International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)
ISSN: 2643-900X
Vol. 10 Issue 7 July - 2026, Pages: 115-121

Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness of State-owned Universities in Delta State

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Abstract: *The study investigated resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement as predictors of institutional competitiveness across state-owned universities in Delta State. The study utilised a correlational survey research design. The population consisted 1,421 academic and senior administrative staff of Delta State University, Abraka; Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba; and University of Delta, Agbor. A multistage sampling technique was utilised to choose a sample of 420 respondents. 403 correctly filled questionnaires were recovered and used for analysis. Data were obtained using the Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness Questionnaire (RMSEICQ) which was validated by experts and has an overall Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88. Data were examined using simple and multiple regression analyses at the 0.05 level of significance. The results indicate that resource mobilisation was a strong predictor of institutional competitiveness. Stakeholder participation was also a strong predictor of institutional competitiveness. Moreover, the combined effect of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement was a strong predictor of institutional competitiveness, explaining a considerable amount of the difference in institutional competitiveness across the universities analysed. Effective resource mobilisation and active stakeholder engagement are key drivers of institutional competitiveness in state-owned universities, the study found. Among others, it was proposed that university management should increase resource diversification methods, encourage inclusive stakeholder participation, establish strategic partnerships and execute policies that boost institutional sustainability and competitiveness.*

Keywords: Resource mobilisation; Stakeholder involvement; Institutional competitiveness; State owned universities; Higher education administration; University administration.

Introduction

Lower government financing, increased operating expenses, greater student enrolment, faster technological change and higher demands for excellent teaching, research and community participation are making the higher education sector more competitive. These trends have encouraged universities to embrace strategic measures that improve institutional competitiveness and guarantee long-term viability. Institutional competitiveness is the ability of universities to recruit students and research funds, build strategic alliances, and sustain high levels of academic performance and innovation (Hazelkorn, 2018). In this context, efficient resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement are becoming important means of boosting institutional performance.

Resource mobilisation has become the key tactic for universities that are struggling with ongoing financial restrictions. As the demands of higher education expand, many countries do not have the public funding to satisfy these demands and have thus had to explore alternate funding mechanisms such as internally produced revenue, research grants, donor support, endowments, and industry alliances. As noted by Agasisti *et al.* (2022), better finance arrangements boost university performance through enhancement of efficiency and accountability. Similarly, Oanda *et al.* (2022) found that African public universities have diversified their funding sources to enhance institutional sustainability and minimise their dependence on government subventions.

In Nigeria, Odinko *et al.* (2025) also stressed that stakeholder supported finance models provide feasible prospects for enhancing the financial capability of higher education institutions.
Besides financial resources, stakeholder participation has become an important factor of institutional performance. Universities have a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, governing councils, staff, students, alumni, employers, host communities, development partners and the business sector. Effective engagement of these stakeholders facilitates collaboration, shared decision-making, resource support, and institutional accountability. Benneworth and Jongbloed (2019) suggested that stakeholder engagement allows institutions to create value by building better relationships and improving societal relevance. Likewise, Veiga *et al.* (2019) showed that active stakeholder engagement improves institutional quality assurance and organisational responsiveness. Nwajiuba *et al.* (2020) found in Nigeria that collaboration between universities, employers and other stakeholders is important for enhancing the quality of higher education and graduate employability.

The increasing entrepreneurialism of universities, innovation and strategic alliances for the improvement of their competitive position, make the necessity of stakeholder involvement even more clear. Trencher *et al.* (2017) argued that collaboration of universities with external stakeholders influences co-creation of knowledge, innovation and sustainable development. Similarly, Okai-Ugbaje *et al.* (2020) found that stakeholder preparation, clearly defined roles and effective collaboration are essential for the successful implementation of institutional initiatives. Ukeje *et al.* (2026) also claim that inclusive stakeholder involvement promotes institutional legitimacy and strengthens governance through participatory decision-making.

Although there is increased awareness of the demand for resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement, many Nigerian state-owned universities continue to face the challenges of poor funding, poor stakeholder participation, dilapidated infrastructure and pressure to improve the quality of academic and institutional reputation. The issues are more pronounced in the state-owned universities in Delta State, where the increased competition for students, research grants, competent academic staff and external finance calls for more strategic management of the school. As Anifowose *et al.* (2026) indicated, entrepreneurial partnerships among university stakeholders can foster internally generated revenue and institutional sustainability. Moreover, institutions with well-integrated strategic planning systems were able to better react to environmental changes and maintain institutional competitiveness (Stensaker *et al.,* 2019).

