WHERE ARE WE? LECTURERS RECEPTIVITY OF SERVICE LEARNING IN NIGERIA

Tolulope Victoria GBADAMOSI
Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
samtiv1975@gmail.com

Abstract

Universities in Nigeria are established to perform three functions- teaching, research and community service. In spite of the establishment of several government and private-owned universities in Nigeria, most of these tertiary institutions have been criticised for not meeting the objectives of their establishment. This is because gaps between the gown and the town exist to the extent that the functionality of the education provided and the relevance of the certificates awarded to the society are being questioned. However, service learning was one of the ways used to bridge the gaps between the universities and communities in some of the developed and developing countries. This study therefore examined the extent to which lecturers incorporate service learning into teaching learning process. The study adopted mixed research design. Three research questions were posed for the study. Validated Service learning Structure Interview Schedule (r= 0.826) was administered to One hundred and fifty lecturers selected from three Universities in Southwest, Nigeria using multi stage sampling technique. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistic and content analysis. The results and implications of the findings were discussed while recommendations were also made.

Keywords

Curriculum, Community Service, Unemployment, Instructional Strategy

1. Introduction

The societal expectation is that education must play a proactive role, which will facilitate self-reliance, credibility and learning for empowerment, and employability which transcends

mere acquisition of knowledge. To achieve this, the government has grown the educational sector as a social instrument for national development by including education allocation in the national budget (Adedigba, 2017). Tertiary level education has been improved upon through complementary efforts from both Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TEDFUND) and the Special Needs Assessment Fund. These two bodies serve as sources of over five billion Naira fund available to improve the infrastructure of tertiary education in Nigeria (Omagu, 2016).

However, in spite of these efforts, it is interesting to note that the debate currently ranging in Nigeria on employability of University graduates have tended to emphasis similar points by highlighting lack of basic mental, social, practical and developmental skills (Oluyomibo, 2016; Aluko, 2014). Most of the university students were not motivated to learn while few motivated ones find it difficult to link knowledge acquired in the class with practical situation (Ilori & Watchorn, 2016). Nigeria as a nation is still far from running educational programmes that prepare citizens for self-reliance, creative empowerment and nation building. Meanwhile, tertiary education is non-compulsory education which is received after post-primary education and it comprises undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Graduates of tertiary education obtain degrees, diplomas or certificates that will help them get better jobs, which in turn, will help them build a solid foundation in life.

1.1 Traditional Roles of Universities

According to the National Policy of Education (NPE), traditional roles of universities are: teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new information, pursuit of service to the community and being a store house of knowledge (FRN, 2013). This informed the mission and vision statements of most Nigerian Universities. For instance, mission and vision of University of Ibadan, Ibadan Established 1948, owned by the Federal government read thus:

''To be a world-class institution for academic excellence geared towards meeting societal needs; To expand the frontiers of knowledge through provision of excellent conditions for learning and research; To produce graduates who are worthy in character and sound judgment; To contribute to the transformation of society through creativity and innovation; To serve as a dynamic custodian of society's salutary values and thus sustain its integrity'' (https://www.ui.edu.ng/content/vision-and-mission).

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife Established in 1962 by the Federal government of Nigeria, mission and vision read thus:

''To promote by research and other means the advancement of knowledge and its practical application to social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological problems; to create a conducive teaching and learning community for imparting skills, knowledge, behaviour

and attitude; advance and protect the independence of the academic enterprise; engender a sense of selfless public service and promote the African culture and tradition'' (https://www.oauife.edu.ng)

The question to ask at this juncture is that to what extent do these Universities meet societal expectation as stated in the National Policy of Education and their mission statements? However, it is undeniable that universities are being criticized by the society on the relevance of the university to the needs of the society (Oni & Alade (?); Aluko, 2014). It is worthy to note that "Both institution and community complement each other because the failure one leads to the failure of the other" said Ted Howard, co-founder and president of the Democracy Collaborative. Service learning is a philosophy and instructional strategy recommended to solve this problem (Mcpherson, 2017; Marcus, 2016).

