

10 Role of University in Collaboration Vis-a-vis the Role of Collaborating Partners

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1 Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to establish roles the public universities play in collaborations as well as to establish the role of collaborating partners. The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives: to establish the roles of university in collaboration; to establish the role of collaborating partners and to establish policies and procedures put in place in governing collaboration. The theoretical framework that is adopted in this paper is derived from the Systems Theory of Organisations (Hong et al, 2004). The System Theory is concerned with compartmentalisation and argues that certain ideas can have relevance across a broad spectrum of disciplines. This was an exploratory and descriptive research project, which required both qualitative and quantitative data on role of university in collaboration vis a vis the role of collaborating partners. Data collection methods employed included questionnaires, interview schedule and secondary data collection guide. The study targeted public universities' administrators and collaborating colleges' managers and administrators. The university administrator respondents acknowledged that they offer Module II Degree Programmes in collaboration with middle level colleges, and other reported that they did not collaborate in Module II Degree Programmes but collaborated in undergraduate programmes. It was observed that universities collaborate not only in offering degrees programmes but also in certificates level, diploma level and higher diploma level programmes. It was observed that factors contributing to the development of collaborations between universities and colleges include: reach the needy students access to university education; increase revenue collected hence improved salary; cover a wider geographic area with the universities Module II Degree Programmes; compete with other institutions; Enhance performance; Reduce administrative cost; and Decision by Management. There are number of expectations that collaborating partners must meet which include: college should be offering the same course; closeness to university not recommended; legislative requirements such as accreditation by CHE/Ministry of Education must be met; colleges must have good background or reputation; qualification of administrators and teaching staff must be within university requirement; availability of facilities and resources; ration of sharing revenues must be win-win situation; quality of programme must be high and good administrative structure is important. The responsibility the university plays in respect to the collaborating partner include: monitors and regulates funds; approves teaching staff; moderates academic standards and policies to be followed; marketing the courses; controls and supervises the programme; caters for programme expenses; set admission and graduation dates; sets and mark exams and timetable, and issues syllabus to be followed. On the other hand collaborating colleges were expected to: recruit students; manage financial matters on day to day basis; supplement teaching staff; provide teaching space and facilities; act as the link between students and the university; release results, time tables and exams, and supervise daily routines and execute instructions given. This study recommends that: collaborations with middle level colleges should be encourages and regulated because they enhance utilisation of resources and increase access to higher education, and contribute to institutions funds. Universities should seek collaborations with many colleges in order to reach needy students who are in need of higher education and public universities role in collaborations be inclusive of nurturing this collaborating institutions to "independence" or a position to run on their own.

2 Introduction

University education in Kenya began in 1963 with just 571 students enrolling at the Nairobi University College (Weidman, 1995). Since then, it has undergone some considerable expansion, and as of 2006, there were a total of six public universities and one university college and over 18 private universities with varying levels of accreditation. The Ministry of Education indicates that an average of 150,000 students sit for KCSE each year (Kiamba, 2003). Among these students, 20,000 are absorbed into public universities under the Regular and Parallel Degree Programmes while over 6,000 students enroll in private universities. About 60,000 students also enroll in post-secondary mid-level colleges, which offer certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses. Access to university institutions is highly competitive and also is influenced by the availability of finances. UNESCO (2006) states that by 2006, the country had 91,541 university students, where almost 90 percent of them were in public universities. In 2006 alone, a total of 58,000 students out of the 68,000 who qualified failed to get admission in the public universities. Between 1990 and 2000, it was reported that 180,000 of the students who attained the minimum entry qualification failed to gain admission to public universities (Kigotho, 2000).

Notwithstanding universities' expansion in the past several years, the capacity of the higher education sector in Kenya is still limited despite that all public universities have acquired constituent colleges, opened satellite campuses and started collaborations with private middle level colleges.

