

PERCEIVED PRIVATE SECTOR SOURCES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explores private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning in Nigeria. Fourteen private sector sources were derived for the study, and respondents were required to score each of the sources between '1' and '14' for the promotion of private sector participation in education of open and distance learning. The instrument was administered to 400 facilitators (teachers) in the open and distance learning/study centres. The study clearly showed that, partnership with private sector could turn around the life of the students for better. Finally, the paper identified a number of private sector sources of participation, among them are skill development, to reduce the level of unemployment, evaluation to make it cooperative in nature, curriculum designing to make curriculum contents relative to the needs of students and society. Others include linkage with the industry for the involvement of students in open and distance learning for practical activities, setting up of entrepreneurial programmes, fund raising, donation and others. Recommendations were made for improvement.

Keywords: *Private sector sources, participation, open and distance learning.*

Introduction

The National Universities Commission (NUC) revealed that there are twenty seven (27) Federal Universities, thirty (30) State Universities and

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thirty four (34) legally approved private Universities and forty four (44) illegal Universities in Nigeria (Badmus, 2009). With the proliferation of universities in Nigeria and many other countries, admission problems still persist. This is because of population explosion which has given rise to increase in providing more universities which may not be feasible. However, demand for higher education in the country (Nigeria) continues to be much more rapidly than before. Also, the increasing cost of education at tertiary level coupled with economic recession has restricted the opportunity for many youth from attaining higher education. In addition, funding of high education has become a problem for governments at all levels. Thus, an alternative is the open and distance learning (ODL) approach.

Open and distance learning (ODL) is non-formal in the sense that, courses are planned in a non-school setting. It can be used at the students' convenience and more people can be reached without building more and more universities (Fagbamigbe, 2006). Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been in operation for a long time because, it is almost clear that, the possibility of the government fulfilling the aspirations of the youth educationally may not be feasible. Against this background, there is therefore the need to embrace partnerships with the private sector in the management of open and distance learning. This study brings to attention some sources of private sector participation in the management of open and distance learning.

Education is the panacea or an important resource for human development. Unfortunately, none of the tiers of government can shoulder the responsibility of managing higher education alone in Nigeria due to the economy depression. The rising demand for higher education by the youth necessitates the establishment of open and distance learning. Because of inadequacy in political support, open and distance learning in Nigeria lack adequate financial resources. A recipe to solve this problem and others, which constituted the handicap in open and distance learning education, is the recognition and involvement of the private sector participation in the management.

Private sector is known as citizen sector, which includes individual or groups of people in the community. The people belonging to this sector operate chain of companies in the society. The businesses operated by them are usually profit-oriented. Private partnership initiative can lead to improvement in the management of open and distance learning (ODL). This initiative is prevalent in both developed and developing countries like United States of America, Pakistan and

so on. It can attract donations toward development, books for equipping the library, building erection and provision of equipment or instructional resources. Others include award of scholarship, skill development and many others. This study intends to critically explore the private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning education in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study intends to explore the sources in which private sector could participate in management of open and distance learning in Nigeria. This is with a view to enlighten the populace that private sector can contribute immensely to the survival of education such as open and distance learning.

Research Question

What are the perceived private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning in Nigeria?

Design of the Study

The investigator made use of survey design to elicit information from the respondents with a view to ascertain private sector's sources in the management of open and distance learning in Nigeria due to the biting effects of the global financial crisis prevalent in Nigeria. This type of study will provide possible private sector's sources, which will help the institution to succeed in dealing with their difficult situations. Each of the sources will be fully discussed.

Population

The population comprised all the facilitators in the thirty-five learning centers in Nigeria. These people have been teaching students in the open and distance learning for several years. It is assumed that they are familiar with the problems encountered by the institution and the students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Out of 400 questionnaires sent out to the examination centers through the information technology staff members posted to supervise

the electronic examinations (e-exam) held in May – June 2013 only 300 were returned. All the returned questionnaires were used for the study.

