

Reputation of University of Maroua at National and Regional levels in Cameroon

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Abstract:

The study examined the reputation of University of Maroua at national and regional levels in Cameroon in terms of quality, staff promotability, students' aspirations and the impacts. The paper further examined the administrative Capacity and the relationship between the leader and the led or subordinates as fundamental in reputation since her establishment in the region; its roles in national building of human capacity in both politics and manpower development in science and technology related courses. The study findings revealed that within four years of the establishment of this young University there is excellent work in all the faculties; human capacity all being improved, it behooves that students (human development) future career prospects, learning and research resources enhanced global utilization in a competitive economy. The study Vindicated stability enjoyed by both academic staff and students as meter of measuring its reputation, hence their human relation, their inputs and outputs achievements. The findings identified relationship as the instrument harnessing the different cultures, managing from the leadership ability. Profile recommendations were made including the need to extend the University's reputation in the continent of Africa first before international level in all the variables indicated in the study including financial responsibility as this may give her a good percentage in bench mark among other Universities in Africa and the world over.

Key words: quality, staff, promolability, students, aspirations, national, regional stability and relationship.

Introduction:

On the 9th August 2012, University of Maroua, one of the youngest University in Cameroon and in the continent of Africa celebrated its fourth anniversary of only four years as compared to Lincoln University, the oldest Historically Black University in the United States of America (USA) founded in 1854, who has celebrated her one hundred and sixty-two years in April, 9th 2012. This comparison is necessary for well thinking individuals to see the grap of University Education in Cameroon especially this young University of Maroua as the 6th in order of establishing Universities in Cameroon comparatively, University of Maroua is too young in Africa among other developing nations like India, Indonesia, Latin-America countries and among the developed nations of the world (Obanya 2010). This also shows the level of development in both human and technology.

What is one of the variables necessary for University's reputation?

Universities the world over cannot be adjudged or assessed by their longevity only but by the performance and programmes evolved hence students and parents search for institutions of higher learning especially Universities worth their aspirations. With this at the back of our minds, University of Maroua can stand the taste of time in Cameroon in terms of quality.

Quality means the most modern way of imparting knowledge to young generation to accomplish the goals or objectives. Just as Lincoln University is trying to keep to the promises of the American Revolution realities in the lives of young people from neglected stratum of the society (Branson 1996. 3), so is the philosophy of this young University of Maroua.

The qualities of faculties of University are designed to meet the present objectives of education for sustainable existence. It implies that education is for body and soul. That is education is for individual aspiration and the society in which he lives. In other words, education contribution should include:

- ❖ General education and cultural
- ❖ Enrichment, but also profession
- ❖ At training and certification
- ❖ Lifelong education, the inculcation of democratic values, the provision of social mobility
- ❖ The pursuit of fundamental research, the development of advanced technology, the provision of advanced medical care and
- ❖ Public health support for agricultural development, material resources, conservation
- ❖ And economic development (Webber and Duderstadt, 2004:5)

The faculties are designed for science oriented educational system which is in high demand internally and globally since science and technology are more in demand than arts, the University of Maroua has this vision and the mission to equip all the faculties especially Faculty of Sciences Education. The department of Enlightenment and public orientation of the school has motivated students to leave their Universities in Cameroon to seek for admission in this young University.

The news of performance of the outgoing graduates in the country is influencing and provoking enough for students to leave their former studies into University of Maroua. Evidence has shown that even law students and those who have completed their first degrees in law, marketing and other courses like Sociology and Religious studies have found their ways into the school through entrance examinations.

The staffs are contributing immensely to excellence in the school's reputation. This is because academic staffs recruitment is based on merit. That in the impersonality principle of Max Weber (1996) cited by Babalola et al (2006). This implies that academic staffs are objectively recruited as lecturers as proven individuals worthy of performing excellently well. They are also selected based on relevant qualifications, experience and personal acumen.

The staff promotion is sequential in that no staff is left out when he/she is due promotion. In other words, there is no partiality.

