

Contextualizing The Involvement Of St. Augustine University Of Tanzania To Mwanza Regional Growth And Development Strategy

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper was to conceptualise the involvement of SAUT in regional development of Mwanza. A more nuanced approach has been proposed for its involvement in regional socio-economic development of the region. The paper uses a descriptive approach to summarise the main four identified conceptual areas. First, SAUT can contribute to regional capacity building labour market upskilling by taking into account problems associated with the absorption of skills needed on both supply and demand side. Second, it can contribute to social and cultural development; Third, it can steer and support regional human capital and skills development; Finally, it can raise the quality of regional innovation processes which in most cases depends on local industries' research and development. The better understanding of these four roles is important in order to deliver practical contributions to economic, social and sustainable smart regional development. The paper concludes that the diverse roles of SAUT as large regional institution of high education, sources of expertise, and providers of common educational experiences should be the most commonly used to classify its regional impact.*

Keywords: *Regional growth; development strategy; regional impact; SAUT, Mwanza, Tanzania.*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is time for St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) to tap into the knowledge base about its role in regional growth and development. A growing body of theory and practice exists on the role of universities in regional growth and development. OECD (2007) has identified why regional authorities seek to mobilise universities in support of their regional development strategies and why, for their part, many universities are engaging with the development of their regions as drivers. According to O'Malley (2018), strong regional universities are central to driving regional development and central to increasing regional prosperity. The 'pivotal' role regional universities play in regional development extends beyond the provision for tertiary courses and conducting research. Arbo (2005) posits that universities and their role in regional development seems to be centered on the following four basic themes, (a) the notion of centrality of the university; (b) the meaning and purpose of the university;

(c) the mission and operation of the university; and (d) the innovation agenda and new modes of governance of the university. Strong regional university is the beating heart of the regional economy and its people. It helps to keep young people in the region, educate regional workforces, attract new residents, foster regional industries, drive local growth and innovation, maintain essential community facilities, and help regional communities to thrive (O'Malley, 2018). Both universities and other higher education institutions have always had an impact on their region by producing trained and educated manpower. University's research and innovations have been often seen as engines of growth and regional development. Importantly, successful partnerships depend on both universities and regional authorities' understanding of each other as drivers (Thaman, 2007). Too often partnerships fail because university managers do not understand the challenges of the regional development on the one hand, and on the other hand regional authorities do not understand the core mission of universities and the constraints within which

they work (Benneworth and Fitjar, 2019). However, once mutual understanding is reached, it is possible to put into place structures and procedures which overcome the barriers to collaboration. This mutual understanding can come from appreciation of some of the general principles as to 'why' the universities in a region have the potential to contribute to its development and 'how' those principles have been translated into practice from various studies (Blume et al, 2017).

Understanding principles as well as practice is important as it reveals that while there are some universal mechanisms that can be adopted across the whole of the region in this area, what is actually effective is highly contingent on regional and national circumstances, including the region's industrial structure and governance, and how universities are funded and regulated within their national higher education system. Perspectives of the role of universities in 'regional development' vary, often depending on the way a 'region' is defined. Garlick (2005) discusses three types of relationships between higher education institution and the region. A structuralist perspective refers to situations in which a university is seen as economic boosters in rural areas, while a spatial perspective is associated with equity measures such as student placement, usually based on distance from metropolitan centres. Another perspective is based on a recognition of the significance of a region to the higher education institutions that are located there (Garlick, 2005). The contribution of higher education institutions to regional development is a topic that has attracted increasing attention in recent years (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). In this paper we want to get behind this issue and take a closer look at how SAUT can contribute to regional development of Mwanza. Currently, it is expected that SAUT, a knowledge institution that educates and conducts research, should also play an active role in regional economic, social and cultural development, which has been entrusted as a regional mission. This paper is organized in seven briefly described sections as follows: section 2 presents approach to methodology; section 3 describes an understanding of the role of SAUT in regional development; section 4 deals with promotion of business enterprises; section 5 outlines the contributions of SAUT to regional human capital and skills; section 6 discusses the challenges and barriers including the enablers of SAUT to regional development; section 7 deals with overcoming the barriers, the channels of engagement and operating principles.

