

Appraisal of Alumni Association Reciprocity for Enhanced Quality Education in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State.

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Abstract

This study appraised the Alumni Association's reciprocity for enhanced quality education in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The descriptive survey design was adopted, and a sample size of 16 respondents was purposively drawn from four universities in Imo State. A researcher-constructed questionnaire titled "Appraisal of Alumni Association Reciprocity for Enhanced Quality Education in Tertiary Institutions" was used to collect data. It has three Clusters and 21 items with Yes or No response options which was dully validated with the reliability index of 0.88 using Cronbach alpha statistics. The study revealed a good state of high prevalence of Alumni Associations in tertiary institutions in Imo State, where there exist functional Alumni Associations with structured leadership (offices/officers) and that they relate with the institutions management in certain decisions. The Tertiary institutions in the state employ; Establishment of Alumni office on campus, Honorary Awards to Alumni, Naming a building after an Alumnus, Involving Alumni in fund raising campaigns, Using influential Alumni to reach out for assistance and Engaging the Alumni to speak to students during orientation programs as encouraging strategies on the Alumni Association to ensure their reciprocal contributions. The study recommends that Tertiary Institutions should encourage Alumni Associations to get involved in supporting research activities, create adequate awareness on the activities/contributions of Alumni Associations in the Institutions so as to attract more adequate and meaningful assistance from the Alumni. The study's findings have implications for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders in tertiary education, highlighting the potential of alumni associations to enhance quality education through reciprocal relationships.

Key words: Alumni, Association, Quality Education, Reciprocity and Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of any society, no society can grow beyond its level of Educational attainment. Most nations of the world have used education as an indicator of their progress in different dimensions because education aims at human capacity building, hence it is a veritable Instrument for Individual and national development to ensure the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Societal and global changes occur through formal education which involves Knowledge, Learning and transfer of knowledge (Ernest, Isah, & Fabunmi, 2008). The essence of education in Nigeria is better captured from the National Policy in Education that describes education as Instrument-par excellence for national reformation, hence its quality needs to be ensured. Tertiary education which is the third level of Education is provided in tertiary institutions such as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, is very key for human capital development, innovations, discoveries and technological development. It is charged with the responsibilities/ functions of research, teaching and community service so as to produce all round refined quality graduates to meet up with the ever challenging dynamic and competitive globalised world standard.

There is no gain saying the fact that for tertiary Institutions to discharge these functions effectively, requires adequate human, physical and financial resources which only government hardly provides. Leveraging on the public private partnership (ppp) arrangement and school community relationship, the Alumni Associations of these tertiary Institution are considered to be indebted to their Alma Mater hence the need to reciprocate by contributing in various ways to enhance quality education, and the Institutions need to employ strategies to foster Alumni presence, involvement and contributions. Undoubtedly these tertiary Institutions produce a lot of great men and women in the society, found in different works of life, with connections and resources who later come together to form Alumni association. The call for reciprocal relationship enjoins the graduates/Alumni of these institutions to give back in appreciation to the institutions for making them what they are today in different works of life and locations. This could be in the forms of funding projects, instituting endowment fund, Construction of physical structures, Scholarship, Linkages, mentorship etc. Considering the fact that government alone can not fund the tertiary Institutions to get the desired quality education and the need for these Institutions to adopt different strategies to Involve or reach out to the Alumni to establish presence by funding, sponsoring projects that will ensure quality education delivery in tertiary institutions in Imo State, becomes expedient. Also the dearth or unavailability of data on Alumni Association reciprocal inputs in tertiary Institutions need to be given urgent attention to ascertain their contributions and awaken their consciousness.

Statement of the Problem

There is no gain saying the fact that Education is a veritable Instrument for Individual and national development and for Sustainable development and Tertiary Education Institutions play a pivotal roles in this aspect of human capital development for the national development which is capital Intensive and require adequate funding. The continuous public outcry about the poor physical state of tertiary Institutions and quality of tertiary education delivery, in Nigeria, especially in Imo state due to inadequate provision of funds for academic activities speak volumes of the need for the Alumni to reciprocate to their Alma mater. Considering the present harsh economic situation coupled with the facts that only government cannot address the myriads of challenging factors in tertiary Institution for quality Education, the researcher becomes worried and agitated, hence the need to ascertain how Alumni associations could reciprocate in alleviating the challenges of their Alma mater for enhanced quality Education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to appraise the Alumni Associations reciprocal relationship for enhanced quality education in tertiary Institutions in Imo State. Specifically, it aims to achieve these objectives;

1. ascertain the state of Alumm Association in tertiary Institutions in Imo State.
2. determine the area of Alumni Associations reciprocal contributions for enhanced education in tertiary Institutions in Imo State.
3. Identify the adopted tertiary Institutions strategies for fostering Alumni Association reciprocity for quality education in tertiary Institutions Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research question's guided the Study;

1. What's the state of Alumni Associations in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
2. What areas do Alumni Associations make contributions to ensure quality education in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
3. What strategies do Tertiary institutions employ to foster Alumni association contributions for enhanced quality education?

