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DELOCALIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA: LESSONS FOR CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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ABSTRACT

The study examined delocalization and commercialization of university education for sustainable development in South-South Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study, the design for the study was analytically descriptive, the population as six federal universities and sample as 585 academic staff, selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The validated 30-item Delocalization and Commercialization of University Education for Sustainable Development Scale (DCUESDS) with reliability index was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions and z-test for testing the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The results show that, delocalization and commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria, to a high extent and also establishes significant differences between the mean ratings of respondents on the extent delocalization and commercialization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria. The study concluded that delocalization and commercialization of university education are strong administrative and economic instrumentalities for leading institutions and societies to paths of sustainable development. The study therefore recommended the continuous adoption and implementation of delocalization and commercialization in universities with their attendant lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean nation.

Keywords: Delocalization, Commercialization, University Education, Sustainable Development.

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INTRODUCTION

In an era where global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and social injustices are becoming increasingly pronounced, the role of education, particularly university education, in fostering sustainable development is more critical than ever. Sustainable development, which aims to harmonize economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection, requires a holistic approach that integrates knowledge, innovation, and community engagement. Universities, as hubs of knowledge production and dissemination, play a pivotal role in this process. However, traditional models of higher education are being re-evaluated to better align with the demands of a rapidly changing world.

Two significant trends shaping the future of university education are delocalization and commercialization. Delocalization refers to the extension of educational opportunities beyond the physical boundaries of university campuses. This can be achieved through online education platforms, satellite campuses, and collaborative partnerships with other institutions. The primary goal of delocalization is to make higher education more accessible to diverse populations, particularly those in remote or underserved areas. By breaking down geographical barriers, delocalization aims to democratize education and create opportunities for a broader spectrum of the population.

Commercialization, on the other hand, involves the introduction of market-driven practices within the higher education sector. This includes the implementation of tuition fees, the development of revenue-generating partnerships with the private sector, and the commercialization of research and innovation. While commercialization can provide universities with the financial resources needed to enhance their infrastructure, improve the quality of education, and invest in cutting-edge research, it also raises concerns about the potential commodification of education and the risk of exacerbating social inequalities.

South-South Nigeria provides a compelling case study for examining these trends. This region, characterized by its rich natural resources and cultural diversity, faces significant developmental challenges, including educational disparities, economic instability, and environmental degradation. Universities in South-South Nigeria are increasingly embracing delocalization and commercialization as strategies to address these challenges and contribute to sustainable development. Delocalization efforts have led to the establishment of satellite campuses and the adoption of online learning platforms, broadening access to higher education. Meanwhile, commercialization has enabled universities to secure funding and foster innovation through partnerships with industry and the commercialization of research outputs.

The experiences of South-South Nigeria in navigating the complexities of delocalization and commercialization offer valuable lessons for other regions, particularly Central America and the Caribbean. These regions share similar developmental challenges, such as economic vulnerabilities, environmental threats, and socio-political issues. By drawing on the successes and challenges encountered in South-South Nigeria, policymakers and educational leaders in Central America and the Caribbean can develop more effective strategies for leveraging higher education as a driver of sustainable development.

Delocalization of University Education

Literally, the word delocalize means to remove from the proper or usual locality. This has been enunciated in Oxford Dictionary (2023). The Dictionary also add that delocalization means to

free or remove from the restriction of locality, freedom from localism, provincialism or the like. Dictionary.com (2023) also takes the same positions. Differently and when moving a little from grammar, Obodo.com (2009) presented the economic underpinnings of delocalization. For the academic outfit, delocalization in economics refers to the transfer of activities of capital and employment in areas of a country or of the world which have competitive advantages. In the field of education, it refers to a different thing but with the usual appendages of delocalization.

As Lucy and Chirchir (2023) presented, delocalization programme is a policy arrangement that entails moving/transferring teachers and other resources and facilities of the school system from their home areas/countries to strengthen school management, improve their effective, addressing cases of conflict of interest, enhancing national cohesion among other national interests. This may explain why it is recommended for universities as it is assumed to have a lot of in-built benefits. As Stobierski (2021) explained the characteristic features of delocalization in school system handles a lot of issues which include and not limited to access to labour, access to job, access to resources, ability for nations to specialize, increase global competition, increased cross boarder investments. The list also includes stimulation of structural changes, increasing globalization, international competition, technological development, increased efficiency through specialization and innovation (Greenbaum, 2021). These features of delocalization in educational institution are believed to be capable of leading to economic resilience that can give rise to sustainable development.

