

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY EVALUATION STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Administrative policy evaluation strategy and Sustainability of Government-owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Social Network Theory by Barnes, 1954. The research survey was the Cross-Sectional Survey. Using the Cross-Sectional Survey provided room for the use of structured design questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the nominal data or the demographic details of the respondents. The study population comprised of seventeen (17) government-owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sampling technique involved a census of the relevant principal officers and deans of government owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study used structured and close-ended questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The data retrieved was analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlations with the help of SPSS version 24. The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between Administrative Policy Evaluation Strategy and Sustainability of Government-owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, it was concluded that Administrative Policy Evaluation Strategy enhanced Sustainability of Government-owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria. We therefore recommended that; the Universities that are seeking to achieve sustainability in terms of Programme Quality, Gown-town Content and Solution Index should integrate Administrative Policy Evaluation Strategy. This strategy can also be applied in similar organizations to achieve sustainability.

Keywords: Administrative Policy Evaluation, Sustainability, Programme Quality, Gown-town Content and Solution Index

INTRODUCTION

An administrative policy evaluation strategy is a systematic approach to assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of administrative policies within an organization. It is an activity carried out by the management, the community, and the private sector (Dismar & Firman, 2019). Evaluation activities are carried out simultaneously and aim to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs from all aspects, including welfare (Afandi & Warjio, 2015). However, evaluation requires clear rules to provide guidelines for its implementation, so that the evaluation process has certain limits without having to exceed the planned goals. This is in line with the meaning of administrative policy which is correlated with efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of government plan. Therefore, policy evaluation is a definite requirement to measure all weaknesses in policy implementation and the various impacts resulting from a policy (Bajari et al., 2022).

Policy evaluation is seen as a functional activity. This means that policy evaluation is not only carried out at the final stage, but for the entire policy process. Furthermore, policy evaluation can be distinguished into two different tasks, namely: (a) to determine the consequences of a policy by describing its impact on the society and (b) to assess the success or failure of a policy based on standards or criteria. Previously set, conceptually, policy boils down to the framework of government action in a system, which includes public participation, varied interests, and socio-political economic dimensions (Haerul et al., 2016). With the complexity of this policy, evaluation holds an important factor in the timeline of a public policy so that an analysis of the concept of policy evaluation needs to be carried out in order to provide direction on policies to achieve their goals. This article aims to analyze the

dichotomies and intersections of public interest, evaluation studies, and policy changes, so as to provide policy evaluators with substantial understanding at both a conceptual and a comprehensive practice level.

Policy evaluation applies principles and methods to examine the content, implementation or impact of a policy. Evaluation is the activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy. It is a “structured and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy or reform initiative, its design, implementation and results. Its aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability as well as the worth or significance of a policy. While this definition may not be universally accepted by the evaluator community, it has offered a starting point to start the analysis and the questionnaire design. From an empirical perspective, a number of countries define evaluation, and others specifically do regarding policy evaluation. However, there is a lack of awareness from practitioners and stakeholders about the different practices developed to assess whether government actions have met their expected goals (monitoring, spending reviews, or performance management), and how they differ from one another or support/complement each other. For example, while in some cases, policy evaluations can come close to performance audit, these two practices still differ in fundamental ways as professional disciplines.

Sustainability practitioners have utilized different theoretical frameworks such as institutional theory among others to understand why and how sustainability initiatives emerge (Delmas, 2002; Hoffman, 2001) and how such efforts lead to different environmental, financial and market performance outcomes at the organizational level (Chatterji & Toffel, 2010; Flammer, 2013). Institutional theory is based on the concept that organizations are influenced by their ‘invisible’ institutional environment and are required to conform to the collective norms.