Furthermore, programmes of learning are people oriented. That is, the goals are achievable on completion of any programme. This has made University unique in the sense that it encompasses or includes Higher Teachers' Training College. This is a rare University indeed, due to the additional programmes. Since jobs are scarce nation-wide and

teaching seems most viable and available on completion of the course. This has influenced mass exodus from other Universities to this young university.

This is one of the management approaches of investment in education. Recruitment of academic staff in public primary and secondary schools depends on the manpower developed from this University hence Government's policy. In other words, certificates and diplomas from this University are authentic and are the basic qualification necessary for teachers' recruitment nation – wide. This has accelerated the drift of students from different educational background into this University, coupled with unemployment of graduates.

This modus operandi of education for sustainable development is for building reform gaps and strengthening Universities roles in Cameroon. This process of education has impact in the country and at regional levels hence unemployment is reduced to its barest minimum and living standard improved.

The modus operandi is the administrative role of the head of the University. The administrator's ideology seems liberal. For instance, taking a cue from neo- liberal ideology, it has the goal of influencing political and social persuasions along specific economic lines. In other words it emphasizes among others, degrees of individuals, personal freedom, ideas and thrusts. It implies that the vice chancellor of this young University promotes open democratic society. This is in consonance with the view of Altbach (2008) who said that the broad social, economic and technological forces are to shape the realities of the 21st century.

The vice chancellor of Maroua University ideology interlinks with the association of African Universities (AAU) Press Release of June 8, 2001 which describes the phenomenon as a combination of much free trade in goods and services, combined with free capital movement (AAU 20021). The emphasis is that people especially students should be able to engage more freely in various economic activities after completing their educational programmes. This was also the call of Press Release of 2007 by AAU. Therefore the success and failure of the University contributed to him. His creative thinking and administrative prowess are witnessed in his renovative ideas and stabled governance of his academic staff, Students and harmonious living with the community leaders. This inter personal relationship of the vice chancellor is a means of reputation.

Literature Review.

Quality: - According to Hornsby (2010: 949), quality means standard. It connotes the ability to reach acceptable standard; it implies that quality is one of the criterion of reputation.

The lecturers simply facilitate learning hence the bulk of the work is done by the learners. This is why it is often said that "It is easy to lead a horse to the stream but it is difficult to force it drink". It implies those students' aspiration triggers or ignites efficiency.

Efficiency of education is the relationship between the outputs of the education system (i.e. graduants) and the inputs (i.e. gadgets). Akangbo (1987) said that there are two types of efficiency, namely internal and external. According to Longe and Durosaro (1988) internal efficiency is the extend of the educational system's ability to minimize cost and reduce wastage resulting from repetition, drop – out and failures while external efficiency in education refers to extent to which education takes care of the broad, social, economic and political goals of the community. The role of University is to improve learners' aspiration. However, the leaners or students have to improve their effectiveness or desire to achieve their goals thus promoting the University within the region and externally (i.e. within the nation).

- Nation, according to Hornsby (2010: 773) refers to a geo – political entity with a common characteristic such as political affiliation and or language. For example, University of Maroua was established by a decree on the 9th August 2008. Therefore she can be compared only with Universities in Cameroon per the variables in the study. However, as a State owned μ University, she has special conditions on which she operates. The uniqueness of the University is in the different current programmes disciplines offered. They include:
- (i) Sciences of Education
 - (ii) Computer science
 - (iii) Information Communication Technology (ICT)
 - (iv) Architecture Network & System
 - (v) Engineering, Environmental Development Arts and Design etc...

These disciplines include other arts Sciences which other oldest Universities have in their curriculum.