A. THE PROBLEM

Universities matter to the development of their host regions. This insight is not anything new, as countless studies demonstrate the positive impact of universities on their regional environment (Blume et al., 2017). The relative importance of knowledge economy as the basis of development was translated into growing expectations for universities to function as engines for regional growth. Among authors that have recognised important role of universities in regional development processes include (Goddard et al., 1999; Keane and Allison, 1999; Chatterton and Goddard, 2000). Given the overall importance of the regional development in terms of its growing focus on knowledge, society and usage of information technology in all sectors of the economy, it is only expected to

further increase in the future. SAUT engagement with regional development takes place in the context of a wider set of changes in the external environment with which it lives and operates (Charles, 2006; Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). Therefore, the extent to which SAUT will be able to take on this role will depend on a number of circumstances, namely: its characteristics as individual institution, the various aspects of the region in which it is located; and the regional policy frameworks will be of substantial significance (Harrison and Turok, 2017). At the same time, there will be some signs of more fundamental conceptual and strategic confusions to be handled in this process.

In spite of the fact that SAUT involvement in regional development is on the policy agenda, it remains far from clear how the institution actually will operate and what its new responsibilities will entail. Nor is there consensus as to what standing collaboration with industry, business and community at large should have in their overall operation and which priorities are relevant? Popescu (2011), explained how our perceptions and ways of understanding things are, to a high degree, textured through the medium of "metaphors". The introduction of the concept of institutional images shows how important such intellectual devices are to our understanding of the institutions. Similarly, some central "metaphors" seem to recur when a university and regional development are under discussion (Thaman, 2007). As one of the largest regional institution, SAUT is seen by many including financial donors agencies as an important facilitator and contributor to the development of a regional consciousness, as well as a positive force for regional cohesion. SAUT is a place for the meeting of minds of persons from different nations as well as a transmitter of the social, economic and cultural values of the region.

B. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this paper was to provide an analytical framework of how SAUT can impact on regional growth in mobilising regional economic, social and cultural development.

Specifically, the paper seeks to:

- ✓ illustrate some of the potential delivery mechanisms that can be used to maximize its contribution to regional growth; and
- ✓ outline the key success factors in building university/regional partnership, particularly the drivers and barriers on both sides behind such partnership working and how these barriers may be overcome.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper will attempt to answer to the following questions:

- ✓ What is the role of SAUT in regional development?
- ✓ What are some of the mechanisms for involving SAUT in delivering regional growth?
- ✓ How can the barriers to mobilising SAUT be identified and overcome?
- ✓ How can effective partnerships and strategies be created to maximise the relationship between SAUT and the region?

- ✓ What benefits can SAUT get from working with regional development partners?
- ✓ What specific activities can SAUT be involved in?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

This section is concerned with brief review of related studies focusing on the topic. Various studies have been conducted by scholars re-emphasising the important role higher education institutions should play in regional socio-economic development. Specifically in their effort to investigate the complexity of the linkages between higher education institutions and the regions where they are located. Some of these studies include those by Chatterton and Goddard (2000); Garlick (2005); Charles (2006); Arbo and Benneworth (2007); Allison and Eversole (2008); Popescu (2011); Blume et al., (2017), just to name some few. For instance, Charles (2006) argued that universities' engagement with the regional development issues and the regional development community is taking place in the context of a wider set of changes in the external environment with which universities must cope with. Thanki (1999), interrogated how do we know the value of higher education to regional development if it is by being involved?