Literature Review

Education

Education is a vital aspect of human and societal development, providing individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking and abilities. It fosters economic growth, reduces poverty, and promotes social mobility. Education is typically categorized into different levels, such as Primary education, Secondary education and Tertiary education. Each level serves a unique purpose and caters for different stages of personal and professional development. Education is often regarded as the key to progress and development in any society. It plays a vital role in shaping the future of individuals and societies, and a well-functioning education system is crucial for any nation's growth and prosperity. According to Wey-Amaewhule, Epelle and Pamogho (2022), education is a crucial index for national development hence many nations are striving to strengthen their educational system especially tertiary institutions so as to equip their students with requisite skills and capabilities that will place them in better job positions or become entrepreneurs after graduation. In Nigeria like many other countries, tertiary institutions stand at the forefront of higher education equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become productive members of the society. Mukoro (2013), noted that tertiary institutions are the highest citadel of learning for the production of intellectuals, researchers and general workforce for governmental and non-governmental establishments.

Tertiary Institutions also act as hubs for research and innovations, driving technological advancements, fostering economic growth, critical thinking, encourage social engagement and promote cultural understanding and diversity. Government across the globe prioritizes and emphasizes university education due to the significant contribution it makes to a nation's economy. FGN (2013), in her National Policy on Education outlined the goals of tertiary education as to: contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction.

It is noteworthy that, in a bid to achieve the aforementioned goals, tertiary institutions, such as Universities, Polytechnics and colleges of Education play a crucial role in shaping individuals careers and contributing to societal advancement. Quality in tertiary education is often measured by factors like: academic standards, faculty expertise, Research output,

infrastructure, student support services etc. Goals of tertiary education among others are to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training, develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment, and promote and encourage Scholarship and community service. Asiabaka & Emenalo, (2011);

Tertiary institution produced a lot of great men and women in the society in different works of life, with connections, resources etc. who later come together to form Alumni association of these institutions, hence, the need for synergy and reciprocity since government alone cannot fund the tertiary Institution to get the desired quality education.

Alumni Association

The term Alumni refers to former students of Tertiary institutions an alumnus can be a former member, employee contributor, or inmate. A College, University or other educational institution's official Alumni Associations are association of former students or products of the Institution. They are the Ambassadors of the institutions they graduated from. A school Alumni association forms a reflection of its past and a link to its future. Valuable traditions of the school can be perpetuated through the activities of the ex-students (Obi, 2019). Sometimes the current students may not know the importance of certain school traditions or reasons behind them in the locality. Alumni can be powerful motivators for the traditions of the school. In addition, Alumni associations in the recent time have become a powerful asset for school development. Schools are changing the way they see and interact with their Alumni. Its' principal goal is to preserve and improve the ties that bind the school to its' alumni base. Alumni associations frequently provide a variety of services and event, including a reunion, career services, networking opportunities career events and fund raising campaign to support the goals and operations of the University. Furthermore, Babalola (2015), stated the objectives of Alumni association as follows;

- a. to keep a roster of all Alumni of college and their pertinent data, maintaining the updated and current information of all Alumni, encourage, foster and promote close relations among the alumni themselves,
- b. to promote a sustained sense of belonging to the Alma Mater among the Alumni by being in regular contact with them,
- c. to provide and disseminate information regarding their Alma Mater, its graduates, faculties and students to the Alumni,
- d. to assist and support the efforts of Alma Mater in obtaining funds for development,

- e. to guide and assist Alumni who have recently completed their courses of study, to keep them engaged in productive pursuits useful to the society,
- f. to provide a forum for the Alumni for exchange of ideas on academic, cultural and social issues of the day by organizing and coordinating reunion activities of the Alumni and
- g. to let the alumni acknowledge their gratitude to their Alma Mater.

