

The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Economic growth and Development: Case study, University of ESwatini

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Abstract: This study examines the role played by the University of ESwatini in facilitating and sustaining economic development. This was achieved by examining how University contexts (policies and practices: completion and non-completion rates of students were managed), and relevance of graduates absorbed by industries. Eight sugar industries were purposively sampled. Descriptive survey design, qualitative and quantitative procedures were used. Data was collected through interviews, documents and questionnaires. Content analysis was used to analyse data. Findings indicated that the University played a role in improving the economy by designing relevant programmes but University's effort was undermined by the knowledge gap possessed by some graduates. It concluded that the University was playing its recommendable role in developing the country's economy guided by its policies and national related economic policies. It was recommended that University-Industry partnership/linkages should be promoted to ensure that what is taught relates to labour needs.

Key words: Economic development, Institutional context, Knowledge production, Role of Higher Education

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I. Introduction

The aim of the study is to examine the role played by the University of ESwatini (UNESWA) in facilitating and sustaining economic development in the Kingdom of ESwatini. The government of eSwatini and others in the region (Southern African Development Community) put more emphasis on the importance on the role of higher education institutions in training graduates who will be ready to contribute positively towards the development of their nations' economies. The aim of the study was achieved by investigating the effectiveness of UNESWA's institutional contexts (practices, structures, policies, completion and non-completion rates of students) and the relevance of graduates absorbed by relevant industries.

Any institutions contributions could be influenced by its existing policies, structures and practices. The structure of higher education in the Kingdom of ESwatini may be considered unified. This means that administration is centrally controlled at Kwaluseni campus, but also that Parliament and the government controls the allocation of public funds to the University. Government, through national policies (National Development Strategy, 1996; A Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme, 2006), put more emphasis on the correspondence between the content of the higher education and the operations of the working place, to enhance economic growth and development. Thus, educational programmes need to be both employment-oriented and business-innovative-oriented. This became more focused in 2011 and beyond because of the global downturn on the country's economic status. In response, the University's strategic plan (2016-2022) emphasised the need to transform the university's practices and engage in more innovative and commercial activities to meet its financial challenges and to address the needs of kingdom.

The impact of higher institutions and their relevance to economic realities could be observed through universities practices (their programmes offered, teachings, completion rates of students), professionals or employees and employers effectiveness in economic related activities. As Bill Clinton, the former US President once noted: you could not have employees without employers. People who started a successful business, built and managed successful institutions, employ large number of people are usually, the products of their country's system of higher education and secondary education systems (Summers, 2011). It is believed that one of the justifications for governments involvement in education and training is the existence of external benefits, which include economic growth (Machins and Stevns, 2004), human capital accumulation which matter for individual economy and wide productivity.

Institutional contexts such as students' completion rates have an impact on economic development of any country including the Kingdom of eSwatini. Completion rates in higher education have been considered unacceptable and has negative effect on the future of higher education and economic development (Roska, 2010), because if a student does not complete a course, all public or personal funds committed are wasted. This

is indicated on Yorke, 1998, p 188 argument, on table 1, where it is clearly depicted the estimated costs of non-completion by Academic Subject Categories (ASC) in some Universities in the United Kingdom-academic year 1994-95.

Table 1 shows the estimated costs of non-completion by Academic Subject Categories (ASC) in some Universities in the United Kingdom-academic year 1994-95.

Academic Subject Categories (ASC) Title	Overall Cost of total Non-completion, £ Million
Clinical and Pre-Clinical subjects	1.1
Subjects and Professions Allied to Medicine	3.4
Science	13.3
Engineering and Technology	16.1
Built Environment	3.8
Mathematical Sciences, IT and Computer Sciences	10.9
Business and Management	11.0
Social Sciences	6.7
Humanities	6.8
Art, Design and Performing Arts	7.4
Total	£80.5

Source: (Yorke, 1998, p 188)

The array of challenges that the University of ESwatini and other higher education institutions face today (2011-2018) is virtually unparalleled when compared to any other point in the history of the Kingdom of ESwatini. The challenges include financial pressure, public scrutiny, and the rate of change in the economic world within and beyond the borders of the Kingdom of ESwatini. These challenges need academics and other practitioners to become cultural outsiders in order to observe their institutional challenges and economic patterns in relation to their key functions (Kezar, 2002). This notes that with challenges or not, higher education institutions have to view challenges through an outsiders perspective and fulfil their key mandate of facilitating economic growth and development within its shore and beyond.

The evolution of university education in the Kingdom of ESwatini and elsewhere shows the responsiveness of the Universities to societal challenges and governments' plans, policies and other realities: government expenditure on education or health (Lorey, 1992). In 2011, it became clear that the economic downturn and financial meltdown in the Kingdom of ESwatini was leading to a new situation, which requires new interpretation and actions. The University of ESwatini's present and future were reinterpreted and handled with sensitivity and according to the national, regional and international interconnectivity.

