

DIMINISHING VALUE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

It is the responsibility of one generation to pass down ethics, information, morals and values to the upcoming generations. This can be done but not effectively without a viable educational system. Tertiary education in Nigeria is tragically becoming neglected by the vast majority of the population. The government alone cannot satisfactorily provide the necessary resources needed in order to boost the value and importance of tertiary education. A sample study was taken from selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria in order to elucidate the impacts they have had in providing tertiary education to their immediate community. The findings show that age was a major factor in the declining need of acquiring tertiary education, which influenced skill and knowledge acquisition. The results of the study suggest that for the value of tertiary education in Nigeria to increase, much effort should be put into informing the majority of the population on the importance of education as a whole.

1 INTRODUCTION

Colleges are found in various African countries as essential association for progression where a broad assortment of subjects are taught to imminent graduates in a devoted field of study to serve their prompt surroundings and entire nation. A higher education is regarded as a technique for social progress and money related reinforcing to the beneficiary. The consequences of Nigeria's underlying tertiary establishments stood out emphatically from their accomplices in Europe and America without a doubt the whole world. They were offered work by multinational associations and corporate bodies. In any case, in the midst of and after the military regime the political scene of Nigerian changed for the more deplorable. Everything was affected including the economy and the preparation structure. Standards began to fall in each one of the levels of guideline and our school graduates unexpectedly got the opportunity to be distinctly unemployable.

The reason for this review along these lines is to discover the components militating against the nature of advanced education in Nigeria. Such elements to be considered are quality in substance and setting. The factors to be considered are subsidizing of advanced education, work showcase appraisal of graduates and impact of strikes on instructing and learning in the colleges.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and other capabilities. Education could be formal with clearly intended consequences and informal with unintended consequences. It is a universal aspect of any culture. Although it is a universal feature of society, educational systems vary according to organizational structures, pedagogical practices, and philosophical and cultural organizations (Kunle and Rotimi, 2006).

This may be readily observed when one examines educational systems in a variety of cross-cultural settings.

What is to be learned, how the learning is designed to a great extent, is a function of culture. For instance, in pre-colonial Africa, the pattern of learning was chiefly informal with the family playing the major role. It was not only the responsibility of the immediate nuclear family, but also that of the extended family and community at large to educate the younger generation (Jaja, 1996).

Advanced education refers to the western kind of training which is sorted out after college education. There are principles and regulations defined and managed by the Ministries of Education. Approaches are attracted up to guide and direct such establishments by Government. In the Higher Education laws are to be discovered, guidelines and measures controlling the sort of structures, offices, equipment required in the institution, the passage capabilities of understudies, their ages, the educational

module, the tenets managing the understudies development, the capabilities of the educators, their workloads, their states of administration and the understudies affirmation and graduation. There is generally quality control mechanism, on account of Nigeria it is the colleges and the National Universities Commission (NUC) that is saddled with that duty. It got to be distinctly clear that for Nigeria to adequately grow and develop it required the colleges, and in the perception of Curle (1970) for a nation to grow, the citizens must be educated, he pronounced:... with a specific end goal to develop; a nation must have a very considerable proportion of trained citizens, not exclusively to go about as specialists, architects, educators and agriculturists additionally to set up its own particular estimations of equity, choice on legitimacy, adaptability, observation and proficiency.

3 TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian educational framework is comprised of three sectors to be specific; primary, secondary/technical and tertiary. The projects of every one of these sectors are equipped towards the objectives of National Policy on Education (NPE). The NPE is an archived proof of what Nigeria needs her educational system to accomplish for her. The tertiary training is given by polytechnics, colleges of education and colleges. From the 1960s to the 1970s, the quality of graduates of Nigerian colleges and their sister organizations was appraised among the best in the world (Ajayi, 2002). Truth be told 1970s were portrayed by scholarly magnificence (Erinosho, 2004; Olukoju, 2002). The Nigerian academy amid this time displayed the best of scholarly custom and culture (Omotola, 2007). In any case, from the 1980s, the quality of graduates from Nigeria's institutions of higher learning started to decline.