Bannerman (2008), states that there are two aspects of organizational benefits, i.e. business and strategic success. Business success is whether the goals and objectives have been achieved and all benefits have been realized. Strategic success is the impact that the project deliverables have on the market and the industry in which the organization functions. This ensures that organizations benefit in the long term from the product or service which was developed, taking all three sustainability dimensions into consideration (Silvius & Schipper 2014). Sustainability is eventually achieved when all the projects in a portfolio are managed in such a way that the vision and strategies of the organization are implemented without the depletion or destruction of resources (Marnewick 2014). Hence, projects within the portfolio should deliver on the intended benefits as stipulated in the business case (Marnewick 2014). Based on the reviewed literature, administrative policy needs direct the administrators and employees of tertiary institutions toward achieving stipulated benefits (guide them from deviation from stakeholders’ goals). This paper therefore examined administrative policy evaluation and sustainability of government owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Theoretical Foundation (Social Network Theory)

Social network theory is a baseline theory for explaining social intelligence which has been described as the ability to understand social situation and manage workforce productively to achieving performance. The Social Network Theory is a theoretical construct that is used in management to study relationships between individuals, groups in the organization. It is also a social structure which is made up of a set of social actors, sets of dyadic ties and other social interactions among employees. According to Faulkner and De Rond (2001) social networks is the persistent and structured sets of autonomous players (persons or

organizations) who cooperate on the basis of implicit and open-ended contracts. They explained those contracts are social rather than legally binding. Follet (1928) noted that, human beings grew and become innovative through their relationships with others in organization. Individual is a social animal who finds a sense of identification, personal security in cooperative relationships and then function in group setting to create knowledge that is significant which individual working separately could not have created.

The simplest idea of a network involves a set of points connected by lines and it was this idea which led the proponents of social network theory to focus on relationships among social entities and workers in an organization. The theory rested on the social interactions and its concern is on managers, employees and the environment. The effectiveness of these interactions is a function of good social skills exhibited by managers and employees. Social skills can be defined as the set of skills (knowledge) people use to interact and communicate with one another. They are based on the social norms of our society, the organization values and norms and they tell us what attitudes and behaviors are considered to be normal, acceptable and expected in a particular social situation (Patrick, 2008). Libet and Lewinsohn (1973) defined social skill as a complex ability that produces behaviors that will be positively reinforced and emulate by others on the premise of effective and productive interactions in the workplace. These interactions expand beyond the organization to the external environment. The social skills in the social validity in light of the definitions above exemplified acceptable and productive behaviors in specific situation that reflect the attitude and abilities to inspire and motivate colleagues to perform their task effectively and efficiently. Organization constantly interacts with the external environment in the form of input-output relationship. To this end, managers must be concern with what is happening in the external environment as it affects the functionality and operations of the organization.

Concept of Administrative Policy Evaluation

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Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability is a multidimensional process based on efficiency and effectiveness, it focuses on results, knowledge, capacity building, networks of partners, and products and services. This means that an organization's operations and production, strategy, and management have to keep incorporating and integrating sustainability issues (Rodríguez-Olalla & Avilés-Palacios, 2017; Lozano, 2018). It is essentially a component of corporate social responsibility, which begins with a fair understanding of environmental factors, economic and social components, and the accountability of their public reporting. In 1969, the US government passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assure a balanced judgment between technological, economic, ecological, social, and other considerations in the public's interest. Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) is another unbiased concept that provides a manufacturing organization with greater sensitivity in its approach to implementing sustainability (Seliger, Kim, Kernbaum, & Zettl, 2008).

Sustainability is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987). It is driven by organizational culture that is conducive to achieving sustainability and has underlying common assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the resolution of sustainability issues. It influences organizational behavior through corporate decision-making and organizational practices (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). From cultural legacy to cultural and creative enterprises, culture drives economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Aligning organizational strategy with sustainability increases the competitiveness of industrial systems (Amui, Jabbour, de Sousa-Jabbour, & Kannan, 2017). On the other hand, sustainable development is a method of organizing citizens to ensure their long-term survival. This requires consideration of both current and future imperatives, such as the protection of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equality.

Programme Quality

There is no gain in saying that basic education has become inadequate to meet the challenges of the growing world not only in Nigeria but also in the entire global village. The demand for higher education has, therefore, become imperative and is rapidly increasing geometrically (Fabiya & Oladipo, 2008). The global perception agrees that for economic and social development to be derived there is need for advancement and the application of the right knowledge. The World Bank/UNICEF (1996) reported that education in general, and university. Education in particular, is fundamental to the construction of the knowledge economy and society in all nations. The report also identified the fact that the potential of

higher education systems in developing countries to fulfill this responsibility is frequently thwarted by long standing problems of finance, efficiency, equity, quality and governance. These challenges are linked to the growing role of knowledge in economic development, rapid changes in telecommunications and technology and the globalization of trade and labour markets (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2004).