II. University breaking grounds for economic growth and development Policy Setting

Re-interpreting its present and future the University of ESwatini crafted its bold development strategy: 2016-2021 to guide its transformation processes in relation to national policy-vision 2022 and others. This shows the university's responsiveness to government development strategies and societal economic challenges. Government plans for development have constituted a central factor in the University strategic plans. This was observed through the interaction of the University policies, government policies and the international economic agenda as stipulated on the framework of Africa 2063 and UN 2030 development agenda.

The strategic plan 2016-2021, titled: transformation and commercialisation, it aimed at transforming the university's practices and challenges and engaging into innovative activities for economic renewal (Vice Chancellor Report, 2015-2016). Through the strategic plan the University, find new position for itself in society and to elucidate its real role in today's ever changing local and international societies. Its mission was further restructured to ensure that it remains focused on promoting sound thinking, rationality in the broader sense through teaching and learning, research and community engagement within its borders and beyond. The strategy is given meaning in the wider context of an educational and economic policies aimed at improving educational practices and economic growth. The University strategic plan 2016-2021, economic policy and labour policy were interrelated. This is substantiated by the recognition and acceptance of the culture of partnership with industries responsible for economic renewal and the fact that the liaison between the University education and work should be emphasised and strengthened. This argument derives from the realisation that the level of education and training of students (who are future labour force) is an important prerequisite for a strong and competitive country.

III. Implementation of the Strategic plan 2016-2021

Issues of financing University projects, economic implications of the university projects gained importance in the 2016-2021 strategic plan. Increasing attention was paid on the following key matters: quality assurance; excellence in teaching, learning and research; increased internal efficiencies; and greater focus on human resources. This was undertaken to make the university systems and activities more sustainable and efficient.

The university implementation of the strategic plan 2016-2021 was based on its current performance; more university self-reflection and reflection by society on what its development focus and values should be and the true nature and on its uniqueness of its strategic policies or programmes offered. For example, the university currently pays a particular focus on programmes such as science technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, which are considered as key domains for intellectual contribution and economic development (Renn, 2012).

The strategic plan 2016-2021 also puts more emphasis on the need for more entrepreneurial activities to deal with financial related challenges in a collaborative and effective way. Collaboration between the University and external stakeholders is emphasised to enhance entrepreneurial activities and for knowledge sharing and production, and economic development. Clark, (1998) noted that universities should put more emphasis on entrepreneurial practices and respond in an entrepreneurial way or act entrepreneurially by finding sources of income through their knowledge exploitation.

The University of eSwatini and others have encompassed the entrepreneurial aspect in their strategic plans to address their financial related challenges and contribute to economic development (van der Sijde, 2014; Etkowitz, et al. 2014). Limited and decreasing funding and other factors have driven the University of ESwatini and others to become more sensitive towards to economic development and deploy more entrepreneurial activities (Vice Chancellor Report, 2015-2016; van der Sijde, 2014). This is emphasised by Yokoyama, (2006) where he noted that institutional responses come in different forms of commercial activities such as corporation formation and partnership with private sector. For example, the University of ESwatini in its strategic plan of 2016-2021 emphasised the commercialisation agenda and re-emphasised that the University's company key function would be to initiate and manage business subsidiary enterprises of the University, and further cement the existing partnership between the University and Royal Science and Technology park (RSTP). The strategic plan also puts emphasis on public-private partnership (PPP) finance venture for capital projects, for generating income purposes to augment the government subvention. The University stresses the generation of more income through knowledge transfer and commercialisation of knowledge through the University's Consultancy and Training Centre. Van der Sijde, (2014) also noted that modern Universities are expected to have a relationship and interactions with stakeholders to produce new knowledge, generate income and building link between what is taught, how it is taught, mainly in relation to labour needs and economic development needs.

The University of ESwatini relationship and interactions with key stakeholders as stipulated within the strategic plan aimed at making the university a vehicle or responsible for producing trained man power equipped with university knowledge or capabilities to create firms, jobs, and eventually economic growth. Promoting relationship and interaction was an attempt by the University to connect intellectual educational projects to local socio-economic projects and bring powerful knowledge to bear fruits on local, national policies, strategies and to guarantee quality assurance procedures.

Quality assurances ensure that the university's beneficiaries or university's knowledge consumers value universities as knowledge creators (Fongwa and Atkinson, 2014). Muller, (2010) claimed that the spirit of quality assurance urge interaction and community engagement which facilitate the application of knowledge, net workings and building of communities of practice, within and among professionals. This has the potential of building the needed dynamic collaboration with different enterprises to enhance economic growth (Fongwa and Atkinson, 2014). This is also emphasised by the "Triple Helix model" which notes that industries, universities, and government should have a close working relationship which aims at boosting local, national and international economy. Millow, (2010) also noted that though economists plan, and policies are implemented by policymakers but the advice on how to implement them sprang from new economic ideas from academic economists. Historians who studied economic growth in Europe noted that economic growth remain a product of universities and others (Summers, 2011).

