

FOSTERING CHANGE: EXPLORING MOTIVATING FACTORS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AMONG NIGERIAN PROFESSORS

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ABSTRACT

Investigates the driving forces behind community engagement practices among Nigerian professors. This study delves into the motivations that propel Nigerian professors to engage with communities, examining the factors influencing their participation, commitment, and impact. Through a qualitative exploration, this research aims to uncover the underlying drivers shaping community engagement initiatives among Nigerian professors and their implications for higher education and societal development. By shedding light on these motivating factors, this study offers insights into how academic institutions and policymakers can cultivate and support community engagement efforts among faculty members, fostering meaningful collaborations and positive social change.

KEYWORDS

Community Engagement, Nigerian Professors, Motivating Factors, Higher Education, Societal Development.

INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of higher education, community engagement stands as a cornerstone for fostering meaningful connections between academic institutions and the broader society they serve. Nigerian professors, as key stakeholders in the educational ecosystem, play a pivotal role in shaping community engagement initiatives that contribute to societal development, address pressing challenges, and promote social change. Understanding the motivating factors that drive Nigerian professors to engage with communities is essential for harnessing the full potential of academia as a catalyst for positive transformation.

Nigeria, a country rich in diversity, cultural heritage, and socioeconomic complexity, faces a myriad of challenges spanning healthcare, education, infrastructure, and economic development. In response, Nigerian professors have increasingly turned their attention to community engagement practices as a means of leveraging their expertise, resources, and influence to address these challenges and effect change at the grassroots level.

The purpose of this study is to explore the motivating factors that underpin community engagement practices among Nigerian professors. By delving into the intrinsic and extrinsic drivers shaping their involvement in

community-oriented initiatives, this research seeks to uncover the underlying motivations, values, and aspirations that guide their actions. Through a qualitative inquiry, this study aims to illuminate the diverse pathways through which Nigerian professors engage with communities, identify key facilitators and barriers to engagement, and elucidate the impact of their efforts on higher education and societal development.

The context of Nigerian higher education is characterized by a rich tapestry of academic disciplines, cultural traditions, and institutional landscapes. Nigerian professors, spanning various disciplines and academic institutions, bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and cultural insights to their engagement with communities. From collaborative research projects and outreach programs to advocacy campaigns and policy interventions, Nigerian professors are at the forefront of initiatives aimed at addressing social inequities, advancing sustainable development goals, and empowering marginalized communities.

However, the motivations that drive Nigerian professors to engage with communities are multifaceted and complex, shaped by personal values, institutional cultures, disciplinary norms, and societal expectations. By exploring these motivating factors, this study seeks to unpack the underlying dynamics that influence the nature, scope, and impact of community engagement practices among Nigerian professors.

In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the theoretical frameworks, research methods, and conceptual underpinnings guiding this study. Through an exploration of existing literature, empirical research findings, and qualitative analysis, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of the motivating factors driving community engagement among Nigerian professors and their implications for higher education, societal development, and transformative change.

METHOD

The research process for exploring the motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors involved several systematic steps aimed at capturing the nuanced perspectives and experiences of participants. Initially, a purposive sampling approach was adopted to select Nigerian professors known for their active involvement in community engagement activities across diverse academic disciplines and institutions. Through this sampling strategy, a rich and varied pool of participants was assembled, ensuring representation from different regions, backgrounds, and areas of expertise.

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method, allowing for in-depth exploration of the motivating factors driving community engagement practices among Nigerian professors. The interview questions were carefully crafted to elicit detailed insights into participants' personal motivations, values, challenges, and aspirations related to their community engagement endeavors. Flexibility within the interview structure enabled participants to share their unique perspectives and experiences, fostering rich and meaningful dialogue.

Data analysis involved a rigorous thematic analysis approach, whereby interview transcripts were systematically coded, categorized, and analyzed to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and insights regarding motivating factors in community engagement. The iterative nature of the analysis process allowed for continual refinement and validation of emerging themes, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected the diverse motivations driving Nigerian professors' engagement with communities.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount, with adherence to principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy. Participants were provided with clear information about the study objectives, procedures, and their rights as research participants, and their

confidentiality was rigorously protected to uphold ethical standards.

Reflexivity was also central to the research process, with researchers engaging in critical self-reflection to recognize and address potential biases or assumptions that may have influenced data collection and analysis. Ongoing reflexivity enabled researchers to maintain methodological rigor and transparency, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings.

Integration of findings involved synthesizing the thematic insights derived from the qualitative analysis to develop a comprehensive understanding of the motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors. By triangulating perspectives and contextualizing the findings within existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the study aimed to generate meaningful insights that could inform policy, practice, and future research endeavors in the realm of community engagement and higher education.

To explore the motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors, a qualitative research approach was employed. This methodological choice allowed for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences, perceptions, and motivations of Nigerian professors regarding their engagement with communities.