The National Policy on Education (2004) characterized tertiary instruction to incorporate, universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotronics. Tertiary education is aimed at:

- To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
- To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- To develop the intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- To acquire both physical and intellectual skills this will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- To promote and encourage scholarship and community services.
- To forge and cement national unity; and
- To promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The first institution of higher education was the Yaba Higher College, established in 1934. This became the nucleus of the first university college, established in 1948 at Ibadan. At independence in 1960 there was need for expansion of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka which was established in 1960, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Lagos and the University of Ife (all in 1962) and much later, the University of Benin (1970). These are known as the first generation universities. In 1975, with the twelve states structure, and the agitation for more universities by Nigerians, the Federal Government established seven additional universities at Jos, Maiduguri, Kano, Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar and Port Harcourt. These universities became known as the second-generation universities (Olaniyan and Adedeji, 2007). Virtually, all states have either a higher institution or a Federal one located there.

The establishment of Higher Institutions was to train various crop of people. Nigeria now has a product of knowledgeable graduates regardless of the now prominently provoked falling standard. Also, are promptly making commitments in all circles of the nation's development.

Today, there is no doubt that the calibre of graduates from our institutions of higher learning has certainly fallen. This shocking circumstance has kept on creating developing worry about the pertinence of advanced education to Nigeria's improvement journey.

There is a general disregard and rot of instructive offices at all levels of training in Nigeria occasioned by the long standing society of poor subsidizing of training by progressive governments in Nigeria.

4 DIMINISHING VALUE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria today is tormented by issues of high rate of unemployment and apparently low quality graduates for employment in the labour market. Recent World Bank publication as indicated by Akanmu (2011) asserted that Nigeria has a normal financial development rate of 7% per annum. However, wage work is evaluated to have declined by about 30%. Why? Just in light of the fact that opportunities are limited, our graduates were not classified employable resulting upon their inadequacies in specialized and life prowess required of them. Experimental data (Adeyeye and Tugbobo, 2011) shows inclination of managers of work for graduates from different terrains far beyond graduates from Nigerian universities.

Charles Soludo, recent CBN Governor of Nigeria, while talking with Meshack Idehen National Mirror correspondence (2011) commented that over 60% of graduates delivered in the nation were not employable or met all requirements for work at worldwide level thus called for what he depicted as an upheaval in the training area in Nigeria.

On a general note, employers of labour, most of which are non-government business outfits set out to maximise profit and hence recruit personnel that will add value to actualization of the organisation vision and mission.

The argument was that, the training of these graduates was defective and deficient in technical and specialized skills required for the challenges of the labour market (Felix & Okpilike, 2010; Obanya, 2009). More often than not, employers of labour have to retrain their new recruits before they become useful to required taste. National University Commission (2004) cited in Akinyemi, Ofem and Ikuenomore (no date) argued that apart from the qualifications that graduates possess, there are other attributes such as analytical skills, good communication skills, good personal and social skills, technical and managerial skill among others that are appropriate for job fulfilment.

Apparently, the disconnect between the training programmes of our universities and the labour market was evidenced in a matrix below showing the mismatch between graduate turn out and graduate employment.

Table 1. Extent of the mismatch between Graduate turnout and Graduate Employment (2003-2007)

Years	Graduate turn out (A)	Registered Graduate unemployed (B)	Placement (C)	Official difference (B)-(C)	%
2003	514,214	2,541	657	1,884	74.1
2004	566,362	1,947	227	1,747	88.5
2005	591,097	4,329	939	3,390	78.3
2006	705, 232	3,063	758	2,305	75.3
2007	754, 100	3,768	350	3,428	91

Source: National Bureau of Statistics/Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (2009) reported in Akinyemi, S.; Ofem, I.G and Ikuenomore, S (no date)

The statistical information from Table 1 indicates that unemployment is persistently above 70% between 2003 and 2007.

The two likely purposes behind this high occurrence of unemployment are absence of occupations and non-employability status of our graduates.

The Nigerian Labour Market distortions are prevalent. This accounts in part, for graduate unemployment. It reflects in the rising occurrence of unemployment among college graduates and those of other tertiary establishments, especially wage rate differential not identified with profitability and colleges instructing educational program that are not firmly connected to the request of managers.

According to Dabalén et al (2000) as quoted by Basse and Atan (2012) graduate unemployment accounted for 32% of the total unemployed labour force between 1992 and 1997. Probably by now the percentage of unemployed graduates might be higher. This is due to the fact that Nigerian graduates

are lacking in in-depth knowledge of ICT necessary for running knowledge economy. Two reasons are principally responsible for this;

- The reading culture is progressively parting way with Nigerian University

Students, and

- Universities are facing enormous decay in terms of functional libraries and equipment and general infrastructure.