There have been a number of studies on university funding, governance reforms, stakeholder participation and institutional performance but little empirical focus has been given to the combined predictive power of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement on institutional competitiveness especially among state owned universities in Nigeria. Most of the available research have analysed these variables in isolation without investigating their joint impact to institutional competitiveness (Agasisti *et al.*, 2022; Jungblut *et al.*, 2018; Veiga *et al.*, 2019). This results in an empirical gap that needs to be filled.

The gap is particularly noticeable in the state-owned institutions in Delta State where the heightened competition for students, research grants, skilled academic staff and institutional recognition has made the need for efficient resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement strategies even more critical. Knowing to what extent these strategic management techniques predict institutional competitiveness is important in influencing policy decisions, enhancing university governance, and encouraging sustainable institutional development. In this regard, this study investigates resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement as predictors of institutional competitiveness across state owned universities in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

Delta State state owned universities are operating within an increasingly competitive higher education environment with declining government funding, increasing operational costs, increasing student enrolment and increased demands for quality teaching, research, innovation and community service. These pressures have posed enormous problems for university administrators to improve institutional performance while at the same time maintaining academic standards and financial viability. However, many of these universities still face the challenges of lack of financial resources, infrastructural development, research capacity and participation of essential players. These issues can threaten their ability to effectively compete for research grants, attract outstanding personnel and students, develop strategic alliances and enhance their institutional reputation.

While university management is making efforts to diversify its funding sources and to strengthen relationship with stakeholders, it is not clear the extent to which resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement contribute to institutional competitiveness especially among state-owned universities in delta state. Previous studies have mostly looked at university funding, governance, stakeholder participation, and institutional performance separately, with little emphasis to the combined predictive effect of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement on institutional competitiveness. The lack of empirical evidence leaves a gap in knowledge that may limit the development of effective policies and management strategies to enhance the competitiveness of state-owned universities. This gap explains the need for this study to ascertain resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement as predictors of institutional competitiveness across state owned universities in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement as predictors of institutional competitiveness across state-owned universities in Delta State. More specifically, this study intends to:

1. assess the degree to which resource mobilisation predicts institutional competitiveness.
2. analyse the degree to which stakeholder participation predicts institutional competitiveness.
3. establish the combined predictive potential of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement on institutional competitiveness.

Research Questions

The study was steered by the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of resource mobilisation on institutional competitiveness?
2. How does stakeholder participation predict institutional competitiveness?
3. How much do resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement jointly predict institutional competitiveness?

Hypotheses

Further null hypotheses were evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance that guided the study as follows:

1. Resource mobilisation does not significantly predict institutional competitiveness.
2. Stakeholder engagement is not a strong predictor of institutional competitiveness.
3. Resource mobilisation and stakeholders involvement do not jointly predict institutional competitiveness.

Methodology

A correlational survey was the research design employed for this investigation. The design was appropriate because it allowed the researchers to investigate the predictive relationships between the independent variables (resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement) and the dependent variable, institutional competitiveness, without manipulating any of the variables.

The population of the study is 1,421 academic and senior administrative workers in the three state owned universities in Delta State. Specifically, Delta State University, Abraka had 812 academic and senior administrative staff, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba had 287 staff and University of Delta, Agbor had 322 people, for a total population of 1,421 responders. These categories of staff were deemed appropriate for the study since they are actively engaged in strategic planning, institutional governance, policy formulation, policy implementation, resource mobilisation, stakeholder engagement and administrative decision making in their respective universities. Their jobs give them with enough information and practical expertise about the institutional management practices and the elements influencing the competitiveness of the institution. The population figures were sourced from the Personnel Units of Delta State University, Abraka, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba and the University of Delta, Agbor (2026).

We picked a sample of 420 respondents using a multistage sampling process. The three state owned colleges were purposively selected in the first stage because they represent the full population of state owned universities in Delta State. In the second stage, the sample was distributed to the three universities in proportion to their respective staff populations, using stratified sampling technique. Then simple random sampling technique was used to choose the responses from the academic and senior administrative personnel in each university, therefore, ensuring that every eligible staff had equal opportunity of being selected. This sampling process increased the representativeness of the sample and provided enough coverage of the research population.

Data were obtained using a standardised questionnaire titled Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness Questionnaire (RMSEICQ) established by the researchers based on substantial review of related literature. The instrument was made in four parts. Section A collected demographic information from the respondents, Section B had 10 items on resource mobilisation, Section C had 10 items on stakeholder involvement, and Section D had 10 items evaluating institutional competitiveness. The questionnaire was designed on a four point rating scale of Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1).