The report of the Gender Budgeting Initiative (2003) highlights the importance of access to quality education as both a basic need (one which is necessary to the fulfillment of an individual's personhood) and also a strategic need (that which will yield access to other opportunities such as health, employment and political awareness). It also sees access to quality education by all regardless of class or gender as a critical element of development as education helps to nurture democracy and promote peace. In view of the above, the acquisition of education, most especially university education, is essentially important and useful to man. Quality is a slippery concept, which implies different things to different people (Preffer & Coote, 1991). It is that which best satisfies and exceeds customers' needs and wants (Artzt, 1992). Quality can be said to lie in the eyes of the beholder. This is because the consumers, who make the judgement on quality, do these by reference to the best comparable performance. Quality refers to the standard of a phenomenon when it is compared to other things like it: how good or bad something is, that is, to be of good/poor/top quality or of a high standard. In this context, it is associated with the 'monitoring and evaluation component of education' to see whether the outcome is good and of the intended standard. In view of this, topical issues in Nigerian education system today center on the quality of education imparted to the citizenry and the relevance of that education to the life of the individual in particular and the nation in general.

Gown-town Content

Gown town contents refer to as the numerous values and roles of higher education in the society are: to foster positive character development, promotion of good governance, preservation of relevant cultural heritage and practices, creativity, and problems solving skills. Every university programme of study or the numerous professions offered by Nigerian universities have specialized skills which the learners should acquire (Rosan, 2002). Town refers to the nonacademic community while gown literarily refers to the university community. It implies the traditional ancient seats of learning such as University of Oxford and University of Cambridge both of which are regarded as one of the world's leading academic institutions and the oldest surviving in the English- speaking world; included also are University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Ibadan both in Nigeria. It is a metaphor, literarily used to depict urban higher education. The term gown originated during the Middle Ages in the European universities where undergraduates often held minor clerical status and donned garb similar to that worn by the clergy. The gown proved comfortable for studying in unheated and drafty buildings and thus became a tradition in the universities. The gown also served as a social symbol, as it was impractical for physical manual work (a comparison can be made with the gowns worn by Chinese officials).

Solution Index

Tertiary institution developed the principles that organizations and individual applied for economic and societal development, formulates theories, and establishes policies and legal procedures for a better society carry out effective training and development. The university stands as the pillar of the society. Institutions of higher education remain priceless assets in human capital development. It is a sine quo non to attaining achieving national economic development. Today, there is global interest in measuring impact of tertiary institutions on host communities using cultural, political and socio- economic indicators. Nigeria is a

multicultural state with over 250 ethnic groups and several tertiary institutions whose roles and responsibilities transcend the realm of education (Fatoki, 2017; Ehinmowo & Eludoyin, 2010). This is because research activities carried out in tertiary institutions are community-oriented as they are conducted in a manner that the development of host communities is felt and practiced by all stakeholders.

Tertiary institution is the bases for global transformation. Globally, community transformation is a difficult but an indispensable task. Ideally, governments are concerned with economic and social needs of its citizens; and fulfilling this obligation requires institutions with educated, skilled and competent people. Apparently, education is a basic tool for community transformation; hence, with the rising trend of globalization, community transformation has become part of tertiary institutions (Ali, 2010). Tertiary institutions have been considered as organizations for social transformation, therefore, their location in a community has been acknowledged as an immense significance to the overall development of that area. Location impact explains the influence of a new thought and initiative (that is, the environment), this new initiative or concept could be in form of tertiary institution.

METHODS

The research design adopted in this study was the Cross-sectional design. This study was an empirical study that involved data collection from the respondent. The Cross-Sectional Research Design is a type of research design that involves collection of data from the sample of participants at a single point in time. The population of the study consisted of the 17 Federal and State-Owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sampling technique involved a census of the relevant principal officers and deans of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria that were selected from the population. Structured-close ended questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection. The validity of the instrument was determined by the supervisors and other experts in the field of Office and Information Management. The reliability was ensured using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with the help of SPSS. Data that was retrieved from the field through the administration of questionnaire and was analyzed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Co-efficient statistical tool to determine the hypotheses in order to ascertain the relationship between the variables through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive statistics was used to present the results in the tables and charts for easy interpretation.