Table 2. : Graduate Unemployment Statistics (1990-2004)

Year	Registration	Declared vacancies	Placement	No. Of Unemployed out of No. Registered	% of placement to registered No. (+)	% of placement to vacancies (+)
1990	10182	3695	986	9787	9.6	26.7
1993	108153	12605	79	95348	0.07	0.63
1995	32442	3708	49	28734	0.01	1.3
2000	104960	115	110	104845	0.10	95.7
2001	84359	127	93	84332	0.11	73.2
2002	94663	121	102	94542	0.10	84.3
2003	61961	917	657	61044	1.06	71.6
2004	87731	617	510	87114	0.58	82.7

Source: Bassey and Atan (2012:70)

4.1 Challenges in Tertiary Institutions

4.1.1 Scarcity of Fund

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) tenaciously and reliably denounce the circumstance whereby add up to budgetary assignment to training falls underneath UNESCO proposal of 26%. As per Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001) referred to in Saint, Hartnett and Strassner (2004), the assertions between Federal government and ASUU put the yearly cost of preparing of an understudy at \$1000. Prior to the understanding the subvention to the colleges was at the rate of \$360 preparing cost per understudy. Numerous years after there seems to be no wonderful change in the subvention got by the colleges. Worst still, the actual amount released by the government to education sector is more often than not below budgetary allocation (Obanya, 2004). Consequent upon this, it is a herculean task running the engine of administration of the university (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009).

4.1.2 Infrastructural rot/insufficiency

Contrary to the world class infrastructural offices seen in college grounds in developed nations of the world, what is acquired in our grounds is troubling and dampening. The street systems are poor, the address lobbies, theatre, research facilities, workshops, scholastic workplaces and brandishing offices are all in lamentable state and horribly deficient (NUC, 2004). The customary structural perfect work of art sort of structures encapsulated of college was truant all the more so from the third era colleges to date. What is accessible today could best be portrayed as match-box structures. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu the Executive Secretary of Education Trust Fund (ETF) recognized this while highlighting on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Network program of Wednesday 21 September, 2011 lead by Mrs Omotosho when he pronounced that no Nigerian college research centre was among the initial 12,000 college labs on the planet. Therefore, ETF planned to provide a world class lab in six chose colleges speaking to the six geo-political locales of the nation inside the following one year.

4.1.3 Inadequate teaching equipment and materials

It is worrisome to note that basic equipment and consumables needed in training of our students in science and technical courses are lacking in most of our campuses today. In few cases where they are present, they are grossly inadequate (World bank, 1994 cited in Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). For example, many graduates of petroleum engineering never saw an oil rig throughout the period of their training. Similarly, those who trained as agricultural engineers never saw combined harvester. This is just to mention a few.

4.1.4 Staffing Inadequacy

Academic staffs constitute the engine room for the training programmes of universities and so, what obtains about them goes a long way to affect the teaching-learning activities. There is a sharp difference between required and actual number of academic staff on our campuses. Between 1977 and 1999, the numbers of academic staffs declined by 12% even as enrolment expanded by 13% (Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2009). In effect, the reports further have it that an estimated 30% of approved academic positions were vacant in the existing universities. Shortfalls are estimated at 73% in engineering, 62% in medicine, 58% in administration and 53% in sciences. Even today, the universities have not fared better, as evidenced in NUC accreditation report of 2009, where many programmes across a large number of the universities were denied accreditation based on a number of deficiencies, significant among which is staffing problem.

4.1.5 Human capital Flight

This has become a syndrome as every window of opportunity from foreign universities is taken up with enthusiasm. This is in connection with poor conditions of service hitherto offered. Lately, it has improved, but there is still room for improvement before it can be said to be at par with what is in operation in developed countries of the world and a few others in Africa such as South Africa and Botswana. Brain drain is not limited to movement across geographical landscape but other juicy careers like political appointment. This problem has come with negative attendant effects such as non-stability of quality from departments, incessant shortage of supervisors for post-graduate students, rising workloads associated with deteriorating staff-student ratio using its staffing norms per academic discipline, the NUC calculates a staffing shortfall of 51% within the system (NUC, 2002b cited in Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2004).