The Alumni Association achieves these objectives by staging an annual programme of events and reunions; through communications, by providing a range of discounts and services for alumni; and by supporting student scholarships and other fund raising initiatives. Alumni associations are of great significant to tertiary institutions. Effective engagement of tertiary institutions with their Alumni association brings strength and growth to institution reputation and progress (Obeng- Ofori and Kwarteng, 2020). Abiola, Akinyemi, Akinyemi, Medubi and Ojo, (2022), observed that Alumni's role is crucial for the growth and development of tertiary institutions. Alumni can be of enormous value for higher education because of the time and money they can spend on their former institution (Snijders, Wijnia, Rikers, and Loyens, 2020). Alumni associations can contribute immensely to enhancing the university's national and international reputation and visibility if adequately harnessed (Anila and Waqar, 2012). Alumni serve as unique stakeholders for any institution. Their only interest is to see the university or an institution flourish and grow in stature. The more their institutions grow in stature, the better for the alumni. This makes them unique as all other stakeholders such as students, faculty, staff, and management have other stakes (Obeng- Ofori and Kwarteng, 2020). In view of the public outcry about the quality of education in Nigeria and in Imo State in particular due to some challenges such as inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructures and limited human resources. It becomes exponent to explore innovative strategies that leverage the Alumni Association's potential reciprocity for enhanced quality education in Tertiary Institutions in Imo, State.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity in this context refers to the mutual exchange of benefits, resources, and expertise between Alumni Association members and their Alma mater. Enhanced quality tertiary education can be achieved through this reciprocal relationship, leading to improved academic programs, research collaborations, mentorship opportunities, and career development for students and faculty. Reciprocity involves a mutual exchange of support, emotional investment, care and love. Reciprocity in a relationship is characterized by each partner feeling able to share their needs. A willingness to meet the needs of the other person. Open and honest communication. The institution would have to keep a cordial relationship not just for fund raising but to also ascertain their welfare. This reciprocal relationship could be

done in various ways such as; inviting them for special occasions like, opening of school building, inaugurations, matriculations, convocations etc. in return the alumni association would help in fund raising, provide job opportunities for the newly graduated students, also help in giving scholarship to students yet to graduate by so doing relationship is maintained (Lemchi and Ihugba, 2023). Lemchi and Ihugba (2023) posit that maintaining contact with former students is crucial to the development of today's tertiary institutions with the following reasons;

- a. The Alumni are the most ardent supporters of their previous schools. They effectively carry out a variety of tasks, such as promoting the school's brand, mentoring current students, assisting with job opportunities, and so on. Past students at several tertiary institutions have assisted deserving but financially disadvantaged students. Students from underserved social groups have received financial assistance to cover recurring expenses.
- b. Alumni has the potential to bring in money; it can help the government funding tertiary institutions
- c. It has an effect on one's reputation. When evaluating and ranking tertiary institutions, alumni participation is one of the factors considered. Rankings can influence reputation, which in turn can influence enrollment, which in turn can influence school income. Even if participation rates are not used in ranking computations, they can be a source of pride among peers.
- d. Alumni who donate money and time benefit the next generation of current and former students.
- e. Money donated to alma maters by alumni sometimes, goes toward research, scholarships, and the construction of new facilities, among other things. It raises our alma mater's profile, making it a better place

These explain the urgent need for Alumni reciprocal relationship with the Alma mater.

Quality Education

Quality education encompasses healthy, supported learners; safe and equitable learning environments; relevant content and curricula; effective, child-centered teaching processes; and outcomes that build knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes for lifelong learning and societal participation. It's a comprehensive process that transforms learners into capable, resilient individuals who can thrive and contribute to sustainable development. It is seen as a dynamic concept, as education faces new challenges, the concept of quality develops. According to Adelabu and Akinwumi (2025) the following principles can define quality. These are:

- a. Relevance to the modern world and to social interaction and one that values dimensions of learning.

- b. Greater equity of access and outcome.
- c. The observance of individual rights.

Quality therefore, relates to the relevance of what is being taught and how well it fits present and future needs of its learners, given their particular context and prospects. It helps prepare individuals for their future their private as well as community and the wider international or community life. Adelabu and Akinwumi (2025) asserts that quality also refers to the education system itself - to the nature of its inputs (teachers, students, resources, facilities, and equipment), its objectives, curriculum and educational technology, and its socio-economic, cultural and political environment. Quality education equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for individual well-being and societal contribution, encompassing healthy and safe learning environments, inclusive child-centered processes, competent teachers, and relevant outcomes beyond academics to foster lifelong learning, sustainable development, and global citizenship. According to UNESCO, (2021) quality education is a holistic, learner-centered process that ensures all students acquire relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies through inclusive, equitable, and rigorous instruction, supported by safe learning environments and effective systems of assessment and accountability.