Arbo and Benneworth (2007), provide an extensive summary of the different "metaphors" that best capture the complex relationship between higher education and regional development in concise and memorable ways. They argued the following: "To begin with we have "machine metaphors" which means, "Higher education acts as an 'engine', 'powerhouse', 'driver', 'dynamo', 'booster', 'accelerator' or 'lever' for regional growth and prosperity". The wording of this statement indicates that this is a place where the pace is set for the region's progress. The other related type of "metaphor" is the "biological" which suggests that, "Higher education represents a 'hothouse', 'seedbed', 'breeding ground', 'spawning place', 'catalyst', or 'fermenter' for regional development". These concepts define associations with something that sprouts then blossoms. They point out that this is the place for innovation and re-invigoration". The third set of "metaphors" focus on "networks", that is, "Higher education represents a 'node', 'hub', 'bridgehead', 'mediator', 'coupling unit', 'transfer point', 'transmission centre', etc...". Meaning that, it is where "access to and dissemination of information and knowledge are emphasised." The last type of "metaphor" is "the time metaphor"; which suggests that "higher education institutions should take the lead in a transformation process": that is, 'spearhead', 'vanguard', 'lighthouse' and 'signpost'. "They herald and are the symbol of a new era" (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Popescu, 2011). Tripl et al., (2014), indicated that the literature on universities' contributions to regional development is broad and diverse. A precise understanding of how regions can potentially draw advantages from various university activities and the role of public policy institutions (imperatives and incentives) in promoting such activities is still missing.

III. APPROACH TO METHODOLOGY

In undertaking this study, we focused on establishing a comprehensive framework of the benefits attributable to SAUT involvement with region. In so doing, the study synthesised existing relevant literature from the various sources on the benefits of university's involvement in regional development. The methodological approach has involved various steps which include (i) a literature review to support the development of a conceptual framework which captures the ways in which SAUT can generate the benefits for society; (ii) data collection, presentation and analysis drawing on available sources, to identify quantitative and qualitative evidence of the benefits of involvement; and (iii) synthesis of the evidence, reporting and presenting the findings of the analysis. The scope of the work to produce this paper did not allow primary research methods to be used, hence the sources utilised are entirely secondary from previous studies, including internet information, relevant websites in the area, as well as documentary evidence from various sources, self evaluations and reviews of higher education works on regional development.

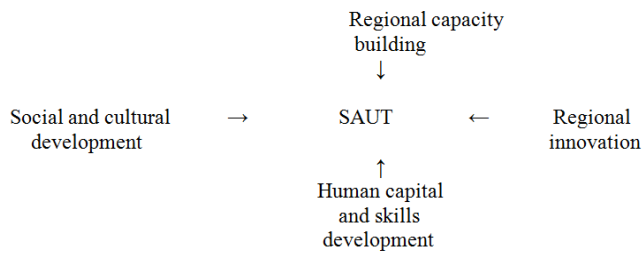
The study methodology was carefully designed to maximize the use of available qualitative information (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To address the gap in the literature, the study was conducted to specifically explore the dynamism effects and outcomes of SAUT involvement in regional development in Mwanza (Benneworth and Fitjar, 2019). The design of this study follows qualitative research design. According to (Astalin, 2013), qualitative design is the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures. The design was based on the following three major qualitative research design approaches, namely narrative, phenomenology, and case study. Both narrative and phenomenological methodologies were used, as the researchers wished to describe the perceptions attached to the opinions of the various authors' analysis of the impact of involvement in regional development. Considering the fact that there can be a number of sources to gather information, the methodology adopted represents relatively a cost effective approach (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). A description of the ways in which SAUT can consider, to some extent, its involvement role in regional development is given in the following sections.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ROLE OF SAUT IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SAUT is a large institution, a source of expertise and a provider of common educational experiences that contribute to sustainable development in the region (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). In understanding SAUT's role in regional development, it is important to tap into its knowledge base as summarised by OECD (2007). Mutual understanding between development players is important in order to have into place structures and procedures which overcome the barriers to collaboration. This requires an understanding of the principles and mechanism that can be adopted across the whole of this involvement. A good

region will be the one that can produce regional knowledge industry with effective connections between local actors (Figure 1).



