

Academic Staff's Perception and Willingness to Participate in Collaborative Research: Implication for Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Authors : Ademola Ibukunolu Atanda

Abstract : Research undertakings are meant to proffer solutions to issues and challenges in society. This justifies the need for research in ivory towers. Multinational and non-governmental organisations, as well as foundations, commit financial resources to support research endeavours. In recent times, the direction and dimension of research undertaking encourage collaborations, whereby experts from different disciplines or specializations would bring their expertise in addressing any identified problem, whether in humanities or sciences. However, the extent to which collaborative research undertakings are perceived and embraced by academic staff would determine the impact collaborative research would have on society. To this end, this study investigated academic staff's perception and willingness to be involved in collaborative research for the purpose of proffering solutions to societal problems. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population comprised academic staff in southern Nigeria. The sample was drawn through a convenient sampling technique. The data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Perception and Willingness to Participate in Collaborative Research Questionnaire (PWPCRQ)" using Google Forms. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentages, mean and charts. The findings showed that Academic Staff's readiness to participate in collaborative research is to a great extent (89%) and they participate in collaborative research very often (51%). The Academic Staff was involved more in collaboration research among their colleagues within their universities (1.98) than participation in inter-disciplines collaboration (1.47) with their colleagues outside Nigeria. Collaborative research was perceived to impact on development (2.5). Collaborative research offers the following benefits to members' aggregation of views, the building of an extensive network of contacts, enhancement of sharing of skills, facilitation of tackling complex problems, increased visibility of research network and citations and promotion of funding opportunities. The study concluded that Academic staff in universities in the South-West of Nigeria participate in collaborative research but with their colleagues within Nigeria rather than outside the country. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the management of universities in South-West Nigeria should encourage collaborative research with some incentives.

Keywords : collaboration, research, development, participation

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