Higher education was historically free in Kenya. Eligible students paid no tuition fees and were given living allowances in exchange for their working in the public sector for three years following graduation. This changed in 1991 when tuition fees were introduced for all Government-supported students and most Government support for living expenses was eliminated in the face of financial austerity and growing enrolments. Continued declines in Government support for higher education has forced universities to continue to look for ways to generate additional income. Among other initiatives, in 1998, the University of Nairobi introduced the highly successful Module II Degree Programmes, academic programmes for privately sponsored students in which they pay full tuition fees. These programmes are run in parallel to the Module I Programmes (traditional student supported programmes whereby students pay only 20% of tuition fees). By the 2002/03 academic year, of the close to 22,000 undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Nairobi, about half were in the Module II Degree Programmes and since their creation these programmes had raised over Kshs 3 billion (US\$130,000,000) using 2002 purchasing power parity (PPP) estimate (Kiamba, 2003).

Module II sector of university in Kenya has several names. They include Parallel Degree Programmes, Privately-Sponsored Students Programme (PSSP), Self-Sponsored Programmes (SSP) and Dual Track Programmes, among others. These programmes serve a large percentage of Kenyan students and others seeking higher education. It fulfils a societal need that would otherwise be expensively fulfilled; it has reduced the exodus of students seeking higher education outside Kenya. The success witnessed with the Module II Degree Programmes has led to efforts to expand capacity to absorb more students including collaboration with private middle level colleges, establishment of satellite campuses and employing various forms/modes of facilitation.

Kenya has more non-university institutions (about 130) compared to the 17 private universities (KIPPRA, 2004). The non-university institutions have not been in direct competition with either the public universities or the private universities until recently, when public universities, seeking increased advantage over private universities, initiated collaboration with non-university institutions. Such partnership allows the latter to grant degrees on behalf of their public university associates, in turn raising the status of these non-university institutions and eats into the market of the private universities.

The introduction of direct income generation, as part of the idea of an entrepreneurial university, has been very challenging but has had a significant impact on the financial environment of African universities where it has been introduced (Marginson and Considine, 2002; Ogot, 2002). In many public universities in Kenya, this development is especially significant because of the new category

of full-fee-paying students and the related Module II or Parallel Academic Programmes. Once the decision to start the process was made, public universities proceeded rather professionally. First, most of them conducted a thorough exercise in identifying the potentially viable areas for income generation (Module II Academic Programmes); second, they adopted a theoretically justifiable organisational restructuring to ensure that management issues were addressed very early during the process – hence, the creation of subsidiary companies to manage the new environment and then looking for middle level colleges (Otieno, 2004). This process has put both the universities and the collaborating colleges in good stead because it has provided an expanded income base and related innovations in organisational arrangements and financial management. However, not without challenges, which is what this paper seeks to examine.

3 Statement of the Problem

Public universities in Eastern and Southern Africa have for a long time depended largely on grants from national governments for most of their recurrent and capital budgets. Statutes of various universities also allow them to get external aid and donations mainly for capital developments, technical assistance and staff training. In the last decade, there has been pressure on public universities in the country to cut back on their budgets because of declining government grants occasioned largely by political and economic structural changes (Abagi, 1995). Universities have responded by putting in place a wide range of programmes to generate their own income such as through collaboration with middle level colleges. A case of most public universities shows that academic programmes with strong market and resource opportunities, include courses in commerce, business administration, law, and medicine.

4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to establish roles of the public universities plays in collaborations as well as establish the role of collaborating partners.

5 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Establish the roles of university in collaboration.
2. Establish the role of collaborating partners.
3. Establish policies and procedures put in place in governing collaboration.

6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that is adopted in this paper is derived from the systems theory of organisations (Hong et al, 2004). The system theory was concerned about compartmentalisation and argued that certain ideas could have relevance across broad spectrum of disciplines. Despite the many difference among the various societies, they share similar distinctiveness. This theory cuts across four archetype views, for every institute that produces output is a system of some sort (Kahn et al, 1966) and an institution, including school, regardless of size and purpose and the administration outlook adopted not withstanding, is concerned with relationships, structures and interdependence rather than just constant attributes, (Kahn et al, 1966). This study was modelled on the postulates of systems theory because institutions like other organisations are always in constant exchange with their collaborating institutions.