Research Instrument

Only one instrument was developed and used for this study. The instrument was a test on perceived private sector sources in the management of open and distance learning (ODL) in Nigeria. This instrument first administered to 5 study center managers who were not involved in the study. Only those private sector sources approved or supported by the five (5) independent raters were accepted and put in the final list. This approved list of private sector sources in the management of open and distance learning (ODL) were turned into questionnaire or a test of knowledge of the private sector sources for the facilitators. The respondents were asked to show their levels of agreement with the plausible private sector sources in the management of open and distance learning education. Test-retest of the instrument reliability gave a reliability coefficient of 0.88, which was considered adequately reliable.

Administration and Collection of Data

The 400 copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents by hand with the aid of some workers in different learning centres. The information technology staff members collected only 300 copies of the instruments back within 4 weeks of administration.

Analysis of Data

The mean statistics was used for answering the question. The respondents were required to indicate their levels of agreement with the identified private sector courses in the management of open and distance learning (ODL). Nominal values were assigned, strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. The mean rank scores of each of the items were computed. The overall rank ordering of the items were determined by using the mean rank of each of the items.

Table 1
Mean and Ranking Order of perceived Private Sector Sources of Participation in the Management of Open and Distance Learning in Nigeria

S. No.	Perceived Private Sector Sources of Participation	Mean Rank	Ranking Order
1	Skill Development	4.10	1 st
2	Setting up of Entrepreneurship Awareness Creation programme	3.35	4 th
3	Donations	3.28	5 th
4	Fund Raising	3.23	7 th
5	Capacity Building	2.84	11 th
6	Evaluation	3.5	2 nd
7	Setting up of Entrepreneurship Coaching and Development Training	3.26	6 th
8	Linkage with Private Companies and Industry	3.21	8 th
9	Setting up of entrepreneurship Motivation Development Programme	3.00	9 th
10	Building Erection	2.98	10 th
11	Curriculum Planning	3.4	3 rd
12	Organization of Private Business Entrepreneurs Conference	3.04	12 th
13	Setting up of Student designated Viewing Investment Opportunities Centres	1.75	14 th
14	Youth Entrepreneurship Programme	2.66	13 th

Results in table 1 above showed that all the respondents accepted all the items. The values range from 1.75 (item 13, Setting up of Student Designated viewing Investments Opportunities centre) in Nigeria to 4.10 for skill development (item 1). The least accepted was item 13. The results in table 1 also showed that all the respondents unanimously agreed or accepted that there are several sources with which private sector can participate in the management of open and distance learning. Each of the sources is discussed, following the rank order.

Skill Development

Skill is the only difference between a trained entrepreneur and one who banks simply on luck. There should be formal avenues of inculcating innovative skills in the students. In the opinion of Badmus (2000), skill is practical knowledge, power and ability acquired for the purpose of doing something and it is acquired through training. Acquisition of these skills will enable programme recipient live a meaningful and fulfilling life and contribute to the development of the

society in which they belong. Nnodim (2012) opined that skill development is vital to students for enhancing self-reliance. Against this background and others, skill development is very important. This item was highly rated on table 1 by the respondents as one of the private sources of participation in open and distance learning.

In support of this, Badmus (2006) claimed that skill development is crucial for student particularly at this time when unemployment rate for university graduates is on the increase and their prospects are worsening. Through private participation, the level of unemployment can be drastically reduced and the youth will be able to acquire relevant skills. It is glaring to the respondents that formal education cannot develop adequate skill required for employment, hence, it becomes imperative that private sector should participate in the management of education such as open and distance learning (ODL).

In the area of skill development, the private sector can be particularly helpful and impressive. Many private companies, industries and corporation can provide the much needed help where many undergraduate students in open and distance learning develop their basic skills in their different areas of specialization through internship or supervised industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) programme, such programme runs between 3 – 12 months. Undergraduate students on industrial attachment are expected to acquire relevant and needed skills from these industries, companies, corporation and organizations owned by private sector. According to Okere (2012) private partnership is a catalyst for education and economic development.

