

Full Length Research Paper

The university as a nucleus for growth pole: Example from Akungba - Akoko, Southwest, Nigeria

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This paper is an attempt to assess the socio-economic impact of Adekunle Ajasin University on Akungba Akoko's community in Ondo State, Southwest Nigeria. Data were collected using a set of questionnaire and secondary data. The establishment of the university has caused the influx of people into the hitherto strictly agrarian and relatively unknown community. The impact of the university was observed on the livelihood; occupational and socialization of the people of the hitherto quiet community. It also has its negative consequences which include demand induced inflation, increased wave of violence among others. The study concluded that location of a tertiary institution in an area is an impetus to the area's rapid growth, provided the activities of such tertiary institution are guided.

Key words: Economic and socio development, university, host community.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1950, urban population has increase from 300 million to 1.3 billion people (World Bank, 1991). The world population therefore has shifted from being predominantly rural to being predominantly urban around the turn of the century. Urbanization though difficult to define possesses various yardsticks by which it is determined. This could be quantitative in terms of minimum population or qualitative as regards the characteristics of the economy and rule of living. This also plays unevenness in area of variation and regional variability (Ibitoye, 1998).

In recent times, there has been a lot of controversy on the location of public and private utilises in one town or the other, this is because people realize the fact that location of such in an area or region could enhance rapid development of such areas socio-economically. The citing of an industry in a town for instance will create employment opportunity for both skilled and unskilled labour and this in turn will increase the population of the town as a result of people migrating to the town to seek employment opportunity (Mydral, 1957). It could also cause increase in various land use activities, changes in building conditions and use in order to cope with the educational trends (Ayobami, 1977). The main objective of this paper is to asses the social and economic effect of

citing a university in a community. The conclusion of the study is based on the growth pole theory which states that economic development never occur uniformly over space but tends to concentrate in certain areas. The areas where development is concentrated may become the growth poles.

Adekunle Ajasin University, formerly Obafemi Awolowo University Ado Ekiti/Akungba-Akoko, is named after Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin the Governor that signed the law establishing the University in 1982. Following the creation of Ekiti state out of the old Ondo state, a bill was passed to relocate the institution from Ado-Ekiti to Akungba Akoko on 9th November, 1999. Prior to this period, Akungba Akoko was purely an agrarian village.

The people were known for agricultural activities only few were engaged in some commercial activities like trading, weaving and artisan. Socio-economic activities were at the barest minimum. Presently students' population in the University is about 10,138. This population is almost the same with the total population census of Akungba in 1991. According to the 2006 census, the population of the host community Akungba- Akoko was 15,579 and their major economic activities were farming, teaching, banking and trading.

Study area

Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko Ondo State Nigeria was selected for this investigation. It was selected

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because it has long been established, since 1999, in the present community. Akungba- Akoko which happens to be the host community lies on longitude 5'44' east and Latitude 7'28' north of the Equator. It is located on an undulating and rocky terrain. It is bordered to the North by Ikare-Akoko, South by Oba-Akoko, East by Odowara and West by Supare-Akoko. The climate of Akungba-Akoko falls within the tropical region with rainfall which varies from 1100 - 2000 mm per annum. The temperature is between 26 and 28°C. There are alternate wet/raining and dry seasons.

Theoretical implication

Generally speaking, urban/rural centers provide many functions not only to the people living there but also to those in other surrounding centers. Usually the location and functions of cities is not by chance. Rather where a city is located and the function it performs are influenced by the demand of such functions. On the basis of this demand cities can be grouped into four classes. These are those that respond to institutional requirements, resource sites, transportation and territory. The interest for this study is on the institutional requirement. The cities that respond to institutional needs are those that have developed from the performance of institutional functions. Examples of these functions include cultural and educational administration, such as been the seat of a university. An underdeveloped region can be developed through the growth and formulation of many institutions among which is the establishment of a University.

The establishment of any institution in a community has been known to be of great value to the overall development of an area. Location impact therefore means the influence of a new idea or concept on its immediate surrounding or an area (that is, the environment), this new idea or concept can be in form of an establishment in a regional setting. The major contribution to the geographical study of location was Christaller (1933) Central Place theory which was primarily meant to examine the principles or laws guiding location. This central place theory concept sought to connect the demand for a good with threshold and range. His work was later modified by Pred (1964) who stressed that it was more or less a theory of the location of tertiary activities. Pred linked it to manufacturing under special market demand condition.