Dissemination of economic related ideas by universities' economists and researchers is regarded as having made a positive strides or inroad to Europe and USA economic success (Summers, 2011), benefits of higher institutions to society derives from its capacity to facilitate the adoption and dissemination of new ideas, technologies relevant to the country's policies and effort to renew their economies. The economic realities and challenges depend more on the authority of ideas and less on the idea of authority (Summers, 2011), and the authority of ideas depend on the culture of the organisation, where organisation strategy could be constructively challenged and altered.

The “Triple Helix model” facilitates working relationship and net workings among key stakeholders and knowledge production (Van Rovij, 2014). Millow, (2010) claimed that networks helped the government’s “premieres’ plan of Australia in the 1930s’, this was a product of Australians Economists, who guided the nation out of its difficulties. The Premier plan provided rationales for action and inaction on economic related matters (Kruss et al. 2012; Harcourt, 1986). Millomow, (2010) noted that Australians Economists who were products of the Universities made some inroads in the arena of policy advice, during the country’s economic difficulties. Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, (2002) stated that Universities are not ivory towers of detached academics producing the knowledge they think needs to be produced but they should be universities with different missions and values to be accomplished through collaboration and interactions between relevant stakeholders. The presences of partnerships and collaboration between University academics and different enterprises not only enhances the quality of research , but also informs the curriculum and increases the quality of university graduates and guarantee economic growth and development (Puukka et al., 2012; Favish and McMillan, 2009). Kline, (1995) claimed that Universities have to pursue different values through collaboration: economic values, which aims at economic growth, scientific values which adds scientific knowledge, educational values which contribute to teaching and learning, production of knowledge and cultural values which adds to prestige of the nation and economic growth.

The University of ESwatini value of knowledge production facilitates economic growth because firm production, knowledge production and policy issues are intertwined and are key ingredients for economic growth, Millow, (2014), and influenced by Economists practices. For example, in Australia, Economists and their profession have an influence on economic policies because they are not entirely within government ambit and also controlled by four different agencies or extra parliamentary: Arbitration court, Tariff board, Commonwealth banks. This helped the Australian people to exercise a “quadripartite control” of industrial and financial challenges.

Knowledge production has the potential of influencing the necessary policies for economic growth, such as policies on financial inclusion. Babajide et al. (2015) claimed that financial inclusion has impact on economic growth because it allows small scale firms to have access to funding that enable them to acquire capital goods and services that could help them to become entrepreneurial and productive. Financial inclusion policies have left notable mark in poverty reduction and development of micro level entrepreneurship (Outlook Regional Economics, 2015; Onaolapo, 2015; Oryo, 2013).

IV. The Methodology

The study design was descriptive survey, employing qualitative and quantitative procedures. In this design, data collection procedures involved questionnaires, interviews and content analysis of relevant documents (University’s Annual Reports; University Strategic Plans and other related documents) (see **Figure 1**). Economic development is complex because it is shaped and framed by broader layers of contexts and dynamics within and between the contexts (institutional practices and industrial practices). These contexts could be easily understood and unpacked by the **Self-Efficacy, institutional contexts and economic development two- way interaction model** see **figure 1** and the social contrast theory which helps in explaining the endogenous and exogenous factors which motivates students or professionals in Universities while executing their professionals duties.



Questionnaires were sent to key members of the senior management teams from the Sugar belt or industries and their responses are shown in table 7, 8, 9, 10). These industries were purposively chosen because of their current contributions towards the country's economic development and the fact that they absorbed graduates from the University of ESwatini. As noted earlier, the impact of higher institutions and their relevance to economic realities could be observed through universities practices (their teachings), employees and employers effectiveness in economic related activities.

The efficiency of providing university education at both undergraduate and graduate level is considered to be a very important and complex factor for national economic development. It is a complex factor because the influence of students' non-completion or failure is complex and felt at different levels: education system level, the institutions, and the students themselves (Yorke, 1989). Thus, cohorts of students entering the university in different academic years and programmes need to be followed-up in order to elucidate the question as to how many completed their programmes at what rate. Students' failure to complete on specified time has some economic related implications (see table 2 - 5). More students who finished after the stipulated time frame could suggest a high rate of wastage and also raises the critical questions as to the relationship of costs and benefits (Blaug, 1985).

The paper examines the role played by the University of ESwatini in facilitating and sustaining economic development in the Kingdom. This key question was addressed through these research questions:

- What was the role played by the University of ESwatini in the process of improving the Swazi economy between 2011-2018?
- How did the University of ESwatini play its role in facilitating the economic development between 2011-2018?
- What factors affected the University's effort or contributions towards the economic development of the country between 2011-2018?
- What strategies that could be used to enhance the University's effort in improving economic development?