1.1.1 Service Learning and University Education

Learning process through teaching strategy that will keep at its breast how knowledge acquire in classroom settings will be of benefit to the society can only be actualised through the teaching strategy called Service-learning. The service-learning strategy came to be as a result of bringing students' learning and community service together through series of principles that was formulated in Wingspread Conference in late 1980s to inform best practices in education (Honnet and Poulen, 1989). In fact, service-learning has been seen as invaluable method of teaching that benefits both students and community. Zlotkowski (1998) opines that service-learning stands on the two poles sides which are conventional active learning on one side and public –private at the other side. Service-learning provides the means through which the wall that divides universities and communities can be removed and makes it possible for the universities to provide help that the communities need (Marcus, 2016). Marcus also explains further that service-learning is more basically concerned with empowering students with knowledge that can make them do permanent good for the interest of their communities. Service-learning's central components include: active participation, thoughtfully organized experiences, focus on community needs and school/community coordination, academic curriculum integration, structured time for reflection, opportunities for application of skills and knowledge, extended learning opportunities, build self-confidence and development of a sense of caring for others (Trane & Zane, 2014, Gbadamosi, 2012).

There can be separate course refer to as service-learning at both college and university (Anderson, Swick, & Yff, 2001) or make use of it as a teaching strategy to teach different concepts in various field of disciplines (George & Shams, 2007), education (Chen, 2004; Gbadamosi & Akanni, 2017; Ajitoni & Gbadamosi, 2015), and nursing (Romack, 2004).

Educational theory propounded by John Dewey which had the assumption on learning through experience supports that service-learning increases knowledge and skills acquisition, self-esteem, personal and interpersonal skills development, and a sense of accomplishment (Chen, 2004). Improvement in knowledge and skills, sense of caring and increase self-confidence are as a result of teaching through service learning strategy (Trae & Zane, 2014). Four-stage service-learning processes are (a) preparation, (b) implementation, (c) assessment/reflection, and (d) demonstration/celebration (Gbadamosi, 2012; Trae & Zane, 2014).

1.2 The Problem

Universities in Nigeria are established to perform three functions- teaching, research and community service. In spite of their establishments, Nigerian Universities are being criticised for not meeting the objectives of their establishment. There are gaps between the gown and the town to the extent that the relevance of the certificates awarded are being questioned. However, service learning has been found to be one of the ways used to bridge the gaps between the universities and communities in some of the developed and developing countries. In spite of the series of research reports on effectiveness of service learning in providing solutions to societal problems and making learning meaningful, little research have been done in Nigeria. This study therefore examined the extent to which lecturers incorporate service learning into teaching learning process in South west, Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine if lecturers are aware of service learning.

2. To determine the extent by which lecturer incorporate service learning.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Are lecturers aware of service learning?

2. Do lecturers use service learning?

3. Do lecturers undergo any training on how to incorporate service learning to teaching learning process?

4. To what extent do lecturers build service learning to the courses taught at the university?

5. What skills related to service-learning have faculty exhibited or shown?

6. Are lecturers willing to enrol for a course/module with service learning?

1.5 Scope of the Study

Faculty of education lecturers in three Federal Universities in Oyo, Lagos and Osun States in Nigeria, were used for the study.

2. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. It has open and closed ended questionnaire. One hundred and fifty lecturers purposively selected from three Federal Universities in Oyo, Lagos and Osun States, Southwest, Nigeria using multi stage sampling technique. Three Federal Universities and their faculty of education were purposively selected. Fifty lecturers purposively selected from faculty education of each University based on interest and willingness to participate after short discussion through personal contact by e-mails and face to face interaction. Validated Service Learning Structure Interview Schedule (r= 0.826) was administered to the respondents through three research assistants. After administration 142 questionnaires were returned. Mixed method of data analysis was used. The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistic of frequency counts, standard deviation and ranking order to answer questions 1-3, 5 & 6. Content analysis was used to analyse data collected from open-ended section in the instrument to answer question 4. Related responses were put together to give "themes" resulting in over 45 courses mentioned by the lecturers.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: *Distribution of the respondents by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	92	64.8
Female	50	35.2
Total	142	100.0

Table 1 showed that 92 (64.8%) of the respondents were males, while the remaining 50 (35.2%) were females.