Perrouxian economic space growth pole theory

The growth pole theory was propounded by a French economist, Perroux (1950) from his observation of the actual process of economic development. He defines economic space as field of forces consisting of centers, points, poles and forms from which centrifugal forces emanate. To Perroux, these link the centers to the form which generates centrifugal and centripetal forces

attracting or diverting material wealth into its space. According to Perroux, development does not appear everywhere and all at once. It appears in points or development poles with variables intensities. Its spread along diverse channel has varying terminal effects to the whole of the economy. Perroux was primarily concerned with the economic growth in firms and industries and their linkage effect. This theory as relate to this study reveals that establishment of the University brought about other economic activities and firms like banking, business centers, etc. These are the linkages effects and the concept is built around the bitter truth that growth does not appear everywhere at the same time, but rather it manifests at point or poles of growth with varying intensity and its spreads through different channels.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study addressed the following questions: what is the relationship between socio-cultural factors of respondents and their contributions to the host community? To what extent does the length of stay of respondents determine their social affiliation with the indigenes? How far has the contributions of respondents affected the physical and economic development of individuals and the host community? In the quest for a comprehensive understanding, these questions influenced the study's methodology. The data used for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through the use of questionnaire administered to respondents in the study area. The questionnaire was divided into three broad sections which sought information on; the demographic characteristics of respondents; their economic characteristics which feature questions like occupation, income and ownership of landed properties and finally their social characteristics which feature questions like inter-marriages, languages spoken etc, respectively.

To ensure an all round representation, respondents for interview were selected from specific study locations within Akungba Akoko. In the administration of the questionnaire, six quarters were identified in the community, they are: Ibaka, Akunmi, Akua, Ilale, Igbelu and Okele. Twenty copies of questionnaire were administered in each quarter making the total number of questionnaire administered to be a hundred and twenty. The simple random sampling was used in the choice of individual respondents for the study. Data analysis was first carried out on the in-depth interview and case studies. Then qualitative data were analyzed using manual content analysis. Quantitative data generated through questionnaire were analyzed with the statistical package for social science (SPSS). A descriptive analysis of data was done using unvaried frequency distribution. A non - parametric statistical technique (Spearman correlation) was used to determine the type and strength of relationship between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of respondents

The study predominantly involved the full survey of some household/traders in the six busy district of Akungba-Akoko. The questionnaire designed was simple requiring minimal time to fill although, it was heavily complemented by structured interview conducted mostly on weekends. The choice of the period for the study was to ensure that most house holds were present. The main questions

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

	Category	Frequency	Percentage frequency (%)
Sex	Male	80	66.7
	Female	40	33.3
Age	Below 30	8	6.7
	30–34	12	10
	35–39	26	21.7
	40–44	30	25.0
	45–49	22	18.3
	50–54	14	11.7
	55+	8	6.7
Religion	Christianity	90	75
	Islam	30	25
Marital status	Single	50	41.7
	Married	65	54.2
	Divorced	2	1.7
	Widowed	3	2.5
Ethnic group	Yoruba	80	66.7
	Ibo	30	25
	Hausa	10	8.3
	Others	-	-
Level of education	Some higher degree	60	50
	School certificate	25	20.8
	Primary school	8	6.7
	No formal education	7	5.8
	Born there	30	25
Length of stay	0-5 year	40	33.3
	6 – 10 years	44	36.7
	11 – 15years	4	3.3
	16yrs+	2	1.7
		4	3.3
	2	1.7	

Source: from authors' survey questionnaire.

were focused on the cultural, socio-economic and educational background of the respondents. They were analyzed using a simple percentage complimented with correlation between economic status, length of stay and intermarriages. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents at a glance.

From the study, the sample size is heavily in favour of men because they are more involved in occupational mobility than their counterpart. Hence, 66.79% of the respondents were men. However, the view of women is also necessary therefore the sample size of women were 33.3%. Since the study was focused on men and women, both married and newly married, the majority of the respondents were married. About 41% of the respondents were single, 54.2% were married, and 1.7% were divorced while 2.5% had lost their partners due to death (widowed). The majority of the respondents were

between the ages of thirty-five and above fifty-five. The lowest recorded was below thirty and above fifty-five. About 75% of the respondents belonged to the Christian faith while the remaining 25% were Muslims. For easy composition, the ethnic composition was grouped into three in order to determine their place of origin. About 66.7% of the respondents indicated that they belonged to the Yoruba group which is the dominant group in the state.