These questions were interrogated through different ways, including paying attention on the number of students who enrolled in full and part time degree programmes lasting required four, five and six years. How many in terms of percentage has successfully completed their programmes within the time set for it; percentage of those who had finished after the stipulated years and percentage who finished after those stipulated years. The costs of non-completion are felt across levels of society because students who enter higher education and leave without qualifications are disadvantaged in the labour market and affect their economic related contributions (Yorke, 1998).

V. Content analysis

According to Krippendorff (1989) content analysis is a research method that uses different procedures to make inferences from text. Content analysis remains an ideal data collection procedure in this study, where the documents which contain information about university matters and interview scripts were compared objectively and inferences drawn.

The purpose of content analysis is to provide insights, facts and guide to actions (Krippendorff, 1989; Tesch, 1990; and Holsti, 1969). This suggests that inferences drawn from the relevant documents and interview scripts can be used to develop insights on the role of the University of eSwatini in improving national economy and development. This is important because University practices or any public institution is not innocent spatial reference or passive matters; they are embedded in peoples or social dynamic practices and struggles (Ber and Vuolteehaho, 2009). These struggles usually involve defending the identities of places and people.

The analysed data were depicted in different tables. **Table 2**, Full Time estimated costs of non-completion by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) in University of e Swatini academic year 2012/13-2016

Students' academic year of registration	Programmes Offered	Costs per programme per academic year • 1 st year, 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th .	Expected total costs after a students' completion	No: of non-completion	Estimated costs of Non-Completion in E.
2012/2013-2016	BA: Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.220.00 • 14.080.00 • 14.880.00 • 15.775.00 	57955.00	BA.18	1043190.00
2012/13-2016	BSc. Agric. and Consumer Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.220.00 • 15.250.00 • 16.150.00 • 17.150.00 	61770.00	38 Agric. 34 Cons. 72	4447440.00
2012/2013-2016	BSc. Nursing and EHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.350.00 • 15.250.00 • 16.150.00 • 17.120.00 	62870.00	26	1634620.00
2012/2013-2016	Science & Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14.350.00 • 15.250.00 • 16.150.00 • 17.120.00 	62870.00	32 Scien.eng. 11 Electic. 43	2703410.00
2012/2013-2016	Social Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13.220.00 • 14.080.00 • 14.880.00 • 15.775.00 	57955.00	45 BAS 6 LLB 51	2955705.00
Total				210	E12784365.00

Source: University of e Swatini academic year 2012/13-2016 Academic Office records

Table 3, Part time/ Institute of Distance Education (IDE) estimated costs of non-completion by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) in University of e Swatini academic year 2012/13-2016

Students' academic year of registration	Programmes Offered	Costs per programme per academic year	Expected total costs after a students' completion	No:of non-completion	Estimated costs of Non-Completion in Emalangeni
2012/13-2016	BA:inHumanities &BEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.030.00 • 10.680.00 • 11.290.00 • 11.970.00 	43.97.00	BA: 26 Com: 53 79	3473630.00
Total				79	E3473630.00

Source: University of e Swatini academic year 2012/13-2016 Academic Office records

In 2012/13-2016 academic year different faculties had different number of registered students and their completion years also differed (University of eSwatini academic year 2012/13-2016 Academic Office records). Others completed their programme on the stipulated time frame, others failed to do. For example, the Faculty of Agriculture had one hundred and ninety (190) registered students, 138 (73%) graduated on time, 15 (8%) after a year and 5 (3%) after two years.

The Faculty of Consumer Sciences had ninety four (94) register students, 42 (45%) graduated on time, 15 (16%) after a year and 3 (3%) after 2 years.

The Faculty of Commerce had hundred and two (102) registered students, 51 (50%) completed on time, 16 (16%) after a year and 5 (5%) after two years. The Faculty of Health Sciences had hundred and fourteen (114) registered students, 29 (25%), completed on time, 54 (47%) after a year and 5 (4%) completed a two years.

The Faculty of Humanities had forty nine (49) registered students, 26 (53) completed on time, 5 (10%) completed after a year.

The Faculty of Science and Engineering had hundred and three (103) registered students. Some of these students, seven nine (79) of them registered for the four year BSc. Science course, 38 (48%) completed on time, 6 (8%) after a year and 3 (4%) after two years. Some students, twenty four (24) registered for the five years electrical and economics course. 8 (33%) completed on time, 5 (21%) after six years.

The Faculty of Social Science had hundred and ten (110) registered students. Ninety five (95) registered for the four year BA. Social science and 26 (27%) completed on time, 17 (18%) completed after a year and 7 (7%) completed after two years. Other students, fifteen (15) had registered for the five year, LLB programme and 4 (26%) of them completed their programme on time, while 5 (33%) completed after a year (see table 5, Full time Students Completion rates or time frame by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) at the University of e Swatini 2012/13-2017).