Evaluation

Evaluation (item 2) seems to be important in the life of the students as it was rated 2nd by the respondents as one of the private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning. Here we are in the 21st century, evaluation of students' performance currently carried out in institutions of higher learning in different areas of specialization is at present a major disaster in the sense that the performance of students at home, interview and on-the-job is at low ebb (Macdonald, 1994). Emphasis is placed on academic achievement derived from pen/paper – examination rather than focusing attention on achievement from practical activities for skill development. The continuity of this practice of evaluation system has led students to gaining very little knowledge and without skill acquisition while in school.

The private sector can turn around this situation for better. The sector can make the evaluation cooperative in nature involving students, teachers and the community members. For example, before graduation, final year students in the open and distance learning can be asked to go out all alone and put in from three to six months in a certain chosen practical work either in the school or in the community. This will be followed by combined evaluation of the project by the teacher, community representative living in the area where the students did his practical work and the student himself. According to Alaezi (1988), this type of evaluation practice will foster links between school and non-school learning and between school and the community. This type of evaluation is better than the only one derived from pen/paper examination which does not focus attention on practical activities, skill development, self competence, proficiency and many more.

Curriculum Designing

Curriculum is an instrument with which learners are shaped to meet various demands of life (Badmus, 2008). Furthermore, she perceived curriculum as the heart of system of education or programme activities by which a nation plans to reach desired goal (Badmus, 2002). This is an important area in the education of a country and it was ranked 3rd in terms of private sector participation in the management of open and distance learning. However, it is sad that curriculum contents in our institutions of higher learning have been criticized for inadequate attention to the development of relevant skills and independent entrepreneurship and did not consider employment ability of its programme recipients.

According to Abiogu (2008), the United Nations Development report showed that a great number of Nigerians are ready to work, but are unable to find work due to the esoteric nature of the Nigerian higher institutions programme. The content of their curricula is not related to the real needs of the students and the community. In the opinion of Badmus (2006), a curriculum for life is to be reconsidered as an alternative to the present open and distance learning education curriculum to eliminate the problems of unemployment, underemployment and many other things affecting our graduates in the society.

In the light of the above, the open and distance learning institutions should involve private sector in the design of their curriculum to ensure the relevance of the curriculum to private sector needs, standard and practice, (Emunemu, 2008). In the same vein, the contribution of private

sector to curriculum development in open and distance learning education is very important because they are in position to know exactly what ought to be included in the curriculum to ensure relevance.

Setting up of Entrepreneurship Awareness Creation Programme

The fourth rated private source of participation in the management of open and distance learning is setting up of entrepreneurship awareness programme in collaboration with private sector. This programme is highly needed by the students because an important problem prevailing in higher education such as open and distance learning in Nigeria is that most of the courses offered by the students are not employment oriented courses and also lacking in entrepreneurial skills. On the other hand, most of the courses offered by the students are not on the employment market. The private sector could work with open and distance learning institutions to foster closer link between the industries and the students so that on graduation from school, students can find suitable employment or self-employment. In the opinion of Fajana (2002), entrepreneurship awareness creation programme is an orientation towards opportunity to get employment in many industries. Another importance of the programme is that it will provide linkage between the students and the professionals, successive entrepreneurs and viable industries.

Donations

Another source of managing open and distance learning is through donations from private sector, either in cash or kind for the effective teaching of subjects offered in the institutions. It ranked fifth on table 1. According to Badmus (2000), through this approach, some donors may undertake the construction of facilities such as standard laboratories and well equipped with necessary materials because a laboratory is not just an empty room. By the same token, some artisans in the community may cooperate in the provision and donation of furniture for various subject areas in open and distance learning institution. Apart from these, books worth several thousand can be donated to open and distance learning institutions by embassies in Nigeria as part of their programme in updating libraries of the institution. In addition to the above, with partnership with the banks, cash donations can come from banks that are committed to the development of education. More so, in the area of sports, donation can also be received from major players in the insurance business. They can take a major step in donating sport kits to open and distance learning institutions. They could donate items such as football,

jerseys, lawn tennis, swimming suits and so on (IGI, 2011, Iseghohi, 2001). On the other hand, the cost of these items can be donated instead of the items. Donation of scientific equipment in the area of science, technology and vocational education can also be received from private companies in and outside Nigeria.

