



## DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING TO ENHANCE QUALITY: A REVIEW OF NIGERIA UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract:** *Developing university social capital consist of working together, fostering trust and given responsibility to employees be it academic and non academic to function independently as well as collectively especially in today's market where competition is striving. Just as universities in Nigeria are beginning to see need to compete with each other, the demand and need for university to make their service more matrimonies are rising, an approach that differential one university quality from another, demanding the need for improvement. This paper is design to look at university social capital as it improves university productivities. This type of study has received lesser attention both in literature and in practice. Hence, this paper fill the gap in knowledge by reviewing university social capital building that can enhance quality building and development in Nigeria University.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In a research work by Mojeed-Sanni (2015), he studies organizational social capital building in medium size business focusing on human resource practitioner's perspective of the study. At a conclusive stage of Mojeed-Sanni 's research he calls that organizational social capital should be developing for every organization who want to be more competitive and also provide best services to customers. The study was further intensified into Nigerian university sector by Mojeed-Sanni, Adetunji and Ogunleye (2015), they looking at social capital building and quality management in Nigeria universities: perception of human resource practitioners. However, the study creates more vacuums in the research field of quality improvement and social capital building that there is need for universities employees to actually understand the two concepts and how the concepts can help develop the university system.

In the two studies named above the author recognised the need for staff empowerment to enable individual who are involved in the running of university business to be on their footing ready to follow the tried of change and willing to develop themselves in other to enhance their delivery level. Although Adetunji (2014) first argue that because there are huge number of applicants willing to get into the university system with close to half a million still waiting for admission into university of their choice. Adetunji (2014) claimed that the moment competition is not in the mind of university education providers in Nigeria. This was further intensified in another study by Adetunji (2015a) that there is need for university in Nigeria to demonstrate a better output as more private university established are now competing for similar markets most public universities have traditionally seen as theirs (Public university in this context means universities established by the government either federal or state. They are also responsible for such university funding and management). Even it was observed that many foreign universities now seen Nigeria as a big market for them to explore due to huge backlog of students waiting for admission. These were as a result of public universities embarking on several month industrial action in the quest for needs such as salaries increment, demand for other social needs among others. In an attempt for the federal government of Nigeria to stop or eliminate such behaviour which has caused or increase the number of applicants waiting admission to almost one million yearly (Oko, 2011). Private investors were asked to support in the provision of university



education. However, the first five years of private investors opportunity to invest on university education reduced the pressure in terms of access but dissatisfaction increases in terms of education teaching and learning quality, teaching materials, basic amenities like water and power, staff involvement funding and many more (Adetunji 2015b). As a result of which many private universities have suddenly been closed down for lack of water or power and many other social amenities. Although most of these private universities blame the under performance of staff, breakdown in communication for student dissatisfaction on basic amenities. The federal government of Nigeria are not expected from sharing such blame as external provider for not providing social amenities for the citizen. But the study will only focus how to improve quality through sustainability and developing internal factors such as blaming the internal staff for such failure. This issues is not the problem of private providers only, it is a general issues, but this paper is streamline to focus only on developing social capital building of human resource that can help improve and sustain quality of service delivery by looking at university social capital as well as quality as a different concept that are inter-linked.

## **UNIVERSITY SOCIAL CAPITAL**

In a work published by Mojeed-Sanni, Adetunji and Sanni (2015), they expressed that the relationships that make organizations work effectively constitute social capital. Mojeed-Sanni, Adetunji and Sanni supports other researcher and explain that social capital consists of the trust, close relationships, respect, and mutual understanding developed in the structure and content of social relations, leading to goodwill and solidarity (Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000; Adler & Kwon, 2002). In a like manner, Cohen and Prusak (2001) posits that factors listed that are embedded in social capital are associated with common sense of purpose and strong norms of cooperation. Therefore, cooperation is keen if improvement will take place in any work place. Quality can be derived through effective activities of the employees while social capital building can only be developed to increase staff performance.

Van Buren (2008) relates organisation social capital to the value created by and for a firm through its internal relations among and within employees (academic and non-academic), as well as its external alliances and reputation, which he called 'relational wealth'. One of the key strengths of any organisation faced with competitive pressures and dynamic operating



environment, such as university education in Nigeria, is the ability to leverage on its internal resource, which human (employees) relations and interactions is a pivotal source. Van Buren (2008) suggested the firm's competitive advantage to be ability to its (a) relationships with and among internal stakeholders (employees), (b) external alliances (with suppliers, joint venture partners, alliance partners), and (c) reputation of its employees individually and collectively is a source of competitive advantage. Complementary to Van Buren's suggestion for firm's creation of source of competitive advantage; Sirmon, Hitt and Ireland (2007) asserts that organisation social capital benefits the firm both in the access it provides to external resource (bridging social capital, i.e., 'outside-in' intangible resources) and in facilitating internal coordination (bonding social capital, i.e., 'inside-in' intangible resources). Bearing in mind that since no firm has total control of all the resources that it needs to survive and compete effectively in the market place, and that firms resources needed to be bundled and leveraged (Arregle et al., 2007) hence, Hitt, Lee and Yucl (2002) expressed that firms must acquire or gain access to needed resources from external sources and facilitate the coordination of activities and projects across various functional units, effective decision making processes, and the implementation of the resulting decisions. An approach which, Adetunji and Mojeed-Sanni (2015) terms as contemporary issues to improve quaity in nigeria universities. They also emphases that it is time for univesrities and its employess to rise to the labour market challenges if they are to compete well in the market place. Arguably, the demand for compete in the market place is linked with the need for quality provision of university education, raising the need to study quality. In Adetunji (2015) quality is the totality of competitive advantage derived from improvewment while Mojeed-Sanni (2015) is of the view that socail capital developmet is the internal development of staff to be more competitive in l the provison of teaching and learning, a key componet of university business, which in turn improves organisation business process. Therefore there is a link between social capital building and managemnt of quality in the university sector. Arguably the demand for compete in the market place is linked with the need for quality provision of university education, raising the need to study quality. In Adetunji (2015) quality is the totality of competitive advantage derive from improvement while Mojeed-Sanni (2015) is of the oppinon that social capital is the internal development of staff to be



more competitive in improving their organisation business process. Therefore there is a link between the social capital development and quality management.