7 Literature Review

According to a study by Sifuna (1998), the rapid expansion of university education starting from mid 1980s was never planned. Sifuna (1998) continues to observe as follows:

There has been no planning in university education for a considerable length of time. The last planning effort in university education was before rapid expansion started. Since then, planning was thrown in a state of confusion. University development seems to be guided by directives from sections of the Ministries of Education or Finance and Economic Development and the chancellors of the public universities.

The increasing demand for higher education is also seen to have contributed to the lack of planning. Sifuna's study (1998) reveals as follows:

The rapid expansion of university education was a spontaneous response to the high demand. With the increasing large flows of students from schools, popular demand for higher education increased. People seem to have put a lot of hope in higher education and this appears unique in the countries of this region.

Due to the increasing number of students seeking higher education, due to lack of teaching space and facilities this led to many public universities forming collaboration with middle level colleges. Learning best thrives where community (Carter, 1996; Wink and Putney, 2002) supports it. Wenger (2002) elaborates on the importance of the context of universities: collaboration with colleges, students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community that form and surround their classrooms and allows them to put their growing knowledge in practice, joining theory and practice to form praxis. Therefore, the building and reshaping of a community of learners and stakeholders is critical to the success of our efforts to improve learning and teaching in the schools. This imbues two crucial considerations: first, educators must possess sensitivity to individual and cultural diversity, as well as equity and social justice, when working within a variety of contexts and communities; and second, the benefits of partnering to improve education must be understood and valued by educators and stakeholders. Gideonse, et al (1993) believes that educators and community stakeholders must see themselves as valued mutual contributors in the development and attainment of a vision, as well as realise the attainment of shared purposes.

8 Design

This was an exploratory and descriptive research, which required both qualitative and quantitative data on role of university in collaboration vis a vis the role of collaborating partners. Data collection methods adopted included questionnaires, interview schedule and secondary data collection guide. The study targeted public universities in Kenya administrators and collaborating colleges managers and administrators. A sample of 1,630 was selected but only 487(29.8%) were returned. Data collected was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively and presented descriptively, and illustrated by use of tables and charts.

9 Research Findings

9.1 Presence of Collaboration

The study sought to find out if public universities collaborated with middle level colleges in provision of Module II degree programmes, 47 percent of the university administrator respondents acknowledged that they offer Module II Degree Programmes in collaboration with middle level colleges. Only 27 percent said that they did not collaborate in Module II Degree Programmes but collaborated in undergraduate programmes. The information is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

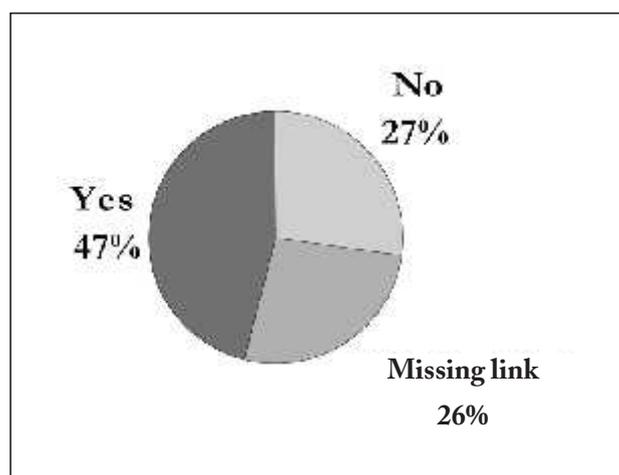


Figure 1: Distribution of Management Responses that their Universities Run Module II Degree Programmes in Collaboration with other Colleges.

It is therefore important to note that universities collaborate not only in offering degrees programmes but also certificates level, diploma level and higher diploma level programmes. The certificates level, diploma level and higher diploma level programmes under collaboration must have been approved by the respective university senate (collaborating partner). The main aim is for approval by the respective university senate is to facilitate recognition and approval for admission into various degrees programmes. In addition universities offer credit transfer arrangements for such candidates/graduates.

9.2 Reasons for Collaboration between Universities and Middle Level Colleges

To find out the major factors contributing to the development of collaborations between universities and colleges, study administrators were asked to give the factors that led to collaboration. This is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Manager Respondents According to the Factors that Motivated Development of Collaborations with Middle Level Colleges.