Contributions of Alumni Association to Tertiary Institutions for enhanced Quality Education

Alumni associations significantly contribute to the development of tertiary institutions. Okunola and Adekunle, (2022) asserts that Alumni associations support institutions by providing high-level manpower training, contributing to national development. Research emphasizes the crucial role of alumni in the growth of these institutions, highlighting the need to involve them in university activities. Alumni involvement can encompass various areas, including financial support, mentorship, and networking opportunities for current students and the institution as a whole. Okunola and Adekunle, (2022) highlighted the contributions of alumni association to tertiary institutions as follows;

1. Financial support and fundraising: this covers Scholarships for students, bursaries, endowment funds, infrastructure projects (libraries, lecture halls, laboratories), and general development funds. Alumni-led fundraising can provide a stable stream of resources beyond government allocations, supporting access and quality improvements.
2. Mentoring, career guidance, and employability: Alumni mentoring programs, internship placements, guest lectures, career fairs, and alumni-in-residence initiatives.

3. Governance, governance reform, and university governance support: Alumni input on council/board membership, accreditation preparation, strategic planning, and governance reforms. Alumni voices can enhance transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement in universities.
4. Infrastructure, facilities, and campus services: Donations and volunteering for campus facilities (libraries, ICT labs, hostels), campus amenities, and maintenance drives.
5. Research collaboration and knowledge transfer: Joint research initiatives, grant proposals involving alumni as industry partners, guest researchers, and alumni-donor-funded research labs. This enhances research output, attracts external funding, and strengthens university-industry collaboration.

These therefore imply that Alumni ought to serve as a linking pin between the academic and the industry/society at large for synergy, collaboration, for students' employability and professional networks. Furthermore, alumni are seen as the most important assets of tertiary institutions. Alumni networks were created from regional groups brought together for fundraising purposes. Over time, these networks developed both in their importance because the university gained benefits from these networks for the development of the university and thus created an enormous outreach potential for current students in their career paths. According to Abiola, Akinyemi, Akinyemi, Medubi and Ojo, (2022) alumni donations are consistently the highest-ranking charitable support source for higher education. Because of a steady reduction in higher education funding from state and local governments, public and private higher institutions should depend evermore seriously on financial donations from their Alumni as a source of budget enhancement.

In harnessing alumni associations' funding, for enhanced quality tertiary education, institutions need to identify the factors influencing Alumni's intentions to invest in the tertiary institution that is their Alma mater, especially in terms of financial support (Abiola, et al., 2022). Furthermore, Afriyie (2015) posits that Alumni donations and fundraising efforts have helped institutions improve infrastructure, upgrade facilities, and provide scholarships. Alumni have provided guidance, internships, and job opportunities to students and recent graduates, enhancing their career prospects and also Alumni have contributed to curriculum review and development, ensuring programs remain relevant and industry-aligned. Aikins, Adu- Oppong and Darko (2019), assert that Alumni giving is hinged on students' social experience, academic experience, Alumni relations practices, and labour market orientation.

Alumni donation can be motivated by factors such as characteristics of the giver, readiness to give, ability to give, willingness to give, and the perception about how well an institution deserves a donation. Also, good academic performance, a conducive environment,

diversity of student support services, investments, and co-curriculum activities positively affect a tertiary institution's reputation (Obeng- Ofori and Kwarteng, 2020). Personal learning and student experience, an alumnus has while studying in a university can lay the foundations for the future relationship with the university and positively influence his/her behavior towards the institution (Francioni et al., 2021).

Institutional Strategies in Fostering Alumni Association Reciprocity

In order to enhance Alumni Associations reciprocity, tertiary institutions have to adopt some attainable strategies in sustaining the relationship between their Alumni Association. These strategies for enhancing Alumni Association Reciprocity according to Obeng- Ofori and Kwarteng, 2020, highlighted are as follows;

1. Institutions Regular Communication with alumni through newsletters, social media, and email updates,
2. Alumni Engagement online Platforms: for alumni to connect, network, and engage with each other and the institution,
3. Establishment of mentorship link programs, for alumni to interact with the students and recent graduates of the institution,
4. Recognition and Rewards Scheme for contributions in the same vein Nwosu, (2018), posits that Institutions could establish strategic partnerships where collaboration with alumni leads to partnerships with industries, government, and other stakeholders as well as the establishment of feedback mechanisms to solicit alumni input on institutional decisions and initiatives as strategies for enhancing Alumni Association Reciprocity.