Table 2: *Distribution of the respondents by Professional Status*

Professional Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lecturer II	14	9.8
Lecture I	50	35.2
Senior Lecturer	35	24.7
Professor/Reader	43	30.3
Total	142	100.0

Table 2 showed that 14 (9.8%) of the respondents were lecturer II, 50 (35.20%) were Lecturer I, 35 (24.7%) were Senior Lecturer and 43 (30.3%) were Professor/Reader.

Service learning profile

3.1 Awareness of Service Learning

Research Question 1: Are lecturers aware of service learning?

Table 3: *Lecturers Awareness of Service Learning*

Have you heard of service learning before	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	59	41. 5
No	83	58.5
Total	142	100.0

Table 3 indicated that that 59 (41.5%) of the respondents have heard of service learning, while the remaining 83 (58.5%) have not. This implies that majority of the lecturers were not aware of service learning.

3.2 Use of service learning

Research Question 2: Do lecturers use service learning?

Table 4: *Lecturers use of Service Learning*

Have you used service learning before	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	22	15.5
No	120	84.5
Total	142	100.0

Table 4 revealed that 22 (15.5 %) of the respondents have used service learning while the remaining 120 (84.5 %) have not.

3.3 Training on Service Learning

Research Question 3: Do lecturers undergo any training on how to incorporate service learning to teaching learning process?

Table 5: *Training on how to incorporate service learning to Teaching by respondents*

Have you undergone any training on how to incorporate service learning to Classroom Instruction?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	19.7
No	114	80.3
Total	142	100.0

To determine if lecturers have done training/workshop on use of service learning, respondents were asked to choose whether they have done training or not. Higher percentage of the respondents 114 (80.3%) have not done training. Few of them 28 (19.7%) of the respondents have undergone training.

3.4 Ways of incorporating service learning

Research question 4: To what extent do lecturers build service learning to the courses taught at the university?

In the open-ended section of the instrument, respondents were asked to mention at least two of the courses teaching by them that service learning can be incorporated based on its characteristics and mention service activities performed by the respondents.

One of the respondents explained that: ''students organise community health programmes''

Another also mentioned that ''in SPE 323, students were asked to go to schools and communities to teach care skills in the course''

3RD Respondents '' non was developed''

In summary, few service learning activities were incorporated to those courses mentioned and form themes as community and political participation, feedback and problem-solving strategies, cooperative and video modelling while large percentages of faculty are not incorporating service activities to learning. Though, few one that indicated activities performed by the students were not familiar with the concept of service learning which made them not to harness the activities performed by the students to solve societal problems that would have brought the university and the community together.

It seems that students were less or not connected to real life situation that will enable them to apply knowledge acquired to solve real life problems and connect to the community (Ilori & Watchorn, 2016). This is in connection to the fact that most of the lecturers did not have knowledge of service learning as reported in table 3. They made use of convectional mode of interaction that is less interactive with little or no link to the community needs.

3.5 Perceived skills exhibited by Lecturers in the context of service learning

Research question 5: What skills related to service-learning have faculty exhibited or shown?

Table 6: *Skills Related to Service Learning Exhibited by Faculty*

S/N	Statements How often do you	Very often	Occasional	Rare	Never	Mean	STD.D	Rank
1	Design service-learning projects with course content?	8 5.8%	75 54.3%	28 20.3%	27 19.6%	2.46	0.873	7
2	Encourage students to develop a written record of what their experiences were in various human activities?	35 26.1%	60 44.8%	28 20.9%	11 8.2%	2.89	0.890	5
3	Encourage students exploring new solutions to problems?	67 48.6%	56 40.6%	12 8.7%	3 2.2%	3.36	0.733	2
4	Motivate learners sharing experiences outside classroom?	87 63.0%	40 29.0%	8 5.8%	3 2.2%	3.53	0.707	1
5	Organise your students to participate in service activities individually or collectively?	63 45.7%	52 37.7%	16 11.6%	7 5.1%	3.24	0.851	3
6	Make use of community problem solving strategies?	48 34.8%	59 42.8%	28 20.3%	3 2.2%	3.10	0.795	4
7	Organised field trips to support	24	80	23	11	2.85	0.801	6

	classroom interaction?	17.4%	58.0%	16.7%	8.0%			
8	Invite members of the community to attend a class or classes in order to engage in a discussion with students on problems within the community?	8 5.8%	40 29.0%	47 34.1%	43 31.2%	2.09	0.911	8
Weighted mean = 2.93								