Driving force that motivates collaborations	Frequency	Percentage
Reach the needy students access to university education	13	38.2
Increase revenue collected hence improved salary	10	29.4
Cover a wider geographic area with the universities Module II Degree Programmes	2	5.9
Compete with other institutions	3	8.8
Enhance performance	7	20.6
Reduce administrative cost	5	14.7
Decision by Management	1	2.9

The reasons given for collaborating in order of preference included: to enable reach the needy students access university education (38.2%); to facilitate increase in revenue which translates into better staff compensation (29.4%); to enhance performance of institutions with increased revenue which would translate into effectiveness and efficiency of the institution (20.6%); to facilitate

reduced administrative cost, where operation cost of the mother institution are transferred to the collaborating institution and only surplus income is acknowledged (14.7%); to facilitate competition with other similar institutions for example within similar catchment areas (8.8%); to enlarge geographical coverage of institution presences (5.9%).

It can be concluded that most of the motivating factors are business oriented with a view to maximising revenue. Kiamba, (2004) states that in Kenya, the importance of the Module II Degree Programmes as revenue earners has been growing since their introduction in 1994. In 1998-98, the Dual Track Programmes at the University of Nairobi generated about 4 percent of its total income, by 2002-03, this had grown to one-third (Kiamba, 2004). In 2002/03 academic year alone, the University of Nairobi earned a total of US\$ 17,551,873 through its Parallel Programmes, and by the end of that year income from students and parents (including both Module I and (II) contributed close to 40 percent of the total university income (Otieno, 2004). In turn, the Government allocation dropped from 70 percent of the university's income in 1995/96 to 49 percent in 2002/03 (Kiamba, 2004). This might have been the motivating factor for developing strategies to generate more income into the university hence the need for partnerships. The income from the Kenyan Parallel Programmes is used for institutional development and payment of academic and administrative staff. Generally, 35 percent of the raised funds are said to be used to pay the lecturers, while 65 percent goes to the university which then is expected to use the funds for improved teaching materials and development projects.

9.3 Expectations for Collaboration

Before a university starts collaborating with any college, there are specific standards that the college has to meet. In determining those standard requirements, the managers were asked to outline the same. Table 2 gives a summary of the responses.

Table 2: Expectations of College before Collaboration.

Response	Percentage	
	YES	NO
College should be offering the same course	5.9	94.1
Closeness to university	8.8	91.2
Legislative requirements such as accreditation by CHE/Ministry of Education	76.5	23.5
College's background or reputation	94.1	5.9
Qualification of administrators and teaching staff	76.5	23.5
Availability of facilities and resources	73.5	26.5
Ration of sharing revenues	88.2	11.8
Quality of programme	88.2	11.8
Good administrative structure	91.2	8.8

From the analysis, the major expectation before a university collaborates with a college was the availability of teaching facilities and resources in respective college (73.5%). Availability of facilities and teaching and learning resources greatly determines the quality of education offered in a particular course and that is why most universities find beneficiaries to establish this.

Qualification of administrators and the teaching staff was also a key requirement (76.5%). Among the points recommended by Nagel (2001) that affect quality of learning in higher education is faculty members' competence and availability of teaching – learning facilities.

Ratio of sharing revenue after collaboration, the universities were to find out what the university stood to gain financially (88.2%). Quality of programmes to be offered was also notable as a key requirement (88.2%) especially where the collaborating college wanted their programmes approved by the respective university senate. Good administrative structure and closeness (geographically) to the university was also a consideration for collaboration – a preference was where the university was not within close vicinity (91.2%) and those with good administrative structures. Further considerations included college's background or reputation; colleges of good reputation were more recommendable (94.1%). Another factor considered was if the college has been offering similar courses as the university such as computer related, hospitality or medical which was highly (94.1%) a positive attraction for collaboration and further validated by CHE or with approved legislative requirements such as by Ministry of Education as reported by 76.5 percent.

The major attraction of the middle level college for collaboration was acknowledged as the certificates given to students from the public universities which were recognised and usually more acceptable in the job market.