The instrument was exposed to face and content validity by three experts, two experts in Educational Management and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation. The validators reviewed the instrument for clarity, relevance, adequacy of content, appropriateness of language and applicability of the items in measuring the variables under research. Their findings and suggestions were integrated into the final edition of the questionnaire prior to its administration.
A pilot study was undertaken with 30 academic and senior administrative staff from a state owned university outside the study area to establish the reliability of the instrument. The responses gathered were examined using Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability value of the instrument for Resource Mobilisation was 0.86, Stakeholder Engagement 0.88 and Institutional Competitiveness 0.90. The total reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.88. The coefficients showed that the instrument had strong internal consistency, and was therefore judged reliable for the investigation.

The questionnaire was administered by the researchers themselves with the assistance of three trained research assistants who were well orientated on the aims of the study and the processes of the administration of the instrument. The respondents were promised of confidentiality of information given by them and were encouraged to be honest. Out of the 420 copies of the questionnaire administered, 403 copies were correctly completed and retrieved reflecting 95.95% retrieval rate while 17 copies were deleted due to incomplete responses. Data analysis was carried out on the retrieved questionnaires.

Data collected to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 were analysed using simple linear regression analysis. To answer Research Question 3, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the joint predictive influence of resource mobilisation and stakeholder

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engagement on institutional competitiveness. Regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Predictive correlations among the variables were interpreted on the basis of coefficient of determination (R2), standardised beta coefficients (β), F-values and related probability (p) values.

Results

Table 1: Coefficient of Determination of Resource Mobilisation and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Decision
Constant (Resource Mobilisation)	0.738[a]	0.545	0.544	7.536	41.782	Moderate Positive Relationship
					0.664	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilisation

The coefficient of determinant of resource mobilisation and institutional competitiveness among state owned universities in Delta State is presented in Table 1. The output shows a moderate positive correlation with R value 0.738 and R^2 value 0.545. This suggests that resource mobilisation explains 54.5% of the variation in institutional competitiveness across the universities analysed. The prediction model is stable following adjustment for sample error, as suggested by the adjusted R2 value of 0.544. The unstandardised regression coefficient also suggests that a one-unit increase in resource mobilisation is connected with a 0.664-unit rise in institutional competitiveness (B = 0.664).

Table 2: Coefficient of Determination of Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Decision
Constant (Stakeholder Engagement)	0.712[a]	0.507	0.506	7.814	39.645	Moderate Positive Relationship
					0.618	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement

The results in Table 2 indicate a moderate positive connection with R-value of 0.712 and R 2 value of 0.507. This implies that 50.7% of the variation of institutional competitiveness is explained by stakeholder involvement. The corrected R2 value of 0.506 also reinforces the stability of the regression model. The unstandardised regression coefficient (B = 0.618) shows that for each unit improvement in stakeholder involvement, institutional competitiveness is predicted to increase by 0.618 units.

Table 3: Joint Coefficient of Determination of Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	Decision
Resource Mobilisation and Stakeholder Engagement	0.841a	0.707	0.706	6.432	High Positive Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement

Table 3 shows the joint coefficient of determination of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement on institutional competitiveness. The results show a strong positive correlation with R and R2 values of 0.841 and 0.707 respectively. This suggests that resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement together jointly explained 70.7% of the variance in institutional competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.706 implies that the regression model is a reliable estimate of the combined predictive power of the two independent variables. This result implies that the combined effects of the two factors are important determinants of the variation of institutional competitiveness.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Resource Mobilisation and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	27,486.372	1	27,486.372	479.826	.000[b]
Residual	22,972.415	401	57.288		
Total	50,458.787	402			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilisation
b. Dependent Variable: Institutional Competitiveness

The findings from table 4 reveals that resources mobilisation strongly predicts institutional competitiveness, F (1, 401) = 479.826, p < .05. The null hypothesis was rejected since the probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance. It so implies that resource mobilisation is a strong determinant of institutional competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25,582.913	1	25,582.913	412.608	.000b
Residual	24,875.874	401	62.034		
Total	50,458.787	402			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Engagement
b. Dependent Variable: Institutional Competitiveness

Table 5 indicates stakeholder participation as a significant predictor of institutional competitiveness, F(1, 401) = 412.608, p < .05. The null hypothesis was rejected as the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the involvement of stakeholders is important factor in the competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Competitiveness

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	35,675.119	2	17,837.560	246.917	.000b
Residual	14,783.668	400	36.959		
Total	50,458.787	402			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Mobilisation, Stakeholder Engagement
b. Dependent Variable: Institutional Competitiveness

As demonstrated in Table 6, the joint effect of resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement on institution competitiveness is statistically significant, F(2, 400) = 246.917, p <.05. The null hypothesis was rejected because the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement contribute meaningfully to institutional competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State. The two factors explained a significant fraction of the variation in institutional competitiveness implying that successful mobilisation of institutional resources and active stakeholder engagement strengthens the competitive position of state-owned universities.