Table 6 revealed the responses of respondents to knowledge and skills related to service learning that faculty exhibited using five point-Likert scale. The most rated skills indicated by the respondents with mean greater than two and half (2.5) were: motivate learners sharing experiences outside classroom'' (3.53); was ranked highest by the mean scores rating and was followed by ''encourage students exploring new solutions to problems'' (3.36); ''Organise your students to participate in service activities individually or collectively'' (3.24); ''make use of community problem solving strategies'' (3.10); ''encourage students to develop a written record of what their experiences were in various human activities'' (2.89); and ''organised field trips to support classroom interaction (2.85). on the other hand, ''design service-learning projects with course content'' (2.46) and ''Invite members of the community to attend a class or classes in order to engage in a discussion with students on problems within the community (2.09) were rated low. This implies that lecturer's needs knowledge of service learning and importance of collaborating with community members. It should also be noted that, the weighted mean of 2.94 which is higher than the standard mean of 2.50 was obtained. This indicated that faculty fairly exhibited skills that if well-coordinated can promote meaningful interaction among the students that will give them opportunity to connect learning with real-life situation.

3.6 Lecturers' willingness to use service learning and training

Research Question 6: Do lecturers willing to enrol for a course/module with service learning?

Table 7: *Lecturers Williness to Enrol for aCourse/Module With Service Learning ?*

If there is opportunity, would you enrol for a course/module with community service?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	118	88.1
No	16	11.9
Total	134	100.0
Missing	8	

Table 7 showed that that 118 (88.1%) of the respondents are willing to enrol for a course/module with service learning, while the 16 (11.9%) would not. The higher percentage of respondents that indicated their willingness to undergo training and use service learning instructional strategy implies that majority of the lecturers seems to be ready to use service learning in their teaching if they are able to acquire greater knowledge through seminars and

workshops. The result is in line with the submission of pre-service teachers in a study conducted by Gbadamosi (2015) that they are ready to use service learning if there are support from the University in terms of workshop and reward.

4. Conclusion

The study revealed that service learning has not been embraced by lecturers which brought about disconnection between the Ivory Tower and the society. This implies that there is the need to shift focus from teaching to learning; facilitate ideas and develop functional skills in learners to enable them relevant in the multi-faceted society of ours.

5. Implications of the Study to University Education

The findings of the study revealed that service learning is yet to be institutionalised in most of Nigeria Universities. This implies that if Universities will improve on   research, teaching and community service, there is the need to incorporate service learning to university programmes to promote connection between academics and practitioners, to bringing Ivory tower closer to the communities and give opportunity for students to connect their knowledge with real-world. Doing so at the long run, will sustain learning and make university be abreast with what is happening in the society and respond to society needs through their programmes.

6. Recommendations

It is therefore recommended from the findings that to bridge gap between town and gown, achieve the community service goal and objective in Nigerian Universities as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE):

There should be a paradigm shift from the traditional mode of operation to experiential learning that characterize by service-learning in the University through course-content, teaching practice, extra-curricular and intership.

Curriculum is dynamic and must accommodate new developments as have been practiced in United States, South Africa among others and few private universities in Nigeria.

Workshops, Seminars and online training courses on service learning should be introduced to the University administrators and Lecturers to create awareness and expose faculty members to the pedagogy involved in its use.

Community service unit should be established in the Universities to connect university with the public by creating partnership with industries and other government and non-government organisations.

Resources such as funds, materials, man power among others should be set aside for service learning to encourage members of faculty to employ it to classroom instruction.