Similarly, alumni association, which is a vehicle for educational development may donate money to their alma-mater (Asaolu, 2010). The alumni of open and distance learning institutions could donate money to their alma mater in order to improve facilities in their study centers to make a conducive environment for learning. Such cash donation can be realized at a global re-union occasion aimed at re-uniting with the old boys and girls of the institution. In order to achieve the above and more opportunities from private partnership is necessary. It is an idea that is fast gaining prominence in the management of education in and outside Nigeria. This is because government alone cannot shoulder the responsibility of funding education alone due to economic recess.

Establishment of entrepreneurship coaching and Development Training

The data further showed that “establishment of entrepreneurship coaching and development training” was the six (6th) rated private sector source of participation in the management of open and distance learning (ODL). Oketola (2008) opined that the training above is on how Nigerian graduates can develop functional skills for the world of work. It is a programme, which purposely integrates training into productive and relevant work and therefore remains a valuable link between training and productive work. Another purpose of the training is to give the learner the opportunity of matching theoretical learning with practice. The institutions alone cannot provide adequate entrepreneurship skills, which will enable them find employment in the society. Apart from this, private sectors are more equipped with modern facilities than their institutions. If there is closer working relationship between the private sector and the students, they will acquire relevant skills that could help them gain employment on completion of their programme. Developing the requisite skills to work in the local job market would enhance the global compliance. The entrepreneurship coaching and development training is very important because it is not included in their curriculum. The writer assumes that, private sector can join hand to embark on this training. Staff of private sector could be utilized to train students in relevant skills. The consequence of lack of this training between institutions and private sector may result to not only are some students unable to secure gainful

employment, but also are unable to set up their own private business after graduation.

The training programme entails developing excellent character and attitude in the students. Amao (2008) pointed out that without these two areas, the students may not be able to reach the pinnacle of their career. Similarly, the students may also acquire excellent information technology skills, communication skills in oral, multimedia and visual presentation, and self-confidence. Moreover, the students would identify an accomplished private individual to mentor and coach them while in training. Another importance of the training is to enable each of the students to be competent in every endeavor of entrepreneurship and also become solution providers rather than problems to the society and also to become learned and fruitful graduates rather than merely existing as commercials (Amao, 2008).

Fund Raising

This source was identified as ranking 7th as one of the private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning. Financial difficulties have compelled institutions of higher learning to explore private sources of funding. Fund raising project for raising a large amount of money such as several millions in donations from individuals, corporations, banks and foundations is gaining prominence in Nigeria presently in distance learning institutions in collaboration with private sector. The accrued money realized from the fund raising could be utilized in the management of open and distance learning institutions. The realization of this laudable project requires the private sector constituting a committee consisting of a director of development, alumni, management staff, and students in the institutions. External members who had a history of involvement with the university and show a willingness to commit time, effort and money could be added to the committee.

Apart from the above, another important committee, which could be set up by the private sector is neighborhood education committee (Badmus, 2000). This committee can also help in fund raising. The functions of such committee include:

- i. Assessing the needs of all the subjects (Vocational and Non-vocational) in the open and distance learning institutions regularly and generating money and other assistance.
- ii. Raising fund through persuading the community to be more involved in the financing of the subjects offered by the students in the institutions.