## **UNIVERSITY QUALITY**

Quality is an ongoing debate in the study of university education, as Akinyemi and Abiddin (2013). has argued that education without quality can even be more precarious than no education, stressing that without quality, education has no value, given a more reason why university have to provide quality education by all means. Not far from this debate was what Arong and Ogbadu (2010) asserts that University education is expected to create needed human capital with enhanced skills that can lead to productivity, technological innovation, and growth within the economy. Very close to Arong and Ogbadu assertion was a definition originated by Adetunji (2014) that Quality education is that the education that is adapted and relevant to the needs of the society. That is education that meets the needs and standards in terms of physical survival, health, growth, and in a complex globalized world. Oyewole (2010) posits that quality university education is a worthwhile process, which empowers the recipients with relevant attitudes, knowledge, ideas, skills, and values needed to make informed decisions and live a self-sustaining life.

In a similar opinion Ekong (2006) express that quality builds live skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and perspectives. While Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) described quality as a measure of how bad or good the products of any Nigeria universities are in terms of meeting established standards and their academic performance. To top it up Igwe (2007) expressed that Quality university education is the type of education that produces a complete person. Complete in the sense that the person is morally, physically, socially emotionally and intellectually developed. Although justification for quality and a sound university education cannot be overstressed, as the concern for quality in Nigeria university education is most desirable for the national advancement, political, economical, scientific and technological development. This raise the need for better understanding of what university social capital will consist of if it will enhance quality provision.

## **COMPONENTS OF UNIVERSITY SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Ruiz, Martinez and Rodrigo (2010) expressed that although research on social capital has become a popular way of denoting many kinds of resources accrueable and approbiable to an organisation from interpersonal relationships. However, focus has been on three main



dimensions that are researched in the social capital literature as having influence the development of the mutual benefits of social capital. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) proposed these three dimensions:

firstly, structure of relations (structural dimension), that is the way which the lecturers and other services providers relates with the structure from departmental level to faculty and from faculty to the university as whole. Secondly the interpersonal dynamics that exist within the structure (relational dimension), that is lecture staff relationship, lecturer student relationship, student and supporting staff relationship. Thirdly the common context and languages held by individuals in the structure (cognitive dimension). That is are staff in general saying the same thing, are they following a similar procedure in dealing with student, meaning that are they practicing fairly in terms of institutional social capital, these dimensions are mainly reflected on the one hand, in the concept of associability, which is defined as the willingness and capability of university employees (academic and non-academic) to make individual goals and actions subject to collective goals and actions (Leana, Van & Harry, 1999). On the other hand, trust is a necessary concept arising in terms of university social capital, because it is really necessary for individuals to work together for a common goal and facilitate a collective action in order to promote the university mission and vision statement. Though Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) reverses the order in the sense that they posit that collective actions could also herald trust among academic and non-academic, they suggest that a two-way interaction exist between trust and cooperation – cooperation within university employees can build trust, likewise, trust can lead to cooperation between university employees. An approach which will increase productivities as well as make a university more competitive among her counterparts.

These two concepts (quality and social capital building) can only be understood of those who are involved directly in the daily activities of the university allow each unit or department to function independently of their unnecessary interference as noted by Adetunji (2015). Adetunji expressed that quality management is a collective effort and implementing quality policies should be everyone's duties including the students in the university. He claimed no one should accept poor service. Likewise, the concept of social capital building as discussed by Mojeed-Sanni (2015), pointed that social capital building is a collective work, therefore a similarity is shared in the work of Adetunji (2014), Mojeed-Sanni



(2015). Due to these commonality studying these two concepts can help improve productivities especially in the university where every department work autonomously of the other, with different management and leadership style in operation from unit director to head of department to dean of faculty to university committee such as admission, planning committee etc. and university management. The operation of each independent unit are based on Deans of faculties, head of department or director of units understanding of what to delivery and what not to be delivered.

In both studies discussed above there is one principal function involved in the developing the activities of the university whether it is to improve quality or social capital building, this function is embedded in how well the institution can put all function of management to work effectively including human being who are the primary role player of any organisation. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that social capital building of staff is an important factor improve or enhance quality of service rendered by the university because university operations are quite different to any other establishment.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper concluded by saying social capital building is the development of human resource state of mind that will effectively translate into taking ownership of the business, working together as a team with same motive following the business vision and mission statement from individual to group of individual. The study notes that the success of university education in promoting the well-being of individuals is very crucial. It is likewise a pillar for the cultural and socioeconomic development of Nigeria and any nation. The study refills that Educational programs therefore should be planned to inculcate in students' creative initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, the capacity to analyze complex situations, and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, It can be said that national development is the capacity of a nation to improve and sustain growth in all aspects of national life, and the means to achieving this is to provide university education to the citizenry.

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