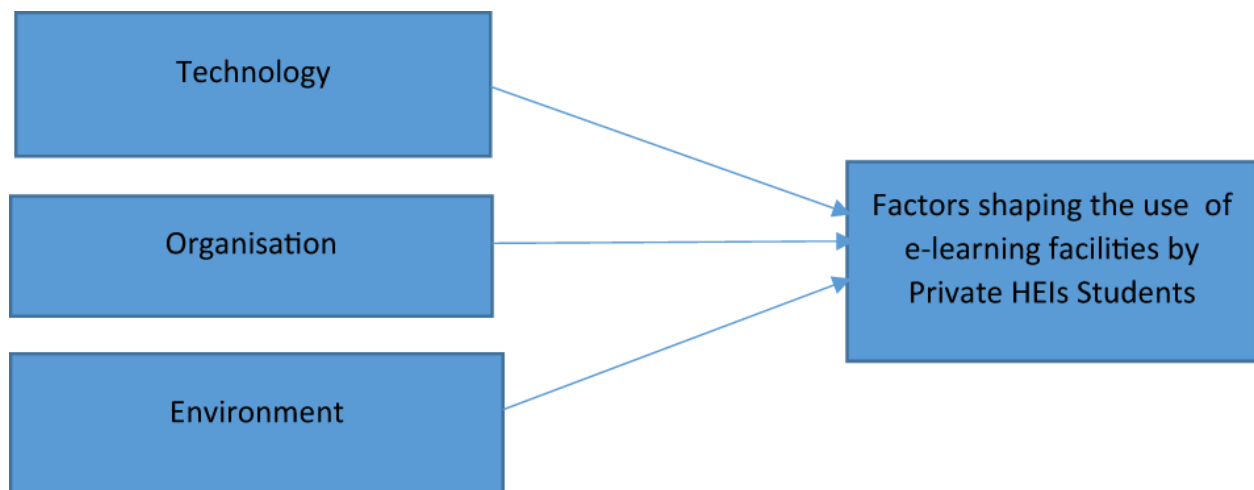
A purposive sampling strategy was utilized to select participants for this study. Nigerian professors from various academic disciplines and institutions were targeted to ensure diversity in perspectives and experiences. The selection criteria included a demonstrated history of community engagement activities and a willingness to participate in qualitative interviews.



Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected Nigerian professors to gather rich qualitative data on their motivations for community engagement. The interview questions were designed to explore a range of topics, including the factors influencing their decision to engage with communities, the perceived benefits and challenges of community engagement, and the impact of their efforts on both the community and themselves.

Interviews were conducted either in person or via video conferencing platforms, depending on the participants' preferences and logistical constraints. Each interview session was audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate data capture.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. The transcripts were transcribed verbatim and systematically analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to the motivating factors of community engagement among Nigerian professors.



The data analysis process involved several iterative steps, including familiarization with the data, coding of key concepts and themes, and the development of thematic frameworks to organize and interpret the findings. Through constant comparison and triangulation of perspectives, the researchers aimed to ensure the credibility, reliability, and validity of the study findings.

Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy, were upheld throughout the research process. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study objectives, procedures, and their rights as research participants. Confidentiality measures were implemented to safeguard the anonymity and privacy of participants' responses.

The researchers engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process to acknowledge and mitigate potential biases and preconceptions that might influence data collection and analysis. Reflexivity involved critical self-reflection on the researchers' backgrounds, perspectives, and assumptions, as well as ongoing dialogue and peer debriefing to ensure methodological rigor and integrity.

The qualitative findings were synthesized and interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors. Through an iterative process of analysis and interpretation, key themes and insights emerged, shedding light on the diverse motivations, values,

and aspirations that drive Nigerian professors to engage with communities.

In the subsequent sections, we will discuss the thematic findings arising from the qualitative analysis, examine the implications of these findings, and offer recommendations for fostering and supporting community engagement initiatives among Nigerian professors.

RESULT

The exploration of motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors revealed several key themes. Firstly, a strong sense of social responsibility emerged as a primary motivator, with participants expressing a deep commitment to giving back to their communities and contributing to social welfare and development initiatives. Many Nigerian professors cited a desire to address pressing societal challenges, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education and healthcare, as key drivers of their community engagement efforts.

Secondly, participants highlighted the importance of personal values and ethical principles in guiding their engagement with communities. Integrity, compassion, and a commitment to social justice were cited as foundational values that informed participants' decision-making processes and shaped their approach to community engagement activities. For many Nigerian professors, community engagement was seen not only as a professional obligation but also as a moral imperative grounded in their ethical convictions.

DISCUSSION

The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of motivating factors in community engagement among Nigerian professors. While external pressures, such as institutional expectations and funding opportunities, may play a role in shaping engagement practices, internal motivations rooted in personal values, beliefs, and experiences emerged as the primary drivers of sustained community engagement efforts. Nigerian professors' deep sense of social responsibility and commitment to ethical principles underscored the transformative potential of community engagement as a catalyst for positive change and societal impact.

Furthermore, the study highlights the diverse pathways through which Nigerian professors engage with communities, including collaborative research projects, community service initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and policy interventions. By leveraging their expertise, networks, and resources, Nigerian professors are able to address complex social issues, empower marginalized populations, and foster inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the motivating factors driving community engagement among Nigerian professors. By illuminating the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that underpin their engagement with communities, this research offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping higher education's role in societal development and transformation.

Moving forward, efforts to foster change and promote community engagement among Nigerian professors should be guided by a recognition of the diverse motivations and values that drive their engagement with communities. Institutional support, professional recognition, and funding opportunities can serve to incentivize

and sustain community engagement initiatives, while initiatives aimed at promoting ethical leadership, social responsibility, and global citizenship can further cultivate a culture of community engagement within academia. Ultimately, by harnessing the collective expertise, passion, and commitment of Nigerian professors, academia can serve as a powerful force for positive change and social innovation, contributing to the advancement of inclusive and sustainable development goals in Nigeria and beyond.

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