

The Face of Higher Education in Nigeria, Need For Counselling Interventions

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Abstract: Higher education has long been identified as the process that helps develop the total man physically, mentally, morally and technologically to enable an individual function effectively in any given environment in which he finds himself; so that he may become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. Hence, the purpose of this study was aimed at x-raying the challenges of higher education in Nigeria through funding and societal vices affecting teaching/learning environment, relationship, commitment and interest of lecturers and students. Counselling intervention and recommendations are made; based on awareness creation and to intensify education of parents, society, government/administrators, lecturers and students on the need to learn and achieve quality education base on effective and adequate funding and good management.

Keywords: face, higher education, need, counselling, interventions

I. Introduction

Higher education is the type and level of education that is given to a person(s) or an individual(s) who are qualified for admission and enrolment for courses after receiving primary and secondary education; and have successfully fulfilled all the requirement or criteria for admission. Such qualified persons are offered opportunity to enroll and to study and obtain degrees, diplomas and certificates of their choices in higher institutions of learning – colleges of education, polytechnic, universities and other consultancies programmes (Mgbekem, 2004).

Education is said to be the sum total of experiences one acquires during life time. It is the act of bringing out that which is hidden in an individual. Education is the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitude, values, skills or sensibilities as well as any outcome of the effort (Cremin, 1974 quoted in Nwachukwu, 1990 and Njama-Abang, 2006). She said education takes place within the society. The society demands from its members that they acquire at school a minimum body of knowledge, skills and certain desirable attitudes and modes of behaviour such as self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. The value of any education is its relatedness to and usefulness to life in society.

Therefore, the primary goals of higher educational institutions is a long-term development of the individual's skills, knowledge, and attitudes to enable him make contributes to his society's social, economic political, religious and cultural development. Thus the goal of higher education has long been identified as the process that helps develop the whole man physically, mentally, morally and technologically to enable him/her function effectively in any environment in which they find themselves; so that they may become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization (Tawari, 1986, Aluede, Aluede & Ufah, 2004).

Furthermore, the importance of higher education is to produce quality education and confer degrees on their products who are worthy in character and learning to enable them assume leadership roles in the immediate and external society or communities (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2006). Ultimately, the child's investment in education is for the nation. However, the state of economy, political and corrupt practices of the nation at present does not allow the university graduates to find a job on graduation. At the same time, the curriculum is not preparing graduate for self-reliance. On this Kayode (2000) notes, up to the independence period the government provided a lever for uplifting the quality of life of an average Nigeria undergraduate from colleges of education, polytechnics and universities to an almost unimaginable level. On graduation he/she had a job waiting, a car and a good accommodation reserved for him/her. These days a Nigerian graduate could roam the labour market for 3 to 5 years without getting a job. The situation is so bad that in some cases graduates with relevant qualifications are denied employment; and such positions are offered to some who are not qualified in the areas or totally quacks; but have godfathers to lobby and influence their employment.

Conversely, Osunji a onetime Minister of Education in Nigeria 2004, observed that Nigeria's higher education may have lost its focus. The present graduates from the nation's institutions or universities could not access productive employment because they were bereft of the required competence and skills. Our graduates are without employment because they are not employable. Many have argued that the system is corrupt through and through, floating campuses of tertiary institutions across Africa, Nigeria and Cross River State in particular, with all sort of social vices perpetuated by administrative system, lecturers, students, unhealthy

teaching/learning environment. Others critics hold that the campus environment happen to be the first after secondary school system and at such they experience their first freedom and independence from parents and tend to indulged in all sort of ill practices.

However, tertiary institutions in Africa, Nigeria and Cross River State as a whole faces a lot of difficulties in realizing their mission, visions, goals and objectives. Based on this the study is determined to investigate the face of higher education in Nigeria and needs for counselling interventions.

The general trend of education and how it changes over the years

The educational goals of training are to develop an individual's skills, knowledge and attitudes so that he can perform specific task. The government and policy makers are aware of this and have accorded education the place of pride. This is evidenced by the massive investment in education. In the second National Development Plan (1970-74). Education accounted for about 14% of total public investment of two billion naira. This made it second only to transport sector in terms of budgetary allocation. In the third plan (1975-80) education was second only to defence and its share in the GDP rose from about 1.2% to about 4%. The fourth plan (1980-85) allocated N2.2billion to education and this represents about 5.5% of the federal government's projected capital expenditure of about N80 billion. Education rank first in the 1993 budget of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Today the story is different with subsidies and allocations to the educational sectors drastically reduced. There was a corresponding increased in the number of institutions in the country. At the tertiary levels enrolments escalated for colleges of education, polytechnics and the universities. In 1975 alone seven new universities were established. In 1981, ten more were approved for establishment. Today the federal universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, private universities and monotchnics, colleges of education and satellite campuses in the country awarding degrees cannot be counted in just a second. Education has officially been looked upon as an important vehicle for uniting a nation. Efforts aimed at achieving this objective can be seen in the establishment of federal universities in all the states of the federation as well as the imposition of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme on all graduate beneficiaries of university education.