The Institute of Distance Education (IDE) had hundred and forty nine (149) registered student in 2012/13-2016 academic years (University of e Swatini academic year 2012/13-2016 Academic Office records). Seventy nine (79) of these students registered for the four years programmes and 46 (58%) completed their programme on time, while 4 (5%) completed after a year and 3 (4%) after two years. 69 of them registered for the six years Commerce programme and only 16 (23%) completed their programme (see tablePart time (IDE) Students Completion rates or time frame by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) at the University of e Swatini 2012/13-2017), this affects the University's reputation, yet its reputation is the key to its long term success and quality of graduates (University of e Swatini Quality Assurance Policy and Frame work Draft, 2018).

Students' completion rates or time frame was analysed and presented in tables. Analysing students' completion rates is important because time spent in education has social costs and economic costs to the individual student, students' families, institutions' image, communities and wider societies (Dlamini, 2018). See table 5, Full time Students Completion rates or time frame by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) at the University of eSwatini 2012/13-2017.

Table 4, Full time Students Completion rates or time frame by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) at the University of eSwatini 2012/13-2017.

Faculties	Programmes	Registered students	Completed on time	Added extra one year	Extra two years	Estimated costs Wastage For staying more
Agriculture	• BSc.Ani.Sci.(Dairy option)	15	9	2	1	51450.00
	• BSc.Agric.Econ. &AgBMgt.	43	36	3	1	68600.00
	• BSc.Agron.	34	24	3	1	68600.00
	• BSc.Ani.Sci.	22	13	3	1	68600.00
	• BSc.Hort.	21	9	1	1	34300.00
	• BSc.Agri.ed.	31	25	5	0	85750.00
	• BSc.ABE	24	22	1	0	17150.00
Consumer Science	• BSc. FSNT	20	11	3	0	51450.00
	• BSc.TADM	24	6	4	0	68600.00
	• BSc.Cons.Sci.	21	4	4	3	120050.00
	• BSc.Sci.Ed.	29	21	4	0	68600.00
Commerce	• B.Com.(new Programme)	102	51	16	5	331275.00
Health Sciences	• B.NSc. (N/P)	43	-	33	2	599200.00
	• B.Sc. EHS (N/P)	20	12	4	1	85600.00
	• B.Sc.EMOSH	14	8	3	0	51360.00
	• B.Sc.EMWR	19	3	11	0	188320.00
	• B.Sc.EHFS	18	6	3	2	85600.00
Humanities	• B.A. Humanities	42	23	4	0	63100.00
	• B.A. JMC	7	3	1	0	15775.00

Science & Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.Sc. B.Eng. (Electrical..) 	79 24	38 - 5yrs prog	6 8	3 5	154080.00 222560.00
Social Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.A. Social Science LLB.(N/P) 	95 15	26 -5yrs pro	17 4	7 5	378600.00 141975.00
Total wastage costs						E2920595.00

Table 5, Part time (IDE) Students Completion rates or time frame by Faculty Academic Subject Categories (FASC) at the University ofESwatini 2012/13-2017.

Institute of Distance Education	Programmes	Registered students	Completed on time	Added extra one year	Extra two years	Costs Wastage For staying more E
IDE	B.A. Humanities	46	24	2	1	35910.00
	B.Ed. Secondary (Commerce)	4	3	1	0	11970.00
	B.Ed. Primary	15	9	1	1	23940.00
	B.Ed. Secondary	14	10	0	1	11970.00
	B.COM	69	0	0	16	191520.00
Total wastage costs						E275310.00

As stated earlier that the University of ESwatini crafted its policies including the bold strategic plan 2016-2021 in line or alignment with national policies for the country’s economic development. The University aligned its policies with national policies, such as the Swaziland Constitution of 2005 and polices on localisation. Though the University’s policies are aligned with national policies but it had some challenge to align their policies with the national localisation policy and practice, thus undermine government’s effort to revamp the economy through localisation guided by the national localisation policy (Table 6 Local Versus International Academics per Facultyand Departments).

Table 6 Local Versus International Academics per Faculty and Departments.

Faculties	Departments	Locals	%	Internationals	%
Commence	Accounting and Finance	3	38	5	63*
	Business Administration	9	69	3	23
Consumer Science	Community Development	4	100	0	0
	Food and Nutrition	3	75	1	25
	Tent and Design	3	75	1	25
Education	Adult	2	33	4	66
	Curriculum	11	79	3	21
	Education Foundation and Management	5	45	6	55*
	In-Service	4	100	0	0
	Primary	4	100	1	20
Agriculture	Agric. and Bio systems engineering	6	85	1	14
	Agric. and Economics management	6	46	7	54*
	Agric. Education	5	83	1	17
	Agric, Animal Science	7	78	2	22
	Hort Culture	2	40	3	60*
	Crop production	4	57	3	43*
Health Sciences	Community Health Nursing Service	7	100	0	0
	General Nursing	13	87	2	13
	Environmental Health	12	75	4	25
Humanities	Academic Communication skills	8	89	1	11
	African Languages	4	57	3	43*
	English language and literature	7	100	0	0
	JMC/Journalism	2	50	2	50*
Social Science	TRS/Religious Studies	3	60	2	40*
	Economics	7	88	1	13
	Law	8	89	1	11

	Political Administration	4	67	2	33*
	Social work	6	67	3	33*
	Stats	8	80	2	20
Science and Engineering	Biological Science	5	56	4	44*
	Chemistry	6	67	3	33
	Computer Science	7	64	4	36
	Geography and Planning	8	73	3	27
	Maths	6	60	4	40*
	Physics	8	80	2	20

Source: UNESWA Calendar 2018/2019 *Departments who appeared under mining National localization Policy of 1996.