4.1.6 Political Disruption

This is one problem that is fast eroding the quality and dignity that is often associated with the ivory tower. Undue interference from proprietors, most especially the state governments in the administration of the university leaves much to be desired. Visitation panels are constituted at will by the visitor without recourse to the law with the aim of getting at their political enemies and antagonists (Adegbite, 2007). Equity, justice, fairness and excellence have all given way to godfatherism and mediocrity.

4.1.7 Cult activities on our campuses

This is a hydra-headed problem that has remained unresolved. The menace of cultism has stretched the management of many universities to limit. It is a problem that has left many students maimed, dead and frustrated. In few occasions some university staff and principal officers were not spared. In fact, the issue of cultism among our students has opened a new and very dangerous dimensions to the situation of things in our educational institutions (Adegbite,2007). The consequence is incessant closure of our universities and psychological trauma of fear.

4.1.8 Poor library facilities

Only few universities in Nigeria today can boast of a standard designated library. Even with the few, how many can boast of adequate and current book stock? Current journals, periodicals, bulletins and magazine are commonly absent. Until recently, the libraries were without e-library facilities. Effective research and teaching under a situation like this is highly constrained. Examination malpractices: Examination malpractice often noticed with WAEC, NECO and JAMB examinations is being reported on our campuses as well, even though it is on isolated cases. It is a monster that should not be allowed to take its root on our campuses. It comes in various dimensions ranging from leakages of examination papers to intake of incriminating materials into the exam halls and copying among students from one another.

5 SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

The government, university management, and private individuals and corporations all together have to be decisive in order to stop the downward trend in quality of graduates being turned out from our universities. In specific terms, the following which are suggestive of paradigm shift are recommended. Government be it federal or state as the proprietors of the universities should begin to see education and university education in particular as an investment with profit being anticipated in future in the

form of crime –free society, economically viable population e.t.c. Against this back drop, increased funding of the university to a desirable level of the university should become a priority of the government. Essentially, university education is a serious business and highly capital intensive, thus, government should see it so. This will afford the governing council the opportunity to effect a turn-around of situations for better on our campuses. The monetary intervention from Education Trust Fund (ETF) should be sustained and expanded too for rapid transformation in the area of infrastructure and capacity building of academic staff. Philanthropists and well established corporations and firms should be encouraged to support the universities in the area of infrastructural development.

University management and corporations or companies be it government owned or private should form a synergy, wherein, students acquire relevant meaningful industrial experience. This way the corporation/companies become an important partner in the training of the needed manpower to run the economy of our country. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedure from both partners is essential to introduce sanity into the system. To complete the above, one year internship period for medical doctors could be extended to other academic programmes. By so doing, the quality assurance is attained. Besides, the professional skills, every student should be made to acquire entrepreneurial skills as it is being currently practiced in some universities typical example of which is Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagan in Ogun state.

The university management should be sensitive to the needs of each department in order to take them to an enviable position. In this regard, consumables should be replaced periodically while equipment is well maintained.

Better welfare packages including salaries that compare favourably with those in developed countries of the world should be offered to the academic staff by the government, in order to curb human capital flight.

University autonomy that has for long being agitated for by ASUU should be granted with appropriate legislation, in order to remove distractions being caused by incessant political interference.

Admission arrangement of the intakes should be improved upon to select only those who genuinely have potential for university education.

Departmental breakthrough in research and excellence should be promptly and handsomely rewarded in order to promote excellence which is the hallmark of university education.

Counselling services should be within the reach of students against social ills like cultism, examination malpractice, sexual harassment etc. Further, the university management should engage in periodic meeting with students' community in order to give them moral talk and obtain information on possible areas of their grievances. Moreover, counselling therapy and rehabilitation programme should be given to cultists who have renounced their membership.

6 CONCLUSION

The non-employability stance of employers of work about Nigerian University graduates before being retrained or enlisted appropriately into jobs for which they are recruited shows much is expected from stakeholders in University education. The circumstance predicts risk for the acceptability of the certificates being issued by these Tertiary Institutions. All the more in this way, that the present rating of any authentication is likewise the value of a similar certificate prior issued and obtained. This is the reason we as a whole ought to see the need and be included in the endeavours to enhance the evaluations of our colleges on the worldwide setting.

The policy makers and the university management should consider as a matter of national interest and urgency the requirement for an outlook change in the way the training programmes are run. When this is done our colleges and their graduates will keep on being significant in world of work both inside and outside the shores of Nigeria.

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