

Full Length Research Paper

Corporate establishments' preferences and the quest for overseas' qualifications by Nigerian university students

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This study examines corporate establishment demand as the quest for foreign education in Nigeria and seeks to expose the motivation behind the rush abroad for foreign education; explicated by the increasing level of university seekers within and outside Nigeria. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study. Major findings revealed that employers of labour demand for foreign certificates holders over national certificates holders. Among the sampled respondents, the effect of certificates acquired abroad on the nation's industries has declined. It was also observed that free-tuition institutions have increased students rush to study abroad irrespective of the courses being offered. Based on these findings, it is suggested that there is the need for government to reform the Nigerian educational system; to eliminate the discrimination on employment based on foreign degrees, as well as families to reorient their wards on courses being offered abroad.

Key words: Foreign education, qualifications and certificates and employees.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The rising demand for university education by Nigerians (Adeyemo, 2000; Lebeau, 2000), is intended to create more job opportunities for them in the increasingly competitive global employment and information technology-driven environment. One of the major problems facing university education in the country is that increasing demands are not matched with expansions in infrastructures to make learning conducive (Falase, 2005). Students' enrolment into Universities seems to have quadrupled since the last two decades in spite of increasing joblessness in the employment market (Smah, 2001). Part of the larger framework for the problems of higher education in Nigeria is the shift from the motives of higher education by the independence nationalists to the present problems and agitations bordering on the management and funding of higher education by the stakeholders.

During the last two decades or more, tertiary educational institutions, especially the Universities have experienced repeated strike actions. Also, over the years

there has been declining funding of higher education in Nigeria, though more and more Universities are being established in the country, nevertheless, the issue of brain drain has also been on the increase as a result of the under-funding and related problems of higher education. Smah (2001:5) noted that the National Universities Commission's (NUC) document revealed that accredited Universities in Nigeria were able to meet only about 30% of their academic staff needs; Staff-Student ratios were unproportional, averaging 1:700+. This has put a challenge on the quality of teaching and research by staff and students. The World Bank observed that graduates of Nigerian Universities of the last ten years were unemployable, partly due to the paralyzing effects of the management and funding of the institutions as well as the incessant strike actions by industrial unions operating on campuses (Smah, 2001; FGN, 2004). The cumulative effects of such scenarios are wide-reaching.

Only recently, the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Charles Soludo called for revolutionary steps to save the nations educational sector from further decline. He said the prevailing deplorable situation in the sector was such that about 60% of graduate being produced from the University System in Nigeria were not qualified for employment at the global

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level. This he said before the Vice Chancellors, academics and the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian University Commission while delivering a convocation lecture entitled 'Making Finance Work for the Poor'. He went further to state that the deplorable condition in the sector has gone beyond just the university system. He lamented the prevailing situation in the society, where the children of those in the middle class and their counterpart in the upper attended the best of schools within and outside the country. While children of the poorest of the poor are left to attend ill equipped shanty, community schools (Punch, 2008).

In 2005, the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) denied accreditation in all the 21 courses in offer at some Universities in Nigeria. Kogi State University-Ayangbe, Adekunle Ajasin University - Akungba in Ondo State and Federal University of Technology Yola, Adamawa State, were also denied accreditation in a number of courses, Adekunle Ajasin University was denied accreditation in nine courses, including English language, a working tool for other courses. University of Yola lost accreditation in four Business courses. Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma, Edo State was denied accreditation in Business Administration, Banking and Finance; Abia State University in Mass Communication; Delta State University in Banking and Finance and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi in Agricultural Education and Engineering (Nigerian University Commission, 2006).

In carrying out this accreditation exercise, the commission constituted 26 panels made up of 95 Senior Academics and 26 NUC staff to assess 182 courses. At the end of the exercise, 38 different courses were denied accreditation. It appears however that Kogi State University presented the worse possible case; none of its courses merited full accreditation (NUC, 2006). The Commission decided that virtually all the courses in the University were 'poorly managed' and 'sub-standard'. Due to political intervention from power brokers in government; the commission rescinded from closing the institution, after it has already directed the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and National Youth Service Corps to stop dealing with the University (Falase, 2005). The Statutory function of the NUC is perhaps to accredit courses offered in the Nation's Universities to ensure that they meet prescribed Standards. In performing this function, the Commission undertakes unscheduled visits to Universities to access the quality and quantity of the academic staff; the quality of teaching and evaluation techniques and the adequacy of teaching and learning facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories and workshops (Aina and Salau, 1992; FGN, 2004). The NUC is also probe with the responsibility of determining if the quality and standard of teaching will lead to the production of poor quality graduates, whose absorption into the nations workforce would 'severely impair socio-economic development in Nigeria and project a dim image of the graduates to the

'global community'.