The study is backed up by social reciprocal theory. Albert Bandura propounded the concept of reciprocal determinism, also known as social reciprocal theory, which is a central concept in his social learning theory, published in 1977. Social reciprocal theory is a concept that explains human behavior as a continuous, dynamic interaction between personal factors, environmental factors, and behavior itself, rather than a one-way influence. For example, a person's personality and beliefs (personal factors) influence their actions (behavior), which can then alter their environment, leading to new thoughts and actions in a self-regulating feedback loop. Social reciprocity theory is relevant to the study as it posits that individuals engage in beneficial exchanges with the expectation of future returns, which aligns with the Appraisal of Alumni Association Reciprocity for Enhanced Quality Education in Tertiary Institutions by suggesting alumni networks assess and reinforce reciprocal support

(mentorship, donations, and collaboration) to sustain and elevate educational quality within tertiary institutions.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey design aimed at ascertaining Alumni Associations reciprocal Contributions for enhanced quality Education in tertiary institutions, in Imo State, with the sample size of 16 respondents purposively drawn from 4 universities in Imo state namely: federal university of technology (FUTO), Imo state; Imo state university Owerri; Alvan Ikoku Federal university of education, and University of Agriculture Umuagwo. Purposive Sampling technique was used to sample 16 respondents comprising of 4 directors of Alumni Association, 4 Alumni officers and 2 members from each of the 4 institutions. The researchers constructed questionnaire titled Appraisal of Alumni Association Reciprocal relationship for enhanced quality Education in tertiary institutions in Imo State. It has three Clusters and 21 items with Yes or No response options which was validated and a reliability index of 0.88 was established using Cronbach alpha statistics. Data were analyzed with percentage of 50% to answer the Research Questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What's the state of Alumni Associations in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Table 1: State of Alumni Association

S/N		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	My institution has an existing Alumni Association	12	75%	4	25%
2.	Has functional Alumni association	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
3.	Has an Alumni officer	13	81.25%	3	18.75%
4.	Alumni relate with the institutions management	11	68.75%	5	31.25%
5.	Alumni are involved in decision making processes of my institution	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
Average percentage			375 75%		125 25%

Table 1: data on table one revealed that there exist functional Alumni Association with Alumni offices in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State and that they relate with the University management. These are shown by the high percentages of all the items (75%, 87.5%, 81.25, 68.25% and 62.5%). These indicates a good state of Alumni Association in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State.

Research Question 2: What areas do Alumni Associations make contributions to ensure quality education in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

Table 2: Areas of Alumni Contribution

	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
6. Provides fund for projects	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
7. Construct lecture halls and classrooms	11	68.75%	5	31.25%
8. Equip libraries	12	75%	4	25%
9. Equip of ICT centers	10	62.5%	6	37.5%
10. Construct and equip laboratories	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
11. Awards scholarships to students	15	93.75%	1	6.25%
12. Institute endowment funds	9	52.25%	7	43.75%
13. Supports research activities	6	37.5%	10	62.5%
14. Links up the university with other agencies for partnership	13	81.25%	3	18.75%
		646		250
Average percentage		71.77%		27.77%

Table 2: A cursory look at the data on table 2 show that Alumni Associations in Imo State make contributions in the of equipping libraries, equipping ICT centers, provision of funds for projects and linking up the university with other agencies for partnerships to ensure quality education. This is explained by the high percentages of (87.5%, 68.75%, 75%, 62.5%, 87.5%, 93.75%, 52.25% and 81.25%) on serial number 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. However, Alumni Associations do not involved in supports for research activities as shown by the low percentage of 37.5% on serial number 13.

Research Question 3: What strategies do Tertiary institutions employ to foster Alumni association contributions for enhanced quality education?