As noted earlier, the role of the University of eSwatini in economic development activities is also assessed through the lens of its graduates absorbed by relevant industries. The data related to this is presented in table 8: No: of Graduates absorbed by company R 1, S2, N3, U4, SW5, T6 according to sex. This is important because it shed light on the company's sensitivity on gender related matters, though gender matters are more than the concept of sex. Company's sensitivity to gender matters has implications on its economic development.

Table 7, Sex- orientation of Graduates absorbed by the sampled companies. Company R1

Female	Male	Total
14	37	51
	Company S2	
Female	Male	Total
9	16	25
	Company N3	
Female	Male	
9	10	19
	Company U 4	
31	50	81
	Company SW 5	
11	8	19
	Company T 6	
3	22	25

Table 8, below shows the number of graduates per department, this is important because each department has a key role to play in facilitating the company's effectiveness and efficiency of the company which could lead to national economic development.

Table 8, No: of graduates per department: Company R1, S2, N3, U4, SW5, T6

Company R1, Departments	Numbers per department
Administration	10
Energy	1
Factor operation	5
Finance account section	7
Health wellness	1
Information and Technology	2
Internal audit	1
Learning Talent	2
Legal	1
Management account	2
Marketing sales logistics	4
Off strategic management	4
Production	3
Property	1
Risk management	1
Services	5
Shared Services	1
Store purchase	2
Water resource	1
Total	51
Company S2 Departments	Numbers per department
CEO's office	2
Human Capital	2

Finance	6
Commercial	7
Technical Services	8
Total	25
Company N 3 Departments	Number per department
Finance	4
FSDU	8
Demonstration plot nursery	1
Project, SMLP	1
Project, SDMANE	1
Pack house	1
Project EU/HCVHP	1
Fleet	1
Agric. Business	1
Administration	1
Total	20

Company U 4 Departments	Number per department	Comments
Human Resources	12	
Finance	18	
Factory/Risk control	12	
Agriculture	39	
Total	81	
Company SW 5 Departments	Number per department	
Finance	2	
Agricultural Irrigation Systems	1	
SMLP	16	
Total	19 (incomplete)	
Company T 6	Number per department	Comments
Agric. Crops (sugar cane Growers)	14	Graduates from Luyengo Campus: Agronomy and Agriculture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 are management level; Promoted to from Supervisory level to management level • 7 are at supervisory level
Agric. Services (SHEQ, Cane Harvesting, Livestock)	2	Graduates from Luyengo Campus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of department; • 1 Junior officer
Finance	5	Graduates from Kwaluseni Campus: Accounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Department • 3 Finance management level • 1 in IT.
Human Resources	1	Graduates from Kwaluseni Campus: law Graduate from law
Health Centre	3	Graduates from Mbabane Campus;health Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Nurses

Table 9, Graduates in senior and middle management: Company R1, S2, N3, U4, SW5, T6 Company R1

Middle Management	Senior Management	Total
20	31	51
	Company S 2	
Middle Management	Senior Management	Total
4	EXCO 6	10
	Company N 3	
2	2	4
	Company U 4	
19	7	25
	Company SW5	
	1	1 (Incomplete)
	Company T6	

The information on table 9, shed light on the people who are strategically placed in each accompany and expected to drive its operations and to assess the knowledge and skills possessed by new graduates from higher training institutions and some suggestions on how to restructure the curriculum content (see table 10 below.

Table 10, Assessment of Knowledge and Skills possessed by new Graduates and Bridging Knowledge Gap