Consequently, education was used as a mechanism for imparting credentials needed for equitable participation in a modern economy. The 1979 constitution and current political policy and practices stress equity through allocation of jobs to reflect "federal character". This made states which were educationally backward to step up their educational investment programme in order to produce qualified people to fulfill the federal character requirement, hence, get a fair share of the "national cake".

Therefore, the demand for education has been fuelled by the observed manpower constraints which have seriously undermined the fulfillment of past development plan and project. Given the trend of uncontrolled expansion of higher educational industry in the country, it is common knowledge that the economy cannot absorb the increased output from our higher educational system. This has already manifested itself in the high unemployment rate now facing the labour market, ill-societal vices (crimes), corrupt practices and the get rich quick syndrome facing the society and educational system.

The problems of higher education in Nigeria today

The Nigeria higher educational system is passing through challenges and difficulties of realizing the aim and objectives of the national policy on education in Nigeria as a result they are faced with the following problems:

1. Funding of higher institution today: In recent times, the colleges of education, polytechnics and universities have witness tremendous dwindling of financial resources. This has reduced and affected the state of infrastructure and equipment in campuses or the system. Effective research requires functional laboratories and teaching and learning also requires well stocked libraries. Fund for capital projects are mixed managed and diverted to individual pocks. This has made many universities to embark into business ventures so as to be able to have funds for recurrent expenditure. For example sandwich programme and CES programme.

Similarly the take home salaries of lecturers are nothing to compare with other African universities and higher institutions. For example, the 2009; and the long strike of 2013 causing so much lost and setbacks in the educational sector. Furthermore, some vice chancellors, governors and top government officials have secured loans from the international monetary fund (IMF) without utilizing or implementing those funds into any educational projects. Rather these loans are converted to personal loans for purchasing big houses abroad, marrying beautiful wives, sending their children to foreign universities, driving luxury car and acquiring outrageous chieftaincy titles.

2. Government related issue or problems of Nigeria: The Nigerian government has also played a destructive role in destroying the educational system in Nigeria. Students now go to school on empty stomach coupled with lack of clean water and bad sanitary conditions. There are no textbooks to be found in the libraries and lack of improved teaching technological equipments. Students are forced to "learn" in dilapidated buildings and

crowded environment or classroom. However, most Nigerian students are naturally gifted and talented, and they still excel beyond our imagination with all the odds against them.

In the past, institutions like Yaba College of Technology, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University, University of Nigeria and University of Calabar were all centres of academic excellence. The Federal Government of Nigeria went ahead to create and established a governmental agency called Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to regulate admission standard. The mismanaged agency then introduced and encouraged schemes like catchments centres (for examination malpractice), cut off marks, federal character, state of origin, vice chancellor's list, political list, head of department list, Dean list, and all outrageous admission lists without testing its limitations and effects on the educational system.

Unfortunately, prospective students into universities, polytechnics and colleges of education simply have to bribe their way into these universities. Thus majority of the students are illegally admitted into the institutions and they find it absolutely difficult to maintain their academic grades. Hence, these students resort to cultism, prostitution and armed robbery as a means of remaining on campus. Most regrettably, hard work and academic excellence are no longer the yardstick by which academic success are been measured in Nigeria, Cross River in particular.

3. Other societal vices: In most Nigerian higher institutions today and globally, religious intolerance, ethnic quarrel and intolerance, xenophobia (racial intolerance) and political instability and other forms of violence are observable and serve as a norm of society. The role and need of education is lost when issues of religious and political differences become the order of the day, as is the case in Nigeria 2014 in its climates. Some higher institutions of learning are close to save lives of students and lecturers while over 250 Chibok secondary school girls are abducted by Boko Haram; these are students that are supposed to be preparing for higher education. This has seriously affected schools in the northern part of the country. Political indifferences and leadership issues are hitted on education and religion as a result the educational sector suffer the loss of academic excellence as our universities are no longer save ground for teaching-learning situations as the June 2014 case of University of Jos, been bomb by these nuisance called Boko Haram.

According to Jude (2000), the pirates confraternity was set out to fight moribund convention, neo-colonialism, tribalism and at the same time, defend humanistic ideals while promoting comradeship and chivalry amongst its members. Today Nigeria universities and higher institutions of learning are flooded with different types of cultist groups whose aims and objectives is to shed the blood of the innocent students or lecturer, whom to them refused to comply. This is seen in the inhuman murder of Dr Godwin Iwatt of Microbiology, University of Calabar on the 6th of April, 2014 and other cases of threat on the lives of lecturers in campuses.

On this, Denga (2005), Odu (2006) in Denga and Ekoja (2008) in their research has shown that good education has power to tame or domesticate violent tendencies. The inner forces of civilization tend to tranquilize and restrain unreasonable levels of aggression that are deep-rooted in barbaric inclinations. There is therefore a need to redress all these issues to move education forward and better.