Table 3: Tertiary Institution adopted strategies for involvement of Alumni association

	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Establishment of Alumni office on campus	16	100%	-	-
2. Honorary Awards to Alumni	8	50%	8	50%
3. Naming a building after an Alumnus	13	81.25%	3	18.75%
4. Involving Alumni in fund raising campaigns	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
5. Using influential Alumni to reach out for assistance	12	75%	4	25%
5. Engaging the Alumni to speak to students during orientation programs	14	87.5%	2	12.5%
Total		481.55		118.75
Average percentage		80.25%		19.79%

Informed by the data in Table 3, which have high percentage scores in all the items except item 16 with (50%) Yes and No responses, the respondents agreed that their institutions employ establishment of Alumni office on campus, naming a building after an Alumnus, Involving Alumni in fund raising campaigns, using influential Alumni to reach out for assistance and Engaging the Alumni to speak to students during orientation programs as strategies of encouraging Alumni Association to make contributions for quality education in their Alma Mater, with the following percentages 100%, 81.25%, 87.5%, 75% and 87.5%. This is substantiated by the average percentage score of 80.25%, meaning that tertiary institutions in Imo State employ; Establishment of Alumni office on campus, Honorary Awards to Alumni, Naming a building after an Alumnus, Involving Alumni in fund raising campaigns, Using influential Alumni to reach out for assistance and Engaging the Alumni to speak to students during orientation programs as strategies to foster alumni association contributions to enhance quality education.

Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed a good state of Alumni Associations in tertiary institutions in Imo State, where there exist functional Alumni Associations with structured leadership (offices/officers) and that they relate with the institutions management in certain decisions. This aligns with Abiola, Akinyemi, Akinyemi, Medubi and Ojo, (2022) who emphasized the crucial role of alumni in the growth and development of tertiary institutions. This highlighted the institutional impact of active alumni associations beyond financial support. The presence of structured alumni bodies with established communication channels with management suggests a strategic partnership that can influence policy, mentorship, infrastructural development, and student career advancement.

Again, the findings has it that the Alumni Associations make contributions in the areas of equipping libraries, equipping ICT centers, provision of funds for projects and linking up the University with other agencies for partnerships to ensure quality education for their Alma mater to ensure quality education. This authenticates Afriyie's (2015) assertion that alumni play a vital role in the development of tertiary institutions through donations and fundraising efforts, which have contributed to infrastructure improvement, facility upgrades, and scholarship provision. Additionally, alumni offer valuable mentorship, internships, and job opportunities to current students and recent graduates, thereby enhancing their career prospects. Their involvement in curriculum review and development also ensures that academic programs remain relevant and aligned with industry needs. If these Alumni Associations make all these contributions one begins to wonder why these institutions are still faced with myriads of challenges in these areas. Or could it be that their contributions are not significant? This is subjected to further studies. Furthermore, the finding has it that the Tertiary institutions in the state employ; Establishment of Alumni office on campus, Honorary

Awards to Alumni, Naming a building after an Alumnus, Involving Alumni in fund raising campaigns, Using influential Alumni to reach out for assistance and Engaging the Alumni to speak to students during orientation programs as encouraging strategies on the Alumni Association to ensure their reciprocal contributions. This aligns with Lemchi and Ihugba (2023) ascertation that maintaining contact with former students is crucial to the development of today's tertiary institutions. Sustained alumni engagement often results in increased support, both financial and non-financial, contributing to institutional growth. It is important to emphasize that strategic alumni engagement goes beyond institutional benefit it fosters a lifelong sense of belonging and identity among graduates. When alumni feel valued and actively involved in the life of their alma mater, they are more likely to contribute meaningfully, not just through donations or mentorship, but also by serving as ambassadors of the institution in both local and global networks.

Conclusion

The study concludes that achieving and sustaining quality education in tertiary institutions in Imo State is strongly dependent on purposeful partnerships, particularly with Alumni Associations. Alumni contributions have proved instrumental in improving infrastructure, ICT and library facilities, and supporting key developmental projects. These outcomes underscore the importance of reciprocity and continuity, as institutions that intentionally recognize, involve, and appreciate their alumni are more likely to secure sustained and meaningful support. Therefore, strengthening alumni engagement strategies such as inclusive governance participation, recognition initiatives, and structured fundraising programmes is essential for attracting consistent alumni contributions and ensuring long-term educational quality through collaborative partnership.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

1. Tertiary Institutions should encourage Alumni Associations to get involved in supporting research activities
2. Create adequate awareness on the activities/contributions of Alumni Associations in the Institutions so as to attract more adequate and meaningful assistance from the Alumni.
3. Alumni officers to articulate and present Annual Report of Alumni activities in the institutions for publicity.

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