COMMERCIALIZATION

Another import variable associated with the running of educational organizations for sustainability is the question of commercializing educational processes, procedures and products. Conceptually, Innovation Institute (2023) saw commercialization as the process by which a new product or service is introduced into the general market. Knowledge Base (2023) corroborated this position, by reporting that, it is the process of introducing a new product to the market and includes such stages as production, distribution, marketing, sales and customer support. As a strategy, commercialization in organizations require that a business organization should develop a plan, determine how the product will be supplied to the market and have the anticipation that there may be some barriers or challenges to the success of the business. When organizations go commercial, they tend to derive some benefits. These benefits include social benefits, economic growth, industry partnership, recruitment and retention and entrepreneurship. Since commercialization is the process that allows business to raise and solve problems of new products and bring them to the market, it helps in assisting companies to decide when to launch a certain product by reviewing a variety of factors which may influence or delay the launch.

In the running of educational institutions, Timothy (2006) coined a new terminology in place of commercialization. For the scholar, when private schools are marketed, they stand to get resources that help in running of schools. This is considered possible because commercialization of business concerns have a lot of advantageous benefits which include and not limited to creation of job opportunities, provision of solutions to problems, profit making, reduction of monopoly in businesses, surviving resources for government, serving expenditure for governments, creating avenues for competition, creating room for economic development and the like. The list also include reduction in operational efficiency which leads to revenue generation, eradication of corruption, attraction of foreign investments, liberation of the economy, leading to economic viability, elimination of problem of the obsolete technology,

reduction in excessive government control, efficient production process, reduction of public expenses and generation of funds for institutions (Innovative Institute, 2023; Knowledge Base, 2023; Shortcross, 2023; Timothy, 2006). The foregoing features and benefits of commercialization are assumed to be capable of enhancing sustainable development in society.

Sustainable development is a new thinking in the handling of individual groups, national and international affairs. As Babalola (2013) noteed it is the ability to keep going and keep up the progress made in the social, economic and ecological segments of the society, without making the future generation worse. Babalola's position may have been grafted from an earlier presentation by the World Bank (2003), that development is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs and which may have been the reason Soubbotina (2004:8) maintained that "for development to be sustainable, it should balance the interest of different groups of people within the same generation, and among generation and to so simultaneously in the economic, social and the environmental dimensions of life". A society is said to be on the course of sustainable development if it can ensure poverty reduction, good governance, access to good healthcare delivery, education for all, handles national demography, contain natural hazards, provide a sustainable atmosphere, possesses arable land for agriculture and other activities. The test also include sustainable oceans, seas and coast, fresh water, encouraging biodiversity, economic development, global economic partnership and consumption and production pattern (Babalola, 2013; Brieh, 2007; United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Countries, organizations and individuals in contemporarily yearn for sustainable development as enshrined in the sustainable development goals to be achieved before the year 2030. This also applies to educational institution among them, universities. As a result, scholars, researchers, and other stakeholders in higher education studies and managers propose that the delocalization and commercialization of universities can enhance sustainable development in universities. Based on this proposition, stakeholders in university administration and university administrators have followed a process of delocalization and commercialization. The researchers are bothered that universities appear to be sliding into under-development as exemplified in their rotten state in terms of facilities, quality of school programmes, level of clientele patronage and quality of products as research findings, public opinions, personal observations, comments by stakeholders in universities, administration have shown. These call to question whether delocalization and commercialization cannot enhance sustainable development in universities as proposed. The need to confirm or debunk the proposition is what gave the researchers a natural propensity to do a study on Delocalization and Commercialization of University Education for sustainable development in South-South Nigerian universities with a view to exposing the lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined the extent to which delocalization and commercialization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South Nigeria: Lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria.
- Establish the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- To what extent does the delocalization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria?
- To what extent does the commercialization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at .05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study was the analytic descriptive survey and the population as the six (6) federally owned universities in South-South Nigeria (Universities of Benin, Calabar, Effurun, Otuoke, Port Harcourt and Uyo). These universities have a total number of 2262 academic staff in their Faculties of Education and Social Sciences from which 585 were selected as sample, using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The subjects of the study responded to validated 30-item instrument titled University Education Localization and Commercialization for Sustainable Development Scale (UELCSDS), 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), with a reliability index of 0.86, obtained using the Cronbach Alpha procedure. Mean and standard deviation were used in ensuring the research questions while t-test 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 question and the test of hypotheses. Thus;

Research Question I: To what extent does the delocalization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South Nigeria?