9.4 Roles Played by the University in the Collaboration with Colleges

To determine the role of the university in collaborations, university administrators were asked to outline the responsibility the university plays in respect to the collaborating partner. Data collected was analysed and the responses are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Roles Played by the University in the Collaboration with Colleges.

Response	Percentage		Total
	NO	YES	
Monitors and regulates funds	17.6	82.4	100
Provide teaching staff	29.4	70.6	100
Moderate academic standards and policies to be followed	35.3	64.7	100
Marketing the courses	5.9	94.1	100
Controls and supervises the programme	23.5	76.5	100
Caters for programme expenses	11.8	78.2	100
Sets admission and graduation dates	5.9	94.1	100
Sets and mark exams and timetable	5.9	94.1	100
Issues syllabus to be followed	8.8	91.2	100

A high percentages (94.1%) of the university administrators acknowledged that they played a big role in marketing the courses that collaborating institutions were offering, they also set admission, examination and graduation dates and were involved in setting and marking of examinations. As reported by (91.2%) the universities administrators, the universities issued syllabuses to be followed in programmes under collaboration. The universities also played a big role in monitoring and regulating funds accrued from the courses offered in collaboration by setting fees brackets as reported by (82.4%) respondents. However they agreed that they catered for programme expenses as they monitored and regulated funds as reported by (78.2%). The universities were also reported to control and supervise programmes under collaboration (76.5%) as well as they played a big role in moderating academic standards and policies to be followed by collaborating partners. The findings indicate that the universities' major concern after setting up collaboration is provision of quality programmes since all these parameters mainly impinge on quality standards. It is very encouraging

to note this since quality education is the major concern of academic institutions in the world today.

9.5 Roles Played by the College in the Collaboration with Universities

Colleges also have their own share of roles when they get engaged in offering courses in collaboration with the universities.

Table 4: Roles Played by the College in the Collaboration with Universities.

Responses	Percentage		Total
	Yes	No	
Recruits students	85.3	14.7	100
Manages financial matters	85.3	14.7	100
Supplements teaching staff	5.9	94.1	100
Provides teaching space and facilities	73.5	26.5	100
Acts as the link between students and the university	91.2	8.8	100
Releases results, time tables and exams	5.9	94.1	100
Supervises daily routines and executes instructions given	79.4	20.6	100

The findings show that the main roles colleges played as collaborating partners included to act as the link between students and the university as reported by (91.2%) college managers. Recruiting of students and day-to-day management of financial matters such as collection of fees were also major roles of the colleges as reported by (85.3%) the respondents. The colleges supervise daily routines and executes instructions given as well as play role in provision of teaching space and students learning facilities as reported by (79.4%) and (73.5%) respectively. Notably the university hardly (5.9%) supplemented teaching staff but only played the role of approving the teaching staff as earlier reported.

10 Conclusion

This study investigated the role of university in collaboration in comparison with the role of collaborating partners in the management of Module II Programmes. The study sought to know the specific policies and procedures, roles played by both partners in the provision of university academic programmes. The study established that the university's main role was to regulate the academic programmes standards and policies. On their part, collaborating colleges' main responsibility was to provide teaching space and learning facilities for smooth running of their programmes. In view of these findings, the study concludes that collaboration between the universities and colleges should be continued and be expanded so as not to risk the predisposition of losing many qualified candidates from pursuing higher education.

11 Recommendations

The study has shown that both the university and colleges have critical roles to play in provision of Module II Programmes. The middle colleges need to be supported if they are effective in these roles. There is need to borrow a leaf from India (Court and Ghai, 1974) where collaborating colleges work with established universities to offer degrees in certain areas. Some universities in Kenya have tried this with great success. In the US, they have Community Colleges that provide a good bridge to universities. Nigerians have succeeded in ensuring that each state has at least a university,

over and above the established universities supported by the central government. It is against this background that the recommendations below are made.

1. Collaborations with middle level colleges should be encouraged and regulated because they enhance utilisation of resources, increase access to higher education and contribute to institutions' funds.
2. Universities should seek collaborations with many colleges in order to reach needy students who are in need of higher education.
3. Public universities role in collaborations be inclusive of nurturing this collaborating institutions to "independence" or a position to run on their own.

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