Other groups represented were the Ibos with 35% respondents and the Hausas with 8.3% respondents. The information gotten through the administered questionnaires revealed that some of the respondents were indigenes of Akungba-Akoko. It was obvious that they move into the town after the creation of the University. 12% of the sample population moved into the town in 1999 - 2000, those that moved in between 2001 - 2002

Table 2. Economic characteristics of the respondents.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage of the frequency (%)
Occupation	University staff	48	40
	Teacher	12	10
	Banker	06	5
	Artisan	08	6.7
	Trader	14	11.7
	Driver/Okada operator	16	13.3
	Unemployed/Housewife	8	6.7
	Farmers	10	8.3
Monthly income	Below 20,000	8	6.7
	20,000 – 30,000	4	3.3
	30,000 – 40,000	8	6.7
	40,000 – 50,000	30	25
	50,000 – 60,000	28	23.3
	60,000 above	42	35

Source: from authors' survey questionnaire.

accounted for 25% of the sampled population and between 2003 and 2004, 32% moved into the study areas. 10% moved between 2005 till date. About 21% of the sampled populations interviewed were indigenes and they have been living there before the creation of the university. There was evidence of intra and inter- ethnic marriages among the respondents. Of those who responded to the question on inter/intra group marriages, 69% married from the same ethnic group while 31% married outside their ethnic groups. The education of the respondents was high with 50% of them having attained some higher degree, 20.8% did not go beyond secondary school, 6.7% of the sample population had only primary education while the remaining 5.8% had no formal education. By implication, the level of education showed that the host community was gradually turning from agrarian village to University town. Basically, the demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated that they were mainly adults, Christians and were mainly from the dominant ethnic groups of Yoruba.

Economic activities as measures of impact

One of the objectives of government is to provide employment for its citizens. The establishment of the University in Akungba-Akoko has directly and indirectly provided employment for a number of people. From the survey carried out, more indigenes were being given employment with the University. The occupation characteristics revealed that some of the respondents were staff of the University. About 40% of the respondents work in the University and 5% in banks in the town. One of the banks (Skye bank) was established the same year the University was created. While Oroke Community bank

had been the only bank existing before the creation of the University. Recently two additional banks, Intercontinental bank and Zenith bank, were established on the campus making the banks a total number of four. The farmers were 8.3% of the sampled population. Traders were 11.7% while teachers in either primary or secondary schools made up 10%, Artisans 6.7%, the Unemployed /Housewife made up 6.7%.

In order to justify the respondents' economic status, a rough estimate of their monthly income was look into (Table 2). Those who claimed to earn below N20, 000 monthly made up 6.7% of the sampled population, 3.3% earn between N20, 000 and N30, 000. Those that earn between N30, 000 and N40, 000 were made up of 6.7% of the sampled population. 25% earn between N40, 000 and N50, 000 while 23.3% earn between N50, 000 and N60, 000. The remaining 35% earn N60, 000 and above. In the area of contribution to physical infrastructure, the university has also added to the number of primary schools available in the town through the establishment of the university staff school. Before the establishment of the University in December 1999, there were only public primary and secondary schools owned by the government. As at today, Akungba-Akoko now has up to six private nursery and primary schools. This have been attracting people to the community, increasing wealth and raising the educational standard of the people.

Another economic activity that has improved over the years is marketing and trading. There is the springing up of services which have been tailored to provide the needs of the University community. Some of these services include dry cleaning and catering services such as canteen for selling food, kiosk for selling different items, etc. Also there are some commercial activities such as that of hotels and banks located on the campus to meet

Table 3. Results of the spearman ranking correlation technique performed on some variables in the study.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	r	p
Occupation	Contribution to physical development (landed properties)	0.060	0.000
	Price of house rent	0.062	0.058
Length of stay	Inter-marriage with host community	0.395	0.48
	Availability/utilization of amenities	0.45	0.05

the banking need of the University staff, students and the community in general. The community operates two periodic markets. Before now the populations of the markets used to be very scanty but since the establishment of the University, it has experience large turn out every market day. Despite the fact that the markets happen to be periodic markets, one will always find activities going on, on the days which are not scheduled to be market days.

In the area of transportation, there had been an improvement in the transportation system of the community. More vehicles now ply the road. From the information gathered, only few vehicles could be seen moving along the road in Akungba-Akoko before 1999, presently, information gathered from personal study showed that close to 1000 vehicles ply the road per day. Some of the respondents interviewed have their own houses while some rent their apartments. Some of those landlords also rent out some of their apartments to other people. When asked the ages of their building, about 28% claimed their houses were more than 15 years. Those whose houses were more than 10 years represent 32% of the sampled population while 40% claimed their houses were less than 10 years. This implies that people started building more houses from 1999 after the establishment of the university. This means that the community felt that the establishment and presence of the university created an economic impact on the community.