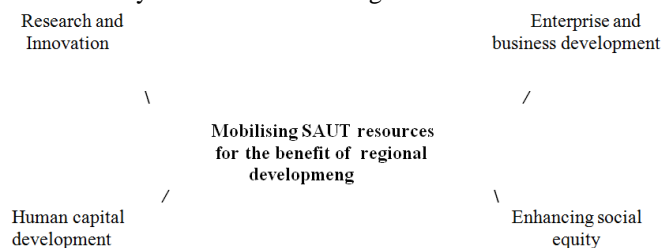
Source: Adopted from Smart Specialization Platform (2011)

Figure 1: SAUT involvement in regional context

SAUT is an anchor institution in regional development, a major employer across a wide range of occupations and contributor to cultural life. Its involvement to support its core business of teaching, research and community outreach can significantly increase regional multiplier effect even if it is not actively supporting regional development (Popescu, 2011). As already mentioned, its involvement to support its core business of teaching, research and community outreach can significantly increase regional multiplier effect even if it is not actively supporting regional development (Popescu, 2011).

B. THE STRATEGIES BY WHICH SAUT CAN USE TO CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As explained earlier, there are various ways in which SAUT can use to contribute to regional development. Importantly, within each of these roles there exist a range of strategies that can be used as individual projects or collectively as part of the wider programme strategy to enhance and support regional development agenda (Duke, 2005). Briefly, SAUT can be involved in regional development through the following four main key areas as shown in Figure 2.



Source: Literature survey (2020).

Figure 2: Mechanisms by which SAUT can be involved in regional development

In reviewing these roles, it is important to make a distinction between the regional impact of SAUT own activity financed as part of the core business of teaching and research and purposive regional interventions initially funded from own source (Goldstein and Renault, 2004).

C. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional development is all about improvement in social and economic conditions of the people including economic cohesion within the region. SAUT can inevitably play a critical role in this area by implementing projects designed to increase local participation in higher education. In so doing it

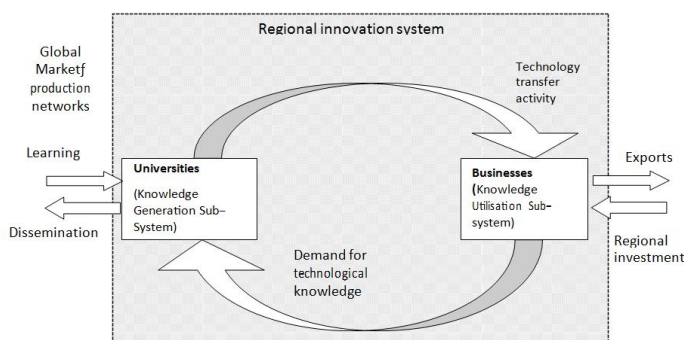
can also increase the supply of skilled labour that will more likely remain within the region. This process can also assist businesses to undertake technological transformations that can be used by current employees to upgrade their skills through SAUT lifelong learning programmes (Fongwa et al., 2014). In the same way, population in the region may be residing in places where SAUT researchers and business will have the opportunities to identify new market opportunities, evaluate service and product innovation. This requires that academic knowledge will need to have a social and technological intervention components (Robins and Webster, 2002).

D. REGIONAL HUMAN CAPITAL AND SKILLS BUILDING

Developing skills and knowledge assets of the workforce is important for a region. It is one of the most important strategy in achieving regional innovation (Wolfe, 2005). According to OECD (2017), a strong correlation exists between productivity growth and level of education. Both the public and business sectors value the presence of SAUT in the region. As a result, they often look how to maximise their role in the development of the human capital needed in the region, by building the required skills and also by acting as an attractor of external talents. This is very important given that SAUT's core activity is teaching, learning and research. Students might be from in or outside the region, or sometimes from other countries, while local students might not stay in the region after graduation. To some extent, it is not realistic to expect SAUT to design teaching programmes only around regional needs, but nationally and internationally since it is a great resource in building human capital (Kettunen, 2004). More often there is a miss-match between the demand for and supply of skills in the local economy, which can have negative effects on regional economic development and innovation potentials. The design and provision of training programmes should be a direct response to employer needs to have a significant impact on the regional economy (Harrison and Turok, 2017). This requires moving beyond traditional contact delivery models to models such as distance learning, on-site teaching, and modular programme design, including partnership for better use of private sector in design and delivery of training programmes (Larty et al., 2016).