Table 1: Internal Reliability Coefficients of Variables

	N	Scale Mean if Scale Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
Policy Evaluation	50	35.6006	41.776	.952
Programme Quality	50	34.7238	41.102	.858
Gown-town Content	50	35.6773	40.804	.763
Solution Index	50	35.6890	40.295	.855

Source: SPSS 22 Cronbach's Alpha

RESULTS**Table 2: Administrative Policy Evaluation**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Evaluation activities are carried out simultaneously and aim to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs from all aspects, including welfare	214	1.0	5.0	3.706	.7644
The policy is assessed to determine the success or failure of a policy based on standards or criteria	214	1.0	5.0	4.425	1.0488
To what extent does policy apply principles and methods to examine the content, implementation or impact of a policy	214	1.0	5.0	4.509	.9077
To what extent does policy evaluations reflect the measurement whether costs are justified in terms of efficiency and value for money	214	1.0	5.0	4.397	1.0464
Valid N (listwise)	214				

Source: Research Survey, 2024.

Table 2 explained how administrative policy evaluation is rated by the respondents. In question one on how evaluation activities are carried out simultaneously and aim to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs from all aspects, including welfare were rating high with a valid mean of 3.71 and standard deviation of 0.644, question two showed that the policy are assess to determine the success or failure of a policy based on standards or criteria yielded a valid mean of 4.43 and standard deviation of 1.0488, the response on question three added that the policy applies principles and methods to examine the content, implementation or impact factor on the university with a valid mean of 4.51 and standard deviation of 0.9077 and lastly the response on question four concluded that policy evaluations reflect the measurement that costs are justified in terms of efficiency and value for money with valid mean of 4.40 and standard deviation of 1.0464 respectively.

Table 3: Programme Quality

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent does the South-South University meet the challenges of the region	214	1.0	5.0	4.435	1.1354
To what extent do the universities in South-South compete effectively with the global perspective?	214	1.0	5.0	4.397	1.1367
How effective is the university education in general, fundamental to the construction of the knowledge economy and society in the region	214	1.0	5.0	4.168	1.3461
Rate your university to how it is able to contribute to rapid changes in telecommunications and technology and the globalization of trade and labour markets	214	1.0	5.0	3.995	1.3925
Valid N (listwise)	214				

Source: Research Survey, 2024.

Table 3 showed the respondents' rate on programme quality as a measure of sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. The response in question one, the quality of the universities are able to meet the challenges of the region with valid mean of 4.44 and standard deviation of 1.1354, question two showed that the universities in South-South compete effectively with the global perspective with valid mean of 4.44 and standard deviation of 1.1367, also the respondents response in question three showed that the universities education in general is fundamental to the construction of the knowledge economy and economic growth in the region, and lastly the respondents in question four affirmed that the universities are able to contribute to rapid changes in telecommunications and technology and the globalization of trade and labour markets with a valid mean of 4.00 and standard deviation of 1.3925. All the respondents' rate was above 3.00 for a 5-point Likert scale and was classified as high.

Table 4: Gown-town Content

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
How does the university output link to the growing role of knowledge in economic development in South- South	214	1.0	5.0	4.145	1.4184
How responsive are the citizen with respect to university objective for character molding in terms of trust and accountability	214	1.0	5.0	4.136	1.2430
To what extent does our university graduates serve as a social symbol, as it was practicable for hard work and innovation	214	1.0	5.0	4.093	1.4375
To what extent does the university enhance positive character development, promotion of good governance, reservation of relevant cultural heritage and practices?	214	1.0	5.0	4.341	1.2105
Valid N (listwise)	214				

Source: Research survey, 2024

Table 4 showed the respond of the respondents in Gown-town Content. The respondents' response in question one showed that the universities output is linked to the growing role of knowledge in economic development in South- South with valid mean of 4.15 and standard deviation of 1.4184, the respondents rate in question two showed how responsive are the citizen with respect to universities objective for character molding in terms of trust and accountability with a valid mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 1.2430, in question three the respondent added that the university graduates served as a social symbol, practicable for hard work and innovation with valid mean of 4.10 and standard deviation of 1.4375 and question four reflected that the university enhance positive character development, promotion of good governance, reservation of relevant cultural heritage and practices with a valid mean of 4.341 and standard deviation of 1.2105 respectively.