Furthermore, the age(s) of these houses also determined the amount they were rented out. The least amount for a rented room was between N800 and N1,000 per month while a flat goes for as high as N36,000 and N50,000 per year. It was gathered from oral interview conducted before the year 2000, that most people gave their houses free to tenant. After the establishment of the University, there became a high demand for accommodation and this lead to high rentage collection. Therefore, this has also led to the improvement in economic value of houses within the community.

Social activities in the university town

In recent time, some facilities have been provided and introduced in Akungba. Some of those facilities are improved water supply, toilet facilities, improved source of light (electricity) and global system mobile (GSM)

services. For example it was gathered that some houses that were built about twenty years ago did not have improved toilet facilities or none at all. Now about 50% of the household interviewed have pit latrine, 38% of the sample population have water closet while the remaining 18% use other means. The presence of the University within the community has helped enlighten and improve the hygiene of the people. In addition, the establishment of the University encouraged the GSM service providers to establish their masks in the study area. The community now has all the networks in the town. People can now contact their people far and near from Akungba.

Integration in terms of language(s) spoken and inter-marriage among non-indigenes is another social impact. From the data gathered some non-indigenes that moved in after the establishment of the University had married indigenes of either Akungba-Akoko or Akoko region. Also the problem of language barrier is eroding gradually. Initially it was difficult to transact business with some market women during market days, but now some of these women are picking the Yoruba language as against the Akoko dialect while some also are picking the English language.

Adverse impact of the university establishment

Most of the respondents said that before the University was established, crime rate and other social vices were minimal. Although, for sometime now, crime rate has increased and this is responsible for the establishment of an additional police station to checkmate the crime rate. The respondents' analysis of crime rate as highlighted revealed that about 40% said that there was high rate of theft and armed robbery, 20% of the sample population claimed that prostitution was on the increase, about 37% said that the people were becoming addicted to drug while 23% said that there were different types of pollution and environmental degradation. Therefore, there is also a negative impact of establishing a University within the community but most times the positive impact overshadows the negative impact.

The result of the spearman correlation analysis performed on selected variables showed that there is high and positive correlation between occupation (economic factor), contribution to landed properties and prices of house rent (Table 3). This may be the notion

because most staff of the University prefer to own their own house and those who cannot afford to rent an apartment rather than traveling down to work everyday from elsewhere. In addition, the study showed that respondents who were not indigenes intermarry with indigenes. The ($p = 0.05$) showed that there is high correlation between the length of stay and utilization of amenities. This means that respondents that reside in Akungba had access to various amenities and made ultimate use of them.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to identify, determine and analyze the various social and economic impact of Adekunle Ajasin University on the development of Akungba-Akoko community in general. The theoretical implication was restricted to see Akungba-Akoko as a growth centre, which radiates outward into the surrounding areas. Attempt was also made to examine the impact of the University on the community. From the analysis of the survey carried out on the socio-economic impact of Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko on the host community, the findings can be summarized into positive and negative effects. The location of the University in Akungba-Akoko created an avenue for the generation of income and provision of infrastructure for the people within its immediate environment. Many people have moved into Akungba-Akoko because of various business and job opportunities that are available within the area. Thus, influx of people to the community has double the population compared to what it used to be and this has led to increase in demand for goods and services.

There is also modification to the use of land in the community. The land that was formally used for agricultural purpose was given to the university as its permanent site. Other type of land use like housing and recreation will be diverted to the University environment. The location of the University has contributed to the growth in the housing sector and an increase in the spatial extent of Akungba-Akoko. In the marketing sector, Akungba before the establishment of the University in 1999, purely practiced periodic system of market, in some cases some commodities may not be available in the market. Now, the periodic market is gradually becoming a daily market and almost all the commodities needed, can be gotten there. Fashion wise, the people of the community are improving. There are different styles of cloth and other innovations being introduced almost on a daily basis.

The aerial extent of Akungba-Akoko has increased since the year 2000 after the establishment of the University. Both the indigene and non-indigenes who work in Akungba are now building houses in the community. However, despite this positive impact, the negative impact cannot be overruled. It is a known fact that the more the influx of people in a particular area, the more the crime rate increases. This is not different with Akungba-Akoko. Over the years, crime rate has increased; from robbery to prostitution and drug addiction. Presently, the availability of police and other security agencies in the town have checkmated these crime cases. Recently another police station has been constructed in addition to the existing one. Therefore, it is necessary to stress that the location of the University in this area does more good than harm. This is manifested in the development of the area's physical layout which had hitherto not been present.

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