- **Regional:** by a dictionary definition, region is an area usually without fixed limits, example: tropical region. In this case, a region is a part of a particular country identified on the map of the country. For example Maroua is situated in the extreme Far North boundary of Cameroon with Tchad. It occupies the Far North Region in Cameroon where the University of Maroua is situated. The people of the region have the advantage to receive the modern education leading to self-actualization and or for sustainable living. This hinges on the responsibility of the head of the institution and his subordinates.
- **Responsibility:** In every organization people are assigned responsibilities to help move the organization forward so as to achieve its goals or objectives. Some responsibilities are based on job specification or specialization. Responsibilities means duties assigned to people to perform so as to achieve the goals of the organization like the University. According to Hornsby (2010: 921), responsibility is authority or power invested on an individual in high position to oversee the management of the organization and recommend promotion for staff under him to improve production and services. He creates good climate for workers by nipping in the bud conflicts that may ensue by relating fairly well.
- **Relationship means to be close to others especially co-workers.** It is the ability to relate dearly to others. Elton Mayo (1953) Hawthorne Studies shows that good relationship between the employees increases production of goods and services. Relationship leads to motivation, effective communication and effective supervision as well as participation in decision – making. These are ingredients of stability based on good governance of the leader (i.e. in University we have the vice Chancellor).
- **Stability:** This is the state of being stable economically, mentally sound or alert or intelligence and politically stabled. It is a device or influence that keeps stable an organization. For example, the study of Urwick (cited in Babalola 2006) that authority rests on the top management and downward to the lowest employee. This means that they should be division of labor for purpose of stability among the workers. This is what University of Maroua is enjoying over the years. This has led to maximum cooperation

among the staff and students to achieve their goals. This has led to the donation of a large parcel of land for the building of the university. This is a parameter of measuring the reputation of leadership of the University.

- **Leadership style:** There are different styles of leadership. In other Words, no organization can function without an effective leader. Leadership therefore is a part of management but not all of it. Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It has been seen as human factor which binds groups together and motivates it (Davis, 1967). It implies that leadership is transformative and transactional. Its focus is on organizational improvement and effectiveness through these four dimensions: setting directions, developing people and redesigning the instructional programmes. To achieve these, the leader must use influence on the process of ongoing activity engaged in by certain individuals in an organization. He should focus on the accomplishment of goals. In other words, the outcome of the leadership process is goal (s) accomplishment. It therefore behooves that the success or failure of any organization is the responsibility of the leader whose intelligence personality. Physical characteristics and supervisory ability should surpass those of his subordinates (Peretomode, 1999).

- **Criterion of Reputation of University.**

There are different criterions people rank a University if they are necessary or exist.

However, the Academic Ranking of World universities (ARWU) have enriched their stock to International Conference on World Class Universities (WUC). The ranking methodologies according to SC/MERTICA in Obanya (2010) consist of Universities Academic ranking of world (ARWU).

- The times Higher Education University rankings
- The World Universities Ranking on the Web.
- ARWU Academic Ranking of World Universities was first published in June 2003 by the centre for World – Class Universities and the Institute for Higher Education of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China. Their methodologies or criterions are:
 - The number of alumni and staff winning the Nobel Prize and medals in specific fields.
 - Number of Higher cited researchers.
 - Number of articles published in Nature and science.
 - Number of articles indexed in science citation Index.
 - Number of articles in social Sciences Index.
 - Per Capita performance in reference to the size of the institution
- Times Higher Education – QS World University Ranking criterion: The Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) between 2004 and 2009 has a full list consisted of 600 Universities. Their Criterion include: indicators, explanations and Weights:

Table I: Time Higher Education – QS Weighting Rates.

| Indicator | Exploration | Weighting |
|------------------------|--|-----------|
| Academic peer Review | Composite score drawn from peer review survey (which is divided) into five subject areas) 9,386 responses in 2009 (6, 354 in 2008) | 40% |
| Employer Review | Score based on responses to employer survey. 3,281 responses in 2009 (2, 339 in 2008) | 10% |
| Faculty Student Ratio | Score based on student faculty ratio | 20% |
| Citation per Faculty | Score based on research performance factored against the size of the research body. Score based on proposition of international faculty | 20% |
| International Students | International faculty | 5% |

Source: Obanya (2010) system RE – Engineering and Institution RE- branding for building world class University: The Nigerian Perspective.

The ranking scores or percentage of weightings are usually criticized for proper placement. This may lead to imperfection of judgment of ranking.