Discussion of Findings

The study findings showed that resource mobilisation strongly predict institutional competitiveness among state-owned universities in Delta State. The coefficient of determination demonstrated that resource mobilisation was able to explain a large part of the variation in institutional competitiveness implying that institutions that have successful resource mobilisation strategies are more likely to be competitive. This finding points out the need for diversifying revenue sources, improving financial management methods, attracting research funding, encouraging endowments, and forming partnerships that can help with institutional growth and sustainability. With the decline of government financing, universities that efficiently leverage financial, human, technological and material resources are more likely to be able to increase teaching, research, innovation, infrastructure and overall institutional performance. This finding validates the findings of Oanda *et al.* (2022) that varied finance options greatly enhance the sustainability and operational performance of African public universities through the reduction of overdependence on government appropriations. This finding also supports Odinko *et al.* (2025) who found that stakeholder-driven funding mobilisation schemes improve the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of higher education institutions in Nigeria through increased internally generated revenue and collaborative funding arrangements.

The study also indicated that stakeholder engagement is a key predictor of institutional competitiveness among state owned colleges in Delta State. The finding implies that effective collaboration between the university management and key stakeholders such as government agencies, governing councils, academic and non-academic staff, students, alumni, employers, host communities and development partners contributes significantly to improving institutional competitiveness. Active stakeholder engagement in universities is associated with better decision-making, greater resource support, greater institutional legitimacy, innovation and quality service delivery. This finding supports the position of Okai-Ugbaje *et al.* (2020) who observed that the execution of institutional initiatives depends greatly on the readiness of stakeholders, the clear definition of duties and effective coordination among all participants. Correspondingly, the finding lends support to that of Ukeje *et al.* (2026) that the engagement of inclusive stakeholders increases institutional legitimacy, encourages participatory governance and facilitates the successful execution of institutional policies and development programmes.

The study concluded that resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement combined have considerable predictive influence on institutional competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State. The joint coefficient of determination showed that the two variables explained a large proportion of the variation in institutional competitiveness, indicating that neither effective resource mobilisation nor stakeholder engagement alone guarantees sustained institutional success. Instead, colleges are more competitive when they simultaneously diversify and control institutional resources and develop constructive relationships with internal and external stakeholders. The interaction of these variables in a complementary way allows universities to achieve improvements in their financial sustainability, governance effectiveness, innovation, strategic planning, academic quality and institutional reputation. This finding supports the claim of Anifowose *et al.* (2026) that entrepreneurial partnerships between students and staff increase internally produced revenue and boost the sustainability of the institutions in Nigerian universities. This finding is also in line with the findings of Stensaker *et al.* (2019), who argued that institutions with embedded systems of strategic planning and good institutional coordination are better able to adjust to environmental changes and maintain long-term competitiveness. Collectively, our findings imply that the convergence of sound resource mobilisation tactics and inclusive stakeholder engagement is a strategic approach to boosting the competitiveness of state-owned universities in Delta State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that resource mobilisation and stakeholder engagement are major determinants of institutional competitiveness among state owned universities in Delta State. The study revealed that resource mobilisation plays a substantial role in fostering institutional competitiveness by equipping universities with the capacity to secure and prudently deploy the financial, human and material resources needed to enhance teaching, research, innovation and institutional development. Similarly, stakeholder involvement was found to dramatically increase institutional competitiveness through increased collaboration, participatory governance and institutional support by both internal and external stakeholders.

Furthermore, it was found that the joint effect of resource mobilisation and stakeholder involvement offers a better explanation of institutional competitiveness than the effect of either of the two variables alone. Sustainable institutional competitiveness of state-owned institutions, therefore, largely hinges on university management's ability to successfully mobilise resources while encouraging meaningful engagement with important stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. State-owned institutions should vary their tactics for mobilising resources by boosting internally produced revenue, research grants, endowment funds, alumni donations and public-private partnerships to improve their competitive edge.
2. University authorities should foster active stakeholder participation by engaging staff, students, alumni, industry, host communities and development partners in institutional planning, policy implementation and decision-making processes.
3. University leadership and governing councils should construct sustainable partnership frameworks with government agencies, business organisations and foreign development partners to improve resource acquisition and institutional capability.
4. State governments should provide enabling policies and incentives that promote resource diversification and stakeholder partnerships as ways for increasing the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of state-owned universities.

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