The denial of accreditation to some courses and programmes in offer in some of the universities is a pointer to the multifarious problems bedeviling the Nigerian educational system. Despite the crisis in the Nigerian educational system, especially the issue of standard and quality: a common knowledge - this has not deterred the desire of Nigerians to acquire University Education. Nigerians are aware of the opportunities which University education provides for social mobility, self-improvement and economic empowerment. The big gap between demand and supply is clearly the factor driving the establishment of new Universities across the country and the increasing demand for higher education overseas in enhancing job opportunities in established organisations (Obioha, 2006).

Access to higher education in Nigeria

Investment in higher education has been justified on the grounds that University degrees, benefit society by adding to the skills of the population, tax revenues and in general, adding to the 'public good' (Obioha, 2006). Unfortunately there is this pervasive agreement in many developing countries that government should provide most of the funding for public higher education (Moussa, 1980). This is however different from what is obtain in developed countries on account that economists have argued that the benefits from higher education accrue to individuals and were therefore of 'private good' for which individuals and families should pay accordingly. Moussa (1980) noted that an additional concomitant of the private good is the fact that grants have been changed to loans placing major burdens on many University graduates. The ideological shift, coupled with the increasing demand, pressure on public budgets, is influencing a dramatic change in the thinking about funding of public higher education in some developing countries. For example South Africa now provides less than one-third the cost of public higher education with students paying the rest. In Western Europe, tuition remains low or in some cases entirely free as in the Scandinavian countries, hence the mad rush of Nigerian students to Sweden, Norway, Finland, or Denmark (McQueen and Wallmark, 1991). The above shows that there is still a commitment to the 'public good theory'. The European experience supports the stance that, modern post-industrial societies can support public higher education systems and provide access to growing numbers of students. In Australia, where there has been a United State style shift to the 'private good theory', the funding system is based on concept of a tax on the earnings of University graduates, as degree holders pay back the cost of their higher education over time, based on their earnings. Thus, there is less of an immediate burden on individuals and a higher degree of equity. In Nigeria, the

Table 1. University students' application and admission profile (5 year Session) in Nigeria.

Years	1990/1991	1991/1992	1992/1993	1993/1994	1994/1995
Number of Application	287, 575	398,270	337,950	430,681	512, 77
Number of Admitted	48,504	61,479	57,685	59,378	37,498
Excess	239,068	336,791	300,791	361,303	475,279

Source: World Bank, 1996.

subscription is to the 'public good' theory, which has been questioned and looked down upon by many, because of its ineffectiveness.

Today Nigeria is experiencing a critical manpower development problem, irrespective of the numbers of qualified candidates seeking admission into higher education, which is far greater than the numbers that can be effectively and efficiently accommodated. Empirically, the average figure of excess demand for University education which was 42% (1977) doubled itself to 84% by 1990 in Nigeria. In Kenya, only 21% of qualified secondary school graduates get University education (World Bank, 1996). The statistic shown in Table 1 gives the trend of access limitation in Nigeria.

The Figures in Table 1 show the difference between the numbers of those who put in for admission and those who actually get admitted to be less than the actual rate which is astronomically high. The question that is pertinent here is that, how are the differences in accessing higher education catered for? Or what opportunities exist for this large population of those who could not be accommodated yearly? JAMB (2000) and Audu (2003) established that the number of prospective students seeking admission into tertiary institution in Nigeria is projected to be about 1.2 million yearly. However, only about 20% of this number actually secures admission to such institutions private or public. Statistics are not available on the number of students who are frustrated to study outside the country and others whose reasons are far from the above. The academic reality of Nigeria today shows a sharp departure from the practice in the past when the children of the poor and the rich were given the opportunity to learn and compete for excellence without discrimination in a challenging academic environment. Based on the problems discussed above, this paper is designated to: 1. Observe the trend and outcome of Nigerian youths seeking higher education abroad. 2. Examine the motivation behind the rush for foreign education. 3. Investigate the disparity in employment between indigenous and foreign trained graduates. 4. Make policy recommendations on the basis of the findings.