Company R1 comments on: Knowledge Gap by new Graduates	Comments on how to bridging Knowledge Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University offers academic knowledge, which focuses on the 'you will learn on the job mentality', yet it is raising the next generation of professionals; The content also doesn't include personal effectiveness and leadership skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University needs to do an analysis on what skills are required by the different organisations in the country then try to close the gap by introducing related courses, e.g. there is a need for Mechanical Engineers and Agriculture Engineers.
Company S2 comments on: Knowledge Gap by new Graduates	Comments on how to bridging Knowledge Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a sugar industry we need students to be trained on practical work. For example, Human Capital-the institution does not have courses specific to HR or Industrial relations; Commercial- we are now focusing on sustainability and there are no courses specific to that; We need courses specific to logistics; Technical-we need courses addressing issues such as sugar cane technology, irrigation; The sugar industry at large is looking for chemical engineers, irrigation engineers-all these programme UNISWA should consider adding on their programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking audience with the industry to address their needs and tailor make courses accordingly.
Company N3 comments on: Knowledge Gap by new Graduates	Comments on how to bridging Knowledge Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The link between theory and practice needs to be improved; Lack of understanding of indigenous language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened the company, UNESWA, SLA engagement of top students graduates on graduate training for two years; UNESWA keep with industries' needs; Have more collaboration programmes between company and UNESWA, for smooth integration and development in industry; Have more regular contact with company during semester courses-to be exposed to issues of standards, agricultural marketing and technological advances.
Company U4 comments on: Knowledge Gap by new Graduates	Comments on how to bridging Knowledge Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, the relevance of knowledge possessed by graduates from UNESWA in relation to practice is suitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general there is no really much gap.
Company T 6 Comments on knowledge gap	Comments on how to close the gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture department: The gap that existed regarding absence of practical experience with the students has been corrected with the recently introduced five months field attachment; Human Resource Department: HR Core: The LLB is fine, however, we suggest that the University add a human resource Management module as optional since not all law students are employed as lawyers; HR-Health Department: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> we suggest that the University add a human resource Management module as optional since not all law students are employed as lawyers; we suggest the current degree also have an occupational module because most of the students are employed by companies who also need this aspect.

VI. Discussions of findings

The discussions of the findings were guided by the research question, which examines the role played by the University of ESwatini in improving the economy of ESwatinibetween 2011-2018?

The study indicated that the University firstly played a key role by aligning its policies and the country's national policies. This is depicted in its strategic plans, particularly its bold development strategy plan of 2016-2021 which served as a roadmap for the University in its effort of aligning its practice and practices in relation to national policy–vision 2022. This shows the University's responsiveness to government development strategies and societal economic challenges. The University strategic plan 2016-2021, national economic policy, and labour policy were reconciled and partnership between its relevant departments and the private sector re-emphasised. This offered companies the opportunity to be more productive and contribute to the country's

revenue base. This finding concurs, Ndlovu, (2018) study findings that taxes remitted by SWADE initiated companies since 2014-2018 are in excess of E210 million, thus contributing to the country's economy. The University recognised and accepted the culture of partnership with industries as a key issue in the process of economic renewal. The liaison process between the University education and work place were emphasised and strengthened to ensure that graduates knowledge will fit to the existing economic challenges. This finding concurs with Summers, (2011) research finding which indicated that people who started successful business, built and managed successful institutions, employ large number of people and pay taxes are usually, the products of their country's system of higher education and secondary education systems. This finding is also inline with Yorke, (1989) research study findings which concluded that most students who had some experiences with higher education in different ways contribute to their country's economic development.

The findings of the study indicated that the University played a role improving the economy indirectly through putting more emphasis on gender matters and their importance in economic development (see table 7), where the female/male landscape is slightly changing and this has some implications for the economy because gender diversity is important in the work place because it exposes both men and women to each other unique and complimentary perspectives, and promote innovation and creativity. This concurs with the Peterson Institute for International Report of 2016, which indicated that companies with at least 30% women in C-suite positions (highest level executives in senior management) demonstrated that a 15% increase in profitability, compared to those with less sensitive to gender diversity.

The study findings revealed that though the University's policies were aligned with national policies but it had some challenges in aligning some other policies such as the National Localisation policy, thus undermine government's effort to revamp the economy through the national localisation policy (see Table 6 Local Versus International Academics per Faculty and Departments). The findings of the study concurs with Udoji's report of (1969) which indicated that the key positions in government were still held by expatriates, yet the most African countries were advocating for localisation, an attempt to localise most of the countries activities.

On the same note, the study revealed that the University's failure or reluctance to fully adhere to the national localisation policy undermined its key role in shaping the country's economy, because the policy of national localisation is anchored on citizen economic empowerment which is one of the key mandates of the University. The University's reluctance is noted in table 6 above, where more departments were dominated by International professionals or Expatriates, a practice which contradicts the policy of localisation in the Kingdom, which states that it could be hard or impossible to depend on foreign manpower or resources for the sustainability of the nation. This University act, further contradicts the SDC Region policies which calls for harmonisation of policies in the region for economic growth. For example, the localisation policy, in Botswana gives preferences to employment of Batswana over non-citizens given similar educational and training qualifications.

The study revealed that the role of the University of ESwatini in improving economic development was undermined by some institutional contexts such as students' completion rates and its financial implications (see Table 2-3). This finding of the study concurs with Yorke, (1989) research finding which revealed that costs non-completion and delayed on the programme are felt across levels of society because students who enter higher education and leave without qualifications are disadvantaged in the labour market and explicitly and implicitly affect their economic related contributions.