E. SAUT AND REGIONAL INNOVATION

The main focus on promoting active engagement of SAUT in the region is perhaps in terms of its contribution to regional system of innovations. This has gained a new insight in the context of the advancement of the notion of regional "smart specialisation" as a future focus for regional policy. It requires the identification of the knowledge intensive areas for potential growth and development related to the role of certain classes of players such as researchers, suppliers, manufacturers and service providers, entrepreneurs, users, including public research and industry science links. Such arrangements and the relationship between the two should externally be oriented by regional partners as can be seen in Figure 3.



Source: Benneworth & Fitjar (2019).

Figure 3: Regional innovation system as a local circulation between regional innovators

Figure 3 presents what could be important contributions that SAUT can make, and which has been broken down into four main areas, namely: business innovation which is closely linked to the research function, human capital development involving teaching function, community development and institutional capacity building of the region. The four domains are integrated, while SAUT being seen to be occupying a “proactive” and not just “passive” role in the regional development process. Consequently, new entrants to the innovation market, be they young academics or new innovative firms, can access academic and corporate knowledge capital more easily than in other places (OECD, 2007). They can also receive advantages in terms of their own competitive performance. The players would be the agents who use the knowledge acquisition and resources to check the available local economic and market opportunities, to identify technological and market niches for exploitation, and thereby act as the catalyst for driving the emerging transformation of the economy”. SAUT can therefore play a key role in defining a regional needed specialisation strategy by contributing to regional’s knowledge capabilities and competencies, as well as those embedded in the university’s own departments and local businesses (Pinto et al., 2015).

In order to support and enhance regional innovation, research activities play critical role in regional development in providing the knowledge base underpinning innovation (Pugh, 2016). One of the most important approach in which SAUT can contribute to this is by transforming its research in a manner that regional actors in both private and public sectors will buy in by being involved (Popescu, 2011). This is what is sometimes known as “assistance model” of innovation that begins with research (Popescu, 2011). What is important here is for SAUT to design its research interventions in recognition that they can easily be used in regional innovation process. This include knowledge that the demand from the public and private sectors for relevant expertise in the business and community activities have been taken into consideration (Smart Specialization Platform, 2011). In this context, both skills in business, social and natural sciences and humanities can be mobilized in relation to organisational innovation, as well as social innovation and the public policy environment within which regional actors operate (Thaman, 2007). Generally, the contribution of SAUT research agenda to regional innovation should be multi-disciplinary as possible.

F. THE DRIVERS OF SAUT

There are certainly many factors that drive SAUT to be involved in regional development process. According to Smart Specialization Platform (2011), we need first to think in terms of student recruitment. That is, during declining students funding, more students can only be recruited locally as a possible remedy to this situation. As a result, this involves developing collaboration links with local schools in related areas where there is often a shortage of qualified applicants (Johnston and Huggins, 2016). It is always important for SAUT to demonstrate its regional availability in providing qualified candidates in science and related jobs to increase its visibility in the region. In terms of national and international marketplace for students, Smart Specialization Platform (2011), argues that the institution needs to promote and contribute through its campus to the attraction of the town as a place to live, work and study are its key drivers, which involve fostering the local creative economy to some extent. Hence work placements with local companies may increase the labour market prospects of the student (Bouche et al. 2003). Increasing emphasis should be placed on collaborative research between SAUT, the public and private sectors. Since there are regional drivers for business who want to reach the institution, there are also drivers within the institution wanting to reach out to business. Knowledge transfer partnerships according to Popescu (2011) are about encouraging the mobility of human capital between the university and local businesses.

D. PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE

It is important that SAUT be involved in regional development given that it is the most progressive approach used by established higher education institutions to actively respond to the challenges facing their region (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007; Allison and Eversole, 2008). Higher education institutions have increasingly recognised the critical role they should play in the development of their regions (Popescu, 2011; Tripl et al., 2014; Blume et al., 2017). This is to some extent due not only to increased competitive pressures and the need to demonstrate value and worth of the institution to the region, but also as a response to the need for better involvement with wider society in order to contribute to the challenges facing the region (Thaman, 2007; Smart Specialization Platform, 2011; Pugh, 2016). Some of these features have been captured in SAUT vision and mission statement which is to impart academic and professional skills, by being a centre of excellence that provide high quality education, research and public service including economic, social and cultural development.

E. OVERCOMING BARRIERS - CHANNELS OF ENGAGEMENT

There has been various ways in which SAUT can be involved in the development of the region by contributing to innovation strategies, sustainable development and growth, as expressed previously. Therefore, for both parties to get maximum benefits out of this process, it is necessary that they

operate within a coordinated framework aiming at securing the greatest achievement from the mobilisation effects by SAUT (Goldstein and Renault, 2004). This requires a well defined clear understanding and communication channels among the participants. SAUT may want to be involved in the region by contributing meaningfully to economic and social development through its teaching and research activities. However, there may be some barriers from both sides which may prevent them reaching in and out effectively. The type of engagement between the region and SAUT is important to prepare the way forward for participation. This kind of approach can lead to increased trust and proactive collaboration between the two (Goddard and Chatterton, 1999).

F. OPERATING APPROACH

As human beings, it may happen, at certain times be at clashes for various reasons. These clashes may also act as a further barrier to some extent, to the engagement and effective partnership working conditions (Smart Specialization Platform, 2011). In these circumstances, SAUT may deliberately like to distance itself from being involved in regional development, or by positioning itself as an observer of the process rather than being part of it. This will become like a disincentive to getting SAUT involved in regional development activities. In order to overcome such issue, the development of a good innovative agreement to regional development approach is needed. Smart Specialization Platform (2011), argued that this is essentially a human resources management tool to enable SAUT to create a balanced portfolio of activities between teaching, research and other activities.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

This paper assessed the ways in which SAUT could be involved in regional development of Mwanza. The paper stresses that it is important for SAUT to consider to be involved in social and economic development of Mwanza holistically by focusing on transformational approaches. This is important not only in terms of the number of people and businesses targeted, but also because this approach will likely have a long term impact on economic development process itself. For this to happen, a good partnership should be established to specifically address delivery issues between SAUT and regional authorities as well as to ensure that longer term sustainable partnerships exist. Goddard and Chatterton (1999) argued that one of the most significant contributions to regional development is when the university's capacities are called to join up things regionally. Figure 1 shows that SAUT can make a significant contribution in addressing regional capacity building, social and cultural development, human capital and skills development and regional innovation, including many other contributions that could be made through research. According to Popescu (2011), for an ideal type of regionally involvement by a university, there are two virtuous cycles. SAUT has productive synergies between teaching, research and service to the community; while the

region has connections between skills, innovation and community. If the interface between these two parts can be well managed, then each cycle can positively reinforce the other, with SAUT and region mutually benefiting. One of the important pieces of information coming out of this paper is: the extent to which there is interaction between the various sectoral players will be the impacts of SAUT. Positive relationship exists between innovation and teaching, teaching and governance, sustainable development and research/teaching. SAUT as a university is able to bring together different activities and by joining them up across. The greater awareness of the value of SAUT will be to some extent a consequence of an increase in the scale of activities of its regional involvement. SAUT investment in people's development in the region is critical, since the kinds of skills needed to undertake regional transformational are often in short supply.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ It is recommended that SAUT get involved in regional development to boost the process of economic and social development.
- ✓ Together the region and SAUT should consider participating in the process of regional development in order to help identify their current strengths and areas that may require capacity building.
- ✓ Both region and SAUT should adopt a broader definition of innovation in order to acknowledge the role that arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences can play, especially in responding to 'serious challenges' which require the development of mechanisms that draw on the expertise and contribution from these disciplines to issues like regional entrepreneurship, creativity and social inclusion, which are key dimensions to regional development.
- ✓ Collaborative research should be used to provide important guidance to regional development process as a whole.

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