Table 5: Solution Index

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent does the South-South universities been able to develop the principles that organizations and individual applied for economic and societal development	214	1.0	5.0	4.383	1.2458
To what extent does South-South universities been able to formulate theories, and establish policies for a better society to carry out effective training and development	214	1.0	5.0	3.449	1.1807
To what does the universities been able to establish legal and ethical conduct that supports business practices and economic growth of the region	214	2.0	5.0	4.308	1.1210
To what extent do the South-South universities been able to transform the individual and communities with the rising trend of globalization?	214	1.0	5.0	3.668	1.3932
Valid N (listwise)	214				

Source: Research survey, 2024.

Table 5 is in Solution index as a measure of sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. The respondent reflected that the universities are able to developed the principles that organizations and individual apply for economic and societal development with valid mean of 4.38 and standard deviation of 1.2458, question two showed that the respondents supported that the universities are able to formulate theories, and establish policies for a better society to carry out effective training and development with a valid mean of 3.45 and standard deviation of 1.1807, question three affirmed that the universities are able to establish legal and ethical conduct that support business practices and economic growth of the region with a valid mean of 4.31 and standard deviation of 1.1210 and also the universities policy implementation are able to transform the individual and communities with the rising trend of globalization with valid mean of 3.67 and standard deviation of 1.3932 respectively.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This univariate analysis answers the question to what extent does policy evaluation enhance sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. From the analysis, the results obtained showed that the respondents supported that administrative policy evaluation is a veritable tool to enhance sustainability especially in government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. They agreed that policy evaluation activities are carried out simultaneously and aim to accelerate the fulfillment of the needs from all aspects, including welfare, and other social needs, the universities and stakeholders constantly evaluate the policy to determine the success or failure of a policy based on standards or criteria and also the policy evaluation applied principles and methods to examine the content, implementation or impact factor on the university. They added that policy evaluations reflect the measurement that costs are justified in terms of efficiency and value for money or investment.

The bivariate analysis showed the relationship between administrative policy evaluation and sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. The correlation

coefficient shows that there is a strong positive relationship between administrative policy evaluation and programme quality of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria with correlation coefficient of 0.829, the relationship between administrative policy evaluation and gown-town content of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria with the correlation coefficient of 0.659 and the relationship between administrative policy evaluation and solution index of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria with the correlation coefficient of 0.686. These confirms the magnitude and strength of these relationship which is statistically significant at ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$). Based on these values, the null hypothesis **H₀₇**, **H₀₈**, **H₀₉** were rejected and the research (Alternate) hypotheses **H_{A7}**, **H_{A8}**, **H_{A9}** accepted. This research supported the work of Similar to Agnew et al. (2019) who found that the varying timing and placement of break as a result of being attached to Thanksgiving week has an impact on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the break, we found that while the fall break surveys overwhelmingly showed students liked the timing of the break where it was, qualitative discussions with students and faculty suggested that the timing of the break might come too soon in the semester. Initially the break fell at six weeks, directly in the middle of the semester but every subsequent year, the break came five weeks into the fall semester. Thus, there is a moderate positive relationship between Administrative Policy Evaluation and Sustainability of Government owned Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the relationship between administrative policy evaluation and sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. Administrative policy evaluation (predictor variable) was tested against the attributes of sustainability (criterion variable) program quality, gown town content and solution index. The hypotheses were tested using the Simple Regression Analysis. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

The major findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between administrative policy evaluation and sustainability of government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria. Based on discussion and conclusion drawn; it was recommended that;

- i. Universities and stakeholder should actually evaluate the import and output of the policy implemented to ascertain its impact on the citizenry. This will enhance sustainability especially the government owned universities in South-South, Nigeria.

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