References

Ajitoni, S.O & Gbadamosi, T. V. (2015). Community-Based Instructional Strategies, School Location, and Primary School Pupils' Environmental Knowledge. Isfte Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education, 19 (2), 22-32.

Adedigba, A (2017). 2018 Budget: Buhari Allocates 7% to Education. Retrieved on 6 March, 2018 from www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/248663-2018-budget-buhari-allocates-7-education.

Aluko, Y. A (2014). Employers' Perceptions of the Employability Skills of New Graduates in Nigeria. Journal of educational review, 7(4): 1- 11.
Http://www.serialsjournals.com/serialjournalmanager/pdf/1469082944.pdf

Anderson, J.B., Swick, K.J., & Yff, J. (Eds.) (2001). Service-learning in teacher education: Enhancing the growth of new teachers, their students, and communities. Corporation for National Service, Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Chen, D.W. (2004). The multiple benefits of service learning projects in pre-service teacher education. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 70(2), 31-36.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National Policy on Education – 6th Edition. Retrieved from https://educatetolead.wordpress.com/2016/02/22/national-policy-on-education-6th-edition-2013/

Gbadamosi, T. V & Akanni, O. O (2017). Utilizing Service Learning Instructional Strategy in Economics Teaching For Boosting Entrepreneurship Skills for Alleviating Unemployment in Nigeria: Counselling Implications. Proceedings of 1st International conference of Fafunwa Education Foundation, Lagos: 192- 205pp.

Gbadamosi, T.V (2015). Pre-service Teachers' Perception and Attitude about Service Learning in Social Studies Curriculum in Nigeria. Proceedings of the Second European Conference on Education, held at the Thistle Brighton Hotel, United Kingdom (July 9-13, 2014).

Gbadamosi, T. V. (2012). Effect of Service Learning and Educational Trips Instructional Strategies on Primary School   Pupils' Environmental Literacy in Social Studies in Oyo State, Nigeria. An unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 205 pages.

George, C., & Shams, A. (2007). The challenge of including customer satisfaction into the assessment criteria of overseas service learning projects. International Journal for Service Learning in Engineering, 2(2), 64-75.

Honnet, E.P. & Poulen, S.J. (1989). Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning, a Wingspread Special Report. Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, Inc.

Ilori , O Watchorn, A (2016). Insipiring Next Generation of Engineers through Service-Learning Robotics Outreach and Mentorship Programme, International Journals of Advanced Robotic Systems, 1-7. DOI: 101177/1729881416663372.

Marcus, J (2016. Bridging the town and gown divide. Retrieved on 8 January, 2018 from http/www/nigerianuniversityscholarhip.com-accessed 25 March, 2018.

Mcpherson, M (2017). Bridging the Gap between Town and Gown: A New Way to Integrate Community Service and Classroom Learning. Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership,7, .(3): 237–240 retrieved from https://doi.org/10.18666/JNEL-2017-V7-I3-6220

Obafemi Awolowo University (2018). About Mission, Vision and Objectives of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Retrieved from https://www.oauife.edu.ng/about-oau/vission-mission

Office of International Programmes (2018). About University of Ibadan. Retrieved from http://oip.ui.edu.ng/about-the-university-of-ibadan

Oluyomibo, S. P (2016). Towards Enhancing University Graduate Employability in Nigeria. Journal of Sociology Anth, 7 (1): 1- 11. https://doi.org/10.1080/09766634.2016.11885696

Omagu, F. E (2016). Infrastructural Development in Nigeria: A Panacea for Transforming Educational Sector for Sustainable National Development. Retrieved on 6 March, 2018 from www.International journal of capacity building in education and management 3 (1): 13- 19.

Romack, J.L. (2004). Increasing Physical Activity in Nursing Home Residents using Student Power, not Dollars. Educational Gerontology, 30(1), 21-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/03601270490248437

Trane, S & Zane, W (2014). An overview of infusing service-learning in medical education. International Journal of Medical Education, 5:147 – 156 https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.53ae.c907

Zlotkowski, E. (1998). A new model of excellence. In E. Zlotkowski (Ed.), Successful Service-Learning Programs: New Models of Excellence in Higher Education (pp. 1-14). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co.