other clients to international world view and prepare them to tackle societal problems both from local and international perspectives with high sense of resilience.

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