METHODOLOGY

In order to access the current situation of unemployment and recruitment with respect to corporate establishment demand, a review of relevant literature was undertaken. Qualitative and

quantitative data were obtained using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The study population included two hundred postgraduate students, a hundred each from the universities of Benin and Ibadan. Also members of staff of five corporate organizations, employers of labour: Telecommunications, Banking industries, Nigerian Breweries and two manufacturing companies; a hundred and twenty in each establishment, six hundred in all. The respondents were randomly selected across various departments therein. The administration of questionnaires was on the basis of simple random sampling techniques in the two universities; care was taken to ensure that there was an equal representation of males and females. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted among the sampled respondents. A simple percentage Statistical analysis was employed as well as a content analysis of the in-depth interviews.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is presented thus:

Trend and outcome of Nigerian youths seeking higher education abroad

For the average Nigerian youth in school, the consciousness is very high, be it political, social and economic. The alarming unemployment rate in the country may have caused some psychological problem, real or imagined fear of not getting jobs after completion of studies. This becomes even worse when elder siblings at home are not gainfully employed, most especially after their first degree (Bachelor degree). This creates a scenario where younger ones immediately put in for a second degree programme (Postgraduate courses) to boost their chances over others in getting employment. This view was highlighted by over 70% of the respondents interviewed. As captured by one of the interviewees (University of Ibadan) thus:

"I was forced to put in for a postgraduate programme three years ago because of the strain and limited opportunity of getting a job or something to do. Notwithstanding, I also got to know that some Nigerian companies especially those branded as foreign or multinational, prefer postgraduate degree holders to first degree holders and in similar vein prefer those with a degree or two from any foreign universities over those that schooled within, irrespective of experience on the job. I wonder what the world today is becoming! (He concluded, with an exclamation)".

Table 2. Ratings by postgraduate students on the reasons for wanting to study in foreign universities.

Trend	Perception/Outcome	Yes**	No**	Total **
Attending foreign affiliated Universities	Not too good(Better than schooling within though less fancied)	164(82%)	36(18%)	200(10%)
Actually going abroad to school and finding a job back home	Very good (Easiest way of getting employment)	141(70.5%)	59(29.5%)	200(100%)
Universities and Polytechnics education in Nigeria	Poor (Difficulty/reduced chances of getting jobs)	178(89%)	22(11%)	200(100%)

** Percentages of data from the two universities: Ibadan and Benin
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2007.

Table 3. Showing the ratings based on the place a degree is acquired.

	Ratings (%)	Cadbury (%)	PZ (%)	Telecoms (%)	Breweries (%)	Banking (%)
Employees with foreign degree (Complete)	1	(56) 47	(53) 44	(68) 57	(36) 30	(31) 26
Locally trained employees with at least a foreign certificate	2	(28) 23	(35) 29	(19)16	(52) 43	(13) 11
Employees completely trained at home	3	(25) 21	(18) 15	(17) 14	(25) 21	(58)48
Polytechnic degree holders	4	(11) 9	(14) 12	(16) 13	(7) 6	(18)15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2007.

Another interviewee (student from University of Benin) noted that:

"While I am here schooling for a second degree, am still looking forward to study abroad to be able to secure a better job here in Nigeria. This, my elder siblings have come to realize and from their experiences I have been advised to start thinking of going abroad for another Master's degree after I must have completed this one".

From Table 2, it shows that most Nigerian students have lost hope in the educational sector as stated above: one hundred and seventy-eight of the two hundred sampled students (89%) agreed that the state of education in the country is 'poor'. Another 82% of the studied sample perceived affiliated foreign universities as 'not too good', though better than home institutions in securing jobs. And 70.5% of the respondents saw the need of going abroad to study as 'very good' because of the opportunity it creates in securing a job. Buttressing this figure, another student commented that:

"Though attending affiliated foreign universities at home is not too pleasant, compared to actually going abroad. It is still far better in terms of getting a job in today's Nigeria no matter the grade one obtains from a local university. I can use myself as an example, after making an Upper Second Class, I have not been able to secure a job while

others from such affiliated schools have been employed".

Demands for employees with foreign degrees by multinational companies (Cadbury and Patterson Zochonous (PZ), Telecommunications, Breweries and the Banking Sector)

In Cadbury, 20% of their top employees as against 32% in PZ industries were either trained at a top foreign university prior to their employment or thereafter. From the questionnaire administered to recruitment managers in the above companies, recruitment bias are shown in the Table 3.