- The world Universities’ ranking on the web. This criterion is an initiative of Cyber metrics Lab, a research group of the Centre de Ciencias Humanasy Sociales (CCHS) part of the National Research Council (CSIC) the largest public research body in Spain. This body is called Web metrics Ranking of World Universities. It was founded in 2004. The Objective of this body is to convince academic and Political communities of the importance of Wed publication not only for assessment of the academic knowledge but for measuring scientific activities. Performance and impact too. Other criterion the body used for assessment included:
 - (i) The assessment of higher education (processes and outputs) in the web.
 - (ii) Taking due account of linguistic, cultural, economic and historical contexts.

This body attempted to follow the recommendations of UNESCO. Therefore to collect data, the emphasis is on audited and verified data. Their published tables usually show the entire Web indicators used in a very synthetic and visual way. First and foremost, the essence of ranking or high reputation of Universities is not only for top classification but also considering several regional rankings for comparative purposes. However, from all indications, all the existing rankings of Universities tended to focus on quality which differs from different perspectives and in terms of indicators used. These differences in terms of indicators and quality variations in terms of definitions has lost sight or not taken into consideration or cognizance of geographical, cultural and political

influences among and across nations. It is in response to such issues that UNESCO's European centre for Higher Education (CEPES) in 2004 convened a meeting of experts to provide more objective and across – nations applicable guide lines for ranking of universities. The Berlin principles on ranking of Higher Institute (2006) cited in Obanya (2010) is an abridged version of ranking Universities, thus:

(a) Purpose and goals of ranking:

- (i) Be one of a number of diverse approaches to assess higher education inputs processes and outputs
- (ii) Rankings provides comparative information and improved understanding of higher education
- (iii) Rankings provide a market based perspective that can complement the work of government, accrediting authorities and independent review agencies.
- (iv) Be clear about their purpose and their target groups i.e. rankings have to be designed with due regard to their purpose. Indicators designed to meet a particular objective or to inform one target group may not be adequate different purposes or target groups.
- (v) Recognize the diversity of institutions and take the different missions and goals of Institutions into account. This means that quality measures for research oriented institutions are quite different from those that provide board access to underserved communities.
- (vi) If an institution is to be up – graded or ranked such an institution should provide clearly about the range of information sources for rankings and the messages each sources generates.
- (vii) There is need to specify the linguistic, cultural, economic and historical contexts of the educational systems being ranked to the different ranking bodies to avoid biases.

(b) Design and weighting of Indicators. These are methods to create the indicators. In other words it means being transparent regarding the methodologies used in creating the rankings. It means that the choice should be clear and not ambiguous.

- Chose indicators according to their relevance validity. It implies that data should be grouped in recognition of the ability of each measure to represent quality, academic and institutional strength and availability of data.
- Measuring outcomes should be in preference to inputs whenever ranking is possible. Data on inputs should be relevant as they reflect the general condition (s) of a given establishment hence they are always available. Measures of outcomes provide a more accurate assessment of the standing quality of a given institution's programmes status change in the ranking due to an inherent difference or due to the methodological change.
- Another method or criteria is to make the weights assigned to different indicators if used prominent and limit change to change hence any change may make it difficult for consumers to discern accuracy.

(c) Collection and processing of data. This is another criteria used in ranking Universities. Collection and processing data has some procedures such as

- Paying attention to ethical standard and the good practice recommendations articulated in these principles.
- Use audited and verifiable data whenever possible.
- Include data that are collected with proper procedures for scientific data collection. It implies that data collected from an unrepresentative or skewed subset of students, faculty or other parties may not accurately represent an institution or programme and should be excluded.
- Apply measures of quality assurance to ranking processes themselves.
- Apply organization measures that enhance the credibility of ranking.