Table I: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent the Delocalization of University Education Enhances Sustainable Development in South-South, Nigeria

	RESPONSES FROM ACADEMIC STAFF								
	ITEMS	EDUCA	TION S	E					
		$\overline{X}1$	SD1	$\overline{X}2$	SD2	$\overline{X}\overline{X}$	Remarks		
1	Access to labour from university delocalization	3.42	.50	2.79	.47	3.11	VHE		
	can lead to sustainable growth in a society								
2	Abundant access to jobs created by university	3.28	.45	2.53	.63	2.91	HE		
	delocalization is capable of stimulating								
	sustainable development in an environment								
3	Open access to educational resources offered by	3.35	.64	2.59	.64	2.97	HE		
	university delocalization is a sustainable								
	development variable in an entity								
4	A school operational system that makes it	3.28	.55	2.69	.57	3.34	VHE		
	possible for its products to specialize is already								
	approaching sustainable development								
5	Increased global cooperation resulting from	3.22	.57	3.34	.55	3.28	VHE		
	university delocalization is a requirement for								
	sustainable development in society.								
6	School operational strategies that allow for	3.23	.51	3.09	.63	3.16	VHE		
	increased border investments will ultimately								
	create sustainable development in societies.								
7	School operations that causes structural changes	3.20	.55	3.18	.51	3.19	VHE		
	are capable of igniting sustainable development								
	in societies								
8	Increasing globalization in education is a strong	3.20	.49	3.28	.53	3.24	VHE		
	sign of sustainable development								
9	A system that allows for international	3.35	.56	3.09	.58	3.22	VHE		
	competition can spur sustainable development								
	in communities								
10	Systems of educational operations that breed	3.31	.57	3.27	.74	3.29	VHE		
	technological development have capabilities to								
	enhance sustainable development in society								
11	Delocalization of education increases system	3.45	.69	3.25	.56	3.35	VHE		
	efficiency through specialization								
12	Innovation created by educational	3.15	.48	3.09	.64	3.12	VHE		
	delocalization is laden with sustainable								
	development								
	Grand mean	3.29	0.55	3.69	0.59	3.18	VHE		

Legend	<u>Scale</u>
$\overline{\overline{X}}$ 1: Mean Group I	$\overline{0.00}$ – 1.00: Very Low Extent (VHE)
SD1: Standard Deviation, Group I	1.01 – 2.00: Low Extent (LE)
\overline{X} 2: Mean Group 2	2.01 - 3.00: High Extent (HE)
SD2: Standard Deviation, Group 2	3.01 – 4.00: Very High Extent (VHE)
$\overline{X}\overline{X}$: Weighted Mean	
$A\overline{X}\overline{X}$ Aggregate Weighted Mean	

Data on Table I show that item 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 had weighted mean ratings between 3.01 and 4.00 (High Extent) indicating that the localization of higher education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria to a very high extent. Differently,

items 2 and 3 had weighted mean ratings between 2.01 and 3.00 (High Extent), which shows that delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria to a high extent.

In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.18, within the range of 3.01 and 4.00 (very high extent) academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences responded that, delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria, to a very high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the commercialization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent to which the Commercialization of University Education enhances Sustainable Development in South-South, Nigeria

		RESPONSES FROM ACADEMIC STAFF						
	ITEMS	EDUCA	TION	SOCIAI	SCIEN	CE		
		$\overline{X}1$	SD1	$\overline{X}2$	SD2	$\overline{X}\overline{X}$	Remarks	
13	Job opportunities created by educational commercialization enhance sustainable development	3.15	.55	3.18	51	3.17	VHE	
14	Solutions found to problem which commercialization offers are indicators of evidence of sustainable development in society	3.04	.44	3.24	.55	3.14	VHE	
15	Profit making education programmes can sustain institutional development	3.07	.46	3.36	.59	3.22	VHE	
16	Reduction in university business monopoly will cause sustainable development	2.52	.58	3.18	.38	2.85	HE	
17	A school programme that serves institutional resources can cause sustainable development	2.55	.57	3.17	.38	2.86	HE	
18	School programmes that serves institutional expenditure can stimulate sustainable development	2.93	.38	3.12	.32	3.03	VHE	
19	School programmes that create avenues for competition stimulate development in a sustainable manner	2.98	.48	3.24	.64	3.11	VHE	
20	School operational systems that create room for economic development are capable of stimulating sustainable development	2.99	.37	3.18	.86	3.09	VHE	
21	A reduction in institutional operational inefficiency can promote sustainable development	3.02	.53	3.35	.58	3.19	VHE	
22	Educational operational systems that guarantee revenue generation can stimulate sustainable development	3.05	.48	3.12	.58	3.09	VHE	
23	The eradication of corruption by school commercialization can stimulate sustainable development	3.02	.79	2.61	.47	2.82	HE	
24	School operational system that attract foreign investment can cause sustainable development in society	2.98	.59	2.54	.47	2.76	HE	
25	Any school operational system that allows economic recovery is sure of creating sustainable development	2.96	54	2.55	.87	2.76	НЕ	

26	A viable school economy will ultimately witness sustainable development	2.09	.69	3.00	.00	3.05	VHE
27	A school operational system that eliminates the use of obsolete technology is laden with development	3.09	.58	3.35	.58	3.22	VHE
28	School operational systems that reduces excessive government control can spur sustainable development	3.24	.61	3.94	.42	3.59	VHE
29	A school operation system that reduces school expenses is laden with development of a sustainable nature	2.54	.62	2.94	.54	2.74	HE
30	School operation systems that generate institutional funds can stimulate sustainable development	3.29	.59	3.01	.34	3.15	VHE
	Grand mean	3.05	6.55	3.06	0.50	3.06	VHE

^{*} The legend and scale for Table 1 apply.