- iii. Ensuring that all people and persons are properly briefed about the fund raising.
- iv. Organizing orientation for the inhabitants of the neighborhood to familiarize them with the importance and expectation from each subject offered by the students. This is to encourage the private people in the community in the funding of such subjects in the open and distance learning institutions.
- v. The private sector neighborhood education committee can organize campaign for sensitization of the citizenry in the neighborhood for raising fund for provision of money for instructional materials/ resources for the teaching of the subjects offered in the open and distance learning institutions.

Organizing Private Business Entrepreneurs Conference

This source ranked 12th. Conferences are organized for different categories of people to update their knowledge and to disseminate new ideas or information. Private business entrepreneurs could organize conferences, seminars and workshops for students to boost entrepreneurship among students in open and distance learning institutions in Nigeria. In support of this, Ryan (2007) said that, in the quest to train or educate the programme recipients on entrepreneurship, a conference could be organized in partnership with private sector to educate on the role of private equity, venture capital, entrepreneurship, financial management and break through economic development never before experienced in Nigeria. He pointed out that conference entitled entrepreneurship, intra-preneurship and venture capital would unlock the fortune at the bottom of Nigeria's pyramid. Furthermore, the students will also have the opportunities to share success stories using case studies and hands – on approach. Panel discussion on “overcoming barriers to Nigerian economic development will also be included in the conference. In the words of Ryan (2007), by this type of training, world class skills will be inculcated into the students and thereby prepare them for self employment after graduation. Ryan (2007) further pointed out that private partnership is the best way to accomplish the above among the students in open and distance learning institution. The respondents supported this source of private participation because the practice of collaborating with private business entrepreneurs by the institution will turn around the life of the students in the sense that there will be a

gradual reduction in the number of students searching for white-collar job, which is not available.

Linkage with Private Companies and the Industry

The data further showed that ‘linkage with the industry’ is the 8th rated private sector source of participation in the management of open and distance learning. It is a forum to provide more opportunities for open and distance-learning students to be involved in practical activities. This is a requirement of the National Policy on Education (FME, 2004) which majority of the institutions are providing verbally through classroom instructions only. Non-formal means could be used through visits to privately owned cottage industries by students to observe and if possible, take part in the work of these industries. A day in the week could be set-aside for this visit. In support of this private source, Awotunde (1988) posited that, final year students and their facilitators could visit privately owned industry to engage in various practical activities related to their areas of specialization. In another form, some of the staff members from the private companies and industries could be brought to the college to demonstrate some aspects of the art of their areas of specialization to the students. The linkage of open and distance-learning students with private companies and industries may include involving the personnel in the advisory committee in the institutions. The personnel from the industry could recommend new programmes based on the needs of the students and society and sometimes recommend curricula changes as well. In addition to the above, for the students to have access to adequate training facilities which are not available in their institutions and teaching staff who are practically oriented, the open and distance learning institutions and privately owned companies and industries could cooperate. Through this cooperation, the industry could allow their use of their facilities and their staff members to train students on the job. Besides, Awotunde (1988) proffered that the qualified staff members from the industries and companies could be released to teach in the institution on part-time basis. This linkage will be very useful to students instead of classroom work often carried out theoretically.

Setting Up of Entrepreneurship Motivation Development Programme

The 9th rated private sector source of participation in the management of open and distance learning was ‘setting up of entrepreneurship

motivation development programme' (EMDP) for students in the institution. To be motivated means to be impelled to seek a goal that seems to have personal value. A student who is motivated to learn will certainly do more than class requirement demands. The programme could be set up by private sector in partnership with open and distance learning institution. The programme aims at emphasizing teaching the students the job and benefits of owning business enterprise. It also aims at creating an entrepreneurship culture among students of the institution, ensures that all undergraduates of the institution are knowledgeable about entrepreneurship and motivated to establish their own businesses on completion of the degree programme. In the same vein another aim is to assist students identify entrepreneurial opportunities and the awareness for acquiring resources required for successful entrepreneurial pursuits. Imai (2003) explained that the programme involves the teacher arranging to bring into the classroom private successful entrepreneurs in the locality to discuss with the students their experiences and characteristics. Similarly, the students could hold discussion in the plants or houses of such private entrepreneurs. More so, the students would be encouraged to observe the implementation of certain principles and procedures, which they have learnt in the programme. Furthermore, students would have the opportunity to visit various industries related to their areas of specialization to enhance their interest in entrepreneurship and also interact with the directors of these designated places. Through this private sector source, there will be linkage between the students and the development of thinking in the world – be entrepreneurs (Imayi, 2003).