4. Family related issues: The Nigerian student today is face with the problem of being unable to compete in a healthy academic atmosphere due to the destructive role of the family, parent and caregiver in particular who lack all ingredients to be called fathers or mothers. These co-called parents hardly oversee the growth and development of their children, rather they chase after worldly desires. Family values and respect are now things of the past. The family name is no longer to be protected. These parents prefer to buy admission letters for their children, sorting for grade, engaged in examination malpractice, forging of certificate and even encourage them to get it out from any person or lecturer who is a hindrance to their way. And for parents who refused to engage in these illegal and immoral unwholesome practices, they are victimized and their children end up staying at home for years, until they learn how to beat the drum or cheat the system. Most of these parents always justify their unwarranted actions with the saying, "if you cannot beat them join them". They failed to realize that they are destroying the future of their children and unborn generation, without considering the effects and consequences in their life and society.

Chikwen (2006) stated that domestic and foreign corporations based in Nigeria like Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, Citibank, Accenture, Nestle, Cadbury, Guinness are all on a massive drive to hire Nigerian graduates from foreign institutions based in Europe, Asia, America, South Africa and including other west African countries like Ghana and Libya. These corporations lack trust and confidence in the Nigerian educational system Cross River State in particular. These corporations were will to offer high paying salaries ranging from \$30,000 to \$150,000 annually which includes all their needed allowance and benefit. But the Nigerian trained graduate are offered nothing compared to their foreign train counterparts; whose salaries ranged between \$2,000 and \$5,000 annually without any benefit. Their actions were justified on the fact that they spend high amount of money in retraining to perform their jobs.

5. Blame the lecturers: However, all ill practices in campuses notwithstanding, most lecturers in Nigerian higher institutions should share the blame for the state of the educational system in the country. Some lecturers refuse to pass students until they buy their prepared lecture note, “handout” or textbooks or sex is offered by their female students against their will; turning them into wanted prostitute at any point in time. This situation is so bad and seen as a living nightmare for female students, including single and married students because their lecturers would make sure they fail until sex is exchanged for passing grades. Some bargain for amount to be paid for As or Bs. While some lecturers are converting to part-time politicians and others have decided to join the corporate world, whereby polluting the noble profession of teaching.

6. The problem of brain drain: There is a massive migration of extraordinary professors and senior lecturers into foreign institutions because there are no incentives to advance their profession in Nigeria. The government chooses to pay them whatever they feel. Our professors are highly underpaid, lack all adequate infrastructures to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently in our institutions. “Awarding” or better still selling honorary degrees to the highest bidder is the order of the day. The good relationship between lecturers and students are no longer present, instead lecturers take advantage of these students for their personal gains.

To further stress the lack of the Nigerian students, the Minister of Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala recently in her key note address during the second biannual lecture series of Prof Bart Nnaji at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, said that graduate from the country’s higher institution of learning were not employable. She also said that Nigeria higher institutions were plagued by inadequate science and technological facilities and materials for practical skills development and the country was shunning out thousands of unemployable science and technology graduates each year (Okorafor, 2013).

Finally, the system suffers from the absent of need driven curriculum to address national needs. There is the problem and difficulty in development and retention of good and existing curriculum and teachers or lecturers.

II. Counselling intervention

Based on the study the following counselling interventions were made:

1. Counselling awareness should be intensified to educate parents, society, government, lecturers and students on the need for parents to encourage hard work rather than illegal and immoral buying of admission grades, and certificate for children. “No hard work syndrome” should be abused.
2. The role of education, particularly the psychological and sociological foundations of education, handled in tandem with guidance and counselling, have a grant potential to mollify and moderate human tendencies to exhibit behavioural outrage. Hence a curriculum offering on education for peace is long overdue at all the three levels of education.
3. Emphasizes should be lay on a safe and orderly environment, a good home to school partnership with a clear and focused mission of the higher education. Establishing good students/lecturers relationship and a regular supervisory system to ensure standards, effective school administration and management, teachers-retraining, monetary to sustain beginning teachers and so on. Finding and salaries of lecturers should be revealed to reflect the African universities scale; to avoid in seizure sticking in institutions.
4. Government should introduce in all tertiary institutions curriculum that address national needs as well as providing the required facilities for research and development.
5. Government should curb cultism in institutions by developing programmes to disarm all fraternities and surrender their weapons drive to National Inter-Fraternity Council (NIFC) or the appropriate authorities.

III. Summary and conclusion

The Nigerian higher institutions are facing a period of academic and administrative disorderliness, difficulties and challenges in different phases. The ineffective implementation of the national policy and adequate attention given to issues concerning education and the wellness of students/lecturers in all higher institutions have dragged the system into various social vices and all sought of fraudulent practices of short-cuts.

In conclusion a review of all the issues related to education from the family society and the teaching/learning environment, curbing violence and unwarranted criminal practices in the school; and focus on the vision and goals of what makes a round person in character, knowledge and skills acquisition should be taken revisited. Hence, all easy way to success should be abused, teachers’ interest commitment, retraining for effectiveness and efficiency is needed. Also education should be adequately funded with appropriate teaching equipment for realistic education. Likewise teachers should be motivated and aim at developing a well reformed character in his/her cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains.

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