Data on Table 2, show that, items 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 38 and 30 had weighted mean ratings within the range of 3.01 and 4.00 (very high extent) indicating that to a very high extent, the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria, to a very high extent. Differently, items 16, 17, 23, 24, 25 and 29 had weighted mean ratings within the range of 2.01 and 3.00 (high extent) showing that to a high extent, the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria, to a high extent.

In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean rating of 3.06 within the range of 3.01 and 4.00 (Very high extent), academic staff from Faculty of Education and Social Sciences responded that the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria to a very high extent.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Academic Staff from Faculties of Education and Social Science on the Extent to which the delocalization of University Education enhances Sustainable Development in South-South Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal.	Sig. value	Alpha level	Decision
Academic staff from the	290	3.29	0.55					_
faculty of education				583	10.06	0.00	0.05	Significant
Academic staff from social sciences	295	3.02	0.59					

Legend

N = Number

Std = Standard

Df = Degree of Freedom

z-cal = z Calculated

Sig Value: Significant Value

Data in Table 3, show summary of z-test analysis of the difference between the ratings of academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria. The z-test value used in testing the hypothesis resulted in 10.06, using 583 degree of freedom, significant value of 0.00 and Alpha level of 0.05. With an alpha level of 0.05 and significant value of 0.00, and 583 degrees of freedom, the significant value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 hence, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the respondents. Based on the foregoing observations, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Ratings of Academic Staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the Extent to which the Commercialization of University Education enhances Sustainable Development in South-South, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal.	Sig. value	Alpha level	Decision
Academic staff from the	290	3.05	0.55					
faculty of education				583	1.99	0.03	0.05	Significant
Staff from social sciences	295	3.06	0.50					

^{*} The legend for table 3 applies

Data on Table 4 show summaries of z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria. The z-test value used in testing the hypothesis resulted in 1.99, using 583 degree of freedom, a significant value of 0.03 and alpha value of 0.05. With an Alpha level of 0.05, significant value of 0.03 and 583 degree of freedom, the significant value of 0.03 is less than the Alpha value of 0.05, hence, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the respondents. Based on the foregoing observations, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study and their educational and business implications are presented in the proceeding sections. Thus;

Delocalization of University Education for Sustainable Development in South-South, Nigeria

The first finding of the study is that, the delocalization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria, to a very high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from test of hypotheses establishes that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences on the extent to which the delocalization of university education enhance sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria. These findings are in tandem with Greenbaum (2021), Lucy and Chirchir (2023) and Stobierski (2021). These scholars and researchers have in their various academic contributions present appreciable backings to support the fact that delocalization in organizations, stimulates developments of sustainable nature. A possible explanation for the trend in the finding may be in the fact that, the respondents of the study as workers in higher education have been parts of school delocalization programmes and are in a position to provide viable empirical information, that can stand the test of time and considered reliable. The implication of these findings is that delocalization has a lot of benefits that schools and societies that embrace the work operational system stand to achieve or record sustainable development.

Commercialization of University Education for Sustainable Development in South-South, Nigeria

The second finding of the study is that the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria, to a very high extent. Additionally, a corresponding finding from hypothesis testing, establishes that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of academic staff from Faculties of Education and Social Sciences, on the extent to which the commercialization of university education enhances sustainable development in South-South, Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with Innovative Institute (2023), Knowledge Base (2023), Short-Cross (2023) and Timothy (2006), which scholars have in their different presentations gives supports to the fact that, the commercialization of organizational processes and activities stimulates organizational development of sustainable nature. This feat appears achievable in the sense that, commercialization has a lot of inbuilt or self-laden benefits that can spark development in business entities. These findings imply that educational institutions that embrace commercialization are bound to achieve and attain a high level of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions on the findings and their educational and business implications, it is concluded that, delocalization and commercialization of university education are strong administrative and economic instrumentalities for leading the society and institutions in society to the path of sustainable development.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended as follows:

- Universities' administrators and other stakeholders should continue to follow the path of delocalization as a disentanglement from delocalization dislodges local tendencies and which automatically invites sustainable development.
- University personnel and other stakeholders should continue to implement the commercialization policies, since such involvement attract a lot of social and economic to the scholars and society and general public.

Lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean

- Countries in these geographical locations should learn that, delocalization dislodges all forms of localization and therefore expose organizations to the competitive world for interaction and the benefits that accrue therein.
- Latin America and Caribbean nation should learn that making the provisions of good and services to be service oriented with not lead to sustainable social and economic development, rather, there is need for private participation in commercialization.

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