Building Erection

This area was identified as ranking 10th among the perceived private sector sources of participation in the management of open and distance learning in Nigeria. According to Badmus (2009), funds are presently being provided for the open and distance learning programmes; such funds are still a “far cry” from what is actually needed to make such education available to more needy potential students. In the light of this, private sector partnership in open and distance learning management becomes quite imperative at this particular period of nation's development and growth. In the area of building construction, study centre, laboratory, library and so on, could be single handedly built and donated by a private individual. For example, Badmus (2009) pointed out that, a private individual (president of senate of federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. A. B. Mark, GCON) built and donated the 35th study centre

located at Otukpo in Benue state and was commissioned and handed over to National Open University of Nigeria on Friday 23rd, January, 2009. Another example is a facility, which was donated by a community for another study centre in Ogun State. This was also handed over to National Open University of Nigeria in March 5th, 2009. All the above confirmed that, the idea of private and community partnership is gaining prominence in the management of open and distance learning in Nigeria. In the same vein, private sector can play an important role in providing digital library, which is another important building in the life of open and distance-learning students. The digital era is here and the library and its services embrace evolving technology and toe the line of change. According to James (2009), a major advantage of digital library is that students from all open and distance learning institutions and all over the world can gain access to the information, at any time as long as an internet connection is available. Furthermore, James (2009) added that, the students would be at a much greater advantage to view the world from their narrow confinement at a faster rate. In another form, student can be in their houses and be in touch with information needed about the world around them, read books they want online, carryout their assignments are healthier development in the world of library services. In comparison, Adekunle and James (2009) pointed out that the traditional library spends so much on rent, book preservation and maintenance, staff salary and so on, while the digital library needs less space and less staff. Apart from the above, in collaboration with private organization such as United States Agency for Infrastructural Development (USAID), more study centres can be built and donated to the institutions. Alternatively, the entire community can donate an uncompleted building and renovated by the private organization. An example is Emovor Community who donated Emovor Community Centre. This project will encourage continuation of open and distance learning (ODL) in the community. From the foregoing, private sector in Nigeria can make significant and numerous contributions to the management of open and distance learning especially in the area of building erection. Hence, this area should be vigorously explored to involve them in upgrading of the standard of open and distance learning.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is very important in order to retain highly motivated teachers by upgrading their qualification and which

subsequently improves the quality of open and distance-learning education as provided for in the national policy of education (FME, 2004). The respondents rated this source 11th among all others. It is advisable that open and distance learning institutions should not stay alone. They can affiliate themselves to private international organizations. These private organizations can contribute a great deal to the upgrading of teachers at higher institution level. An example of the private organization is commonwealth of learning (COL). This private organization commonwealth of learning (COL) can help with skills, training, quality assurance and institutional capacity building training of open and distance learning educators and many other programmes (COL, 1988).

Setting up student Designated Viewing Investment Opportunities Centers

Nigeria is a country with enormous human and material resources that are yet to be fully exploited, coupled with its good climate and absence of natural disasters. In support of this, Adenekan (2009) opined that, Nigeria is an investment destination and is endowed with a lot of resources. He said investment opportunities in Nigeria range from tourism, manufacturing, mining export of natural gas, bitumen, limestone, coal, gold, silver and glass sands. Others are asbestos, graphite and iron ore. Similarly, agricultural products such as groundnuts, palm nut, cocoa, coconut, citrus fruits, maize to mention a few are another investment opportunities. From the foregoing, there is a lot of potentials in the country which can be exploited by students before graduation. Beside, students can be introduced multiple use of cassava tubers in order to harness the potentials of cassava. Ige (2004) claimed that the multiple use include the use of cassava tubers in livestock feeds, food manufacturing, starch as an industrial raw material for beer and malt, cassava based alcohol/ethanol industry, textile industry and soft drink industry. Others include paper mills, pharmaceuticals and petroleum drilling. Unfortunately, students from open and distance learning institutions may not be familiar with these investment opportunities because the curriculum designed for the institutions did not include investment opportunities that are available in Nigeria.