(d) Presentation of Ranking Results: The procedures of presenting ranking results of Universities may include:

- (i) Provide consumers with a clear understanding of all of the factors used to develop a ranking and offer them a choice in how to rank or how rankings are displayed in order that the users of rankings should have better understanding of the indicators that are used to rank institutions or programmes.
 - (ii) Be compiled in a way that eliminates or reduces errors in original data and be organized and published in a way that errors and failure can be correct. That is, to enable the public and institutions be aware of errors made.
- The three – factor model of Saimi (2008). Saimi (2008) reviewed the different models of ranking Universities and came up with a three – factor model. This model has met the views of many other reviewers' ideas. This criteria is described as manageable definition has been distinguished as factor of world class universities i.e. the attainment of world Class Status. It implies that a University would involve an alignment of these three factors to ensure dynamic interaction among them.

This model seems to have an edge over the others hence it is easy to understand and easy to apply. Furthermore it is based on an analysis of what makes great Universities great, what is the real features of world class status are and what institutions must look for in analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses in order to attain the world class status or reputation.

The table 2 shows the three factor model:

| Factor | Features |
|-------------------------|---|
| Concentration of talent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to attract the most qualified professors and researchers. • Ability and privilege to select the most academically qualified students. • A high proposition of carefully selected graduate students |
| Abundant resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four main sources of financing government budget funding for operational expenditure and research • Contract research from public organizations and private firms. • The financial returns generated by endowments and gifts and • Tuition fees. • These abundant resources create a virtuous circle that allows the concerned institutions to attract even more top professors and researchers. |
| Appropriate governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall regulatory framework • The competitive environment and • The degree of academic and managerial autonomy that Universities enjoy • Complete autonomy is also more. Flexible because they are not bound by cumbersome bureaucracies and externally imposed standards • They can manage their resources with agility and quickly respond to the demands of a rapidly changing global market. • As inspiring and persistent leaders, a strong strategic vision, of the institution is on-going • A philosophy of success and excellence • A culture of constant reflection, organizational learning and change |

Maroua and her ranking profile

Maroua University has been operational within four years of her establishment hence her handicapped in submitting her criterion for bench mark ranking or reputation. In spite of none submission or her criterion for reputation she seems to fulfill conditionality's or items of Berlin (2006) principles of ranking of higher institutions. Apart from the objectives and methodologies enlisted, Maroua seems ripe is subject – specific ranking (Obanya,

2010: 47 – 48). The University's philosophy is within the ideology of system-re-engineering and institutional rebranding for building a world class University particularly now in Cameroon. It implies that the University of Maroua does not only provide conventional education; she has extended to professional, vocational, and technical education. She has also included teacher education. The essence of providing education in the world – wide is for sustainable development in terms of jobs and better living conditions.

These changes are the inspirations of the leader. A true leader according to Joseph Jaworski in Obanya (2010) is that he sets the stage on which predictable miracle... can – and do-occur. He synchronized the inner path of leadership. For instance, he as a leader has the power that galvanizes human energy and translates into action. In other words, a visionary leader has the ability for systems thinking, taking the entire system, not part in his or her focus. It implies that he or she visionary strategies are transformative in terms of human development, systems and processes within the University no matter the age or longevity.

Conclusion

From the study, University of Maroua has some reputation in some areas internally i.e. within Cameroon setting only and witting the region too. This is according to table one on Time Higher education – QS Weighting Rates of SCIMERTICA in Obanya (2010), despite the discrepancies. That may be involved in ranking procedures.

The University of Maroua has fulfilled some ranking conditionality's on items according to Berlin principles (2006) in terms of the three factors as presented in table two above. This would have not been possible without the modus operandi of the leadership. This is the man whose behavior towards subordinates can translate human energy into action through his influence and ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, criterion for ranking Universities or institutions higher learning should be based on the:

- Three factors of Berlin conference of 2006
- It should also be based on the subjects' innovation, methodologies and objectivity. For example, the young University of Maroua has added Teacher Education for job assurance. This implies that Universities should not be ranked on longevity but
- On rebranding her activities or programmes to meet the needs of education for life long, sustainable living and for healthy environment in different sub-regions of the world before international awards.
- The Saimi (2008) of the three factor should be adopted at different regions, nations first, before continental competition. These modalities will improve and streamlined the focus of international mandate for bench ranking or reputation of universities the world-over.

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