The study also indicated that the role of University in its effort of improving the economy was further undermined by the institution's contexts, such as the estimated costs wastage for students' non completion rate and staying more on the programme (see table 2, 3, 4). On various assumptions described on table 2, 3,4 above, the estimated costs to the public purse of the students' non completion rate and staying more on the programme at the University for the academic year 2012/13-2015 totalled to **E19453900.00** and this brings pressure to the country's unhealthy economy (see table 2, 3,4). A sum of the order of **E19453900.00** is substantial, and its magnitude is expected to stimulate attempts from all to reduce the costs of the number of students who spend extra years on the programme and the non-completion rate. This finding is inline with Yorke, (1989) study finding which indicated that the education system and the university contexts could be a contributor to the problem of non-completion or delay in students' completion. His study finding revealed that if the institution context, where teaching is provided is not facilitative of the students' learning, they could become dissatisfied with the experience of the programme offered. More often than not this reflects on the institution's failure than on the students.

The findings of the study also indicated that the University's effort to improve the economy of the country is undermined by the knowledge gap possessed by some graduates (see table 10). Participants from Company R1: stated that: *The University offers academic knowledge, which focuses on the 'you will learn on the job mentality', yet it is raising the next generation of professionals; The content also doesn't include personal effectiveness and leadership skills. The company suggested that the situation could be addressed*

through: University needs analysis on what skills are required by the different organisations in the country then try to close the gap by introducing related courses, e.g. there is a need for Mechanical Engineers and Agriculture Engineers.

Participants from Company S2 re-emphasised that there is knowledge gap possessed by new Graduates: *As a sugar industry we need students to be trained on practical work. For example, Human Capital- the institution does not have courses specific to HR or Industrial relations; Commercial- we are now focusing on sustainability and there are no courses specific to that; we need courses specific to logistics; technical- we need courses addressing issues such as sugar cane technology, irrigation; the sugar industry at large is looking for chemical engineers, irrigation engineers- all these programme UNISWA should consider adding on their programmes. The knowledge gap could be addressed by seeking audience with the industry to address their needs and tailor make courses accordingly.*

Participants from Company N3 also stated that the knowledge gap shown by: *the poor link between theory and practice and lack of emphasis on indigenous knowledge.* It was noted that the knowledge gap could be improved through: *Strengthened the Company/industry UNESWA, engagement of top students graduates on graduate training for two years; ensuring that UNESWA keep with industries' needs; have more collaboration programmes between the company and UNESWA, for smooth integration and development in industry; having more students' regular contact with companies during semester courses- so to be exposed to issues of standards, agricultural marketing and technological advances.*

VII. Conclusion

The study concluded that the University of ESwatini plays its recommendable role in developing the country's economy guided by its policies and national related economic policies and its policies remained reconciled with national agenda. The spirit of partnership between the University relevant departments and the private sector is re-emphasised through policies and practice and observed for its effective role. This partnership offers companies the opportunity to be more productive and contribute to the country's revenue base. The study also concluded that though the University's role is visible but there are key issues which need to be attended to. These include restructuring of some curriculum content to suits companies' needs (see table 10).

The study also concluded that dominance of international professionals within some departments introduced the culture of silence or non-participation in educational related matters in the institution, thus undermining the key mandate of the University and the culture of collaborative leadership.

The culture of silence affected collaborative leadership practice which offers different pathways towards sustainable learning and improvements. Collaborative leadership which provides avenues for shaping and reshaping institutional capacity and conditions that directly or indirectly influence students teaching and learning were undermined by the culture of silence. The culture of silence during meetings not only undermined the quality of meetings, but also the professionals' potentials to inform or guide the curriculum change processes, sound management practices and the increase of quality graduates. Lack or limited number of quality graduates affected or limited the potentials of the University to engage into national economic development activities.

The study concluded that there were problems of internal inefficiency, for example, cohorts of students entering the University and their completion rate remain a challenge as double digit numbers of students who failed to complete on time were observed (see table 4), thus undermining the University's potentials to contribute positively towards the economic development of the country and region. It was concluded that there is lack of coordinated effort to link the University effort, professional practices with national developmental agendas or policies.

The study concluded that the University remains reluctant to address the existing problems where more departments were dominated by International professionals or Expatriates, a practice which contradicts the policy of localisation in the Kingdom.

VIII. Recommendations

The use of University-Industry partnership/linkages should be urged to ensure the re-emphasis and appropriate link between what is taught on one hand, and how it is taught and relates to labour needs. For example, the health department could introduce an occupational health module because the students employed by companies need this aspect in their place of work (see table 10).

The problems of internal inefficiency, for example, cohorts of students entering the University and failing to complete their programme on the stipulated time frame needs to be attended to. It has a huge implication for the economic development of the country;

The University's reluctance to address the existing problems where more departments were dominated by International professionals or Expatriates, a practice which contradicts the policy of localisation in the Kingdom, which states that it could be hard or impossible to depend on foreign manpower or resources for the

sustainability of the nation. This University act, further contradicts the SDC Region policies which calls for harmonisation of policies in the region for economic growth needs to be attended to by those responsible.

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