In the quest to educate open and distance learning students on the investment opportunities in Nigeria, partnerships with private sector can be particularly outstanding and impressive. Many private companies can

provide much needed help. In an attempt to introduce the investment opportunities to the students, viewing investment opportunities centers can be established by private sector at designated study centers of the tertiary institutions. Viewing should take place at designated time. This opportunity will enable students develop entrepreneurial mind before graduation.

The private sector could equip the viewing centers with plasma television sets, DSTV decoders and satellite dish and 6 KVA power generating set for constant provision of electricity. Viewing all these potentials at viewing centers by the students will motivate them to become entrepreneurs. They will also be motivated to become self-reliant and also earn foreign exchange. According to Emunemu (2008), it is clear that this goal cannot be achieved by the efforts of government alone. The private sector could work with open and distance learning institutions to transform the life of the students in the area of employment opportunities or generation.

Youth Entrepreneurship Programme

The development of micro, small and medium enterprises among students while in school is important. According to Umoren (2010) this development is to encourage or familiarize the students to embrace entrepreneur for income and employment generation. Private business entrepreneurs can conveniently partner with the open and distance-learning institutions to help in transforming the students to top flight industrialist and entrepreneurs. Specifically, the entire graduating students from the institution could participate or benefit from the entrepreneurship training. Umoren (2010) pointed out that, students who benefited from the training could form cooperative society in order to facilitate their access to working capital.

According to Umoren (2010), the benefits accruing to the students through the youth entrepreneurship training include acquiring of world class skill training, innovative skills, business management skills and equipping them with theoretical and practical intensive training. Furthermore, other benefits include competence and capability to perform in any business in the country and creation of jobs which the training will make available to students. Nnodim (2012) affirmed that, the level of unemployment in the country can be drastically reduced among graduates if they can participate in youth entrepreneurship programme. From the foregoing, it is glaring that government alone could not address the high level of unemployment in the land. Unless

private sectors collaborate with open and distance learning educational institutions to promote the practice of entrepreneurship among their students, many Nigerian graduating students would continue to wallow in unemployment. In addition, the crime rate would keep rising as a result of limited jobs.

Conclusion

It is glaring that open and distance learning is a panacea to the perennial problems of equitable, access to education, equality of opportunities as well as providing a second chance for dropouts. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government alone could not address the issue of funding, provisioning of infrastructure and management. The only alternative is the involvement of the private sector. The importance of private sector involvement in open and distance learning education cannot be over emphasized. They have an immense role to play in development of skills, evaluation, curriculum designing that reflects private sector technologically and many others. The private sector will help to educate, transforms, inspires and offers invaluable resources in the form of entrepreneurial awareness and motivation and capacity building. Other roles include linkage with the private companies, donations and many others.

Recommendation

The study has revealed some participatory roles of private sector in the management of open and distance learning. This is because, it is glaring that, three tiers of governments alone cannot address the biting effects of the global financial crisis and generation of employment. In the light of the issues raised, it is recommended that, the authority of open and distance learning (ODL) institutions should familiarize, interact, collaborate and cooperate with society. The institutions should not distant themselves from the private sectors.

The institutions should have strong linkage with the companies, corporations and industries owned by private sectors to help to achieve all the perceived private sector sources.

Private industries, factories, business owners should avail themselves and their business environments for retraining of graduates. These would go a long way to change their attitudes towards self-employment.

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