Table 3 shows that of the five companies used for this study, three of them (Cadbury, PZ and one of the leading telecom companies in Nigeria) rated as highest, employees with foreign degrees are in this order, 57% (Telecom) 47% (Cadbury) and 44% (PZ). It was only in the Breweries that locally trained employees with at least a certificate obtained abroad was rated highest with 43%, while employees completely trained at home was rated top in the banking industry. Polytechnic degree holders were usually rated low. This discrimination against polytechnic degree holders has been observed by many scholars as the reason why Nigerian universities are usually over crowded (Falase, 2005; Obioha, 2006). These observations showed that the more technicalities

involved in the industry the more the companies will tend to rate foreign trained employees higher as shown from the telecoms to the banking sector.

A Human Resources Manager highlighted the argument behind their ratings in terms of preference enthuse:

“You see in Nigeria today employing responsible and hardworking staff is a problem in the recruitment process. Experiences have shown us that applicants with foreign degrees, either in full or in part, tend to do well, far better than home trained staff; even in ‘on-the-job’ and they cost less to be retrained. This has always been attributed to the Nigerian system of education, which place emphasis on theory rather than practical. Although there are exceptions, the question I ask myself is how many are they (the exceptional ones)”?

A bank manager in one of the banks in Nigeria has this to say:

“Pertaining to employment, especially in any financial institution, be it Banking or Insurance, where a lot of marketing activities and marketers are needed, we have realized that recruiting Nigerians who have been trained abroad, are far better, as they tend to know more influential people in the society based on their family background. What I am trying to say is that because training abroad involves a lot of money, so many wealthy parents find it easier to send their wards abroad for foreign degrees, either at First-degree level or at the Postgraduate level. Another preferred set of staff recruited are young graduates from Private Universities, they are also good at marketing because of their family and socio-economic background on one hand, and also they have high opportunities than graduates from public universities to study outside the country”.

On question relating to knowledge or degrees acquired by foreign degree holders, a recruitment consultant in the brewery illustrated that:

“In a globalizing world, irrespective of ones area of specialization, training and retraining are constantly going on in any industry especially after employing new staff. Foreign trained fully or partly, are always very easy to train and recruit; they adapt sharply to technical know-how, the only problem I have with Nigerians with these foreign certificates, is that they are at times very arrogant and their demands tend to be very high in terms of salary package”.

Corporate establishment demand as a quest for foreign education

Though over 40% of the employers interviewed disagreed that corporate establishment demand was the

motivation behind the quest for foreign education in Nigeria. Nevertheless the students in the interview sessions had a contrary view as captured from their comments (Employers and Students).

An employer said:

“It is to me a global trend seeing students going abroad to study in order to better their status and meet the global manpower need and not because of companies demand. Many of these students intention before going abroad, was to study and remain there to work; but the difficulties encountered overseas have pushed many back home without any option but to seek for employment where they have a stronger comparative advantage over others”.

The percentages from the administered questionnaires seeking the views of postgraduate students on the influence of self, parents or company’s demand to school abroad showed that contrary to the above, corporate establishment has a lot to do with going to school abroad. This, majority of the students (68%) acknowledged.

A postgraduate student commented:

“Most of us today are embarking on postgraduate studies because companies in the country give preference to applicants with foreign degrees above us with similar degrees obtained within. You see in most advertisement for job placement, it is usually stated that ‘Masters degree is an added advantage’ my experience in job interviews also shows that Masters degree are not only the same but those with Masters degree from foreign schools are preferred”.

A Part-time Postgraduate student working in Lagos said:

“The crazy rush for foreign studentship is based on the poor state of the Nigerian universities, colleges and polytechnics, which has effect on the products. If I have my way too I would also like to have a degree from a foreign University, as this is far becoming a routine in the country. The most disgusting truth is that the disparity in wages and salaries are just too wide. Imagine a locally trained Engineer earning ₦180, 000 as against ₦250, 000 for a foreign trained counterpart or those having certificate with a foreign logo/seal”.

The responses to the reasons for the motivation behind the rush to study abroad since the 1980s revealed that 61% of the total respondents were motivated to school abroad because of the job opportunities overseas, followed by the option of schooling and coming back home for employment 27%; and 12% of respondents saw it as a medium for migrating abroad. The scenario in the 1990s showed a new trend of motivation which saw schooling abroad and coming back home for employment

Table 4. Reasons why students are opting (Rushing) to study abroad since the 1980s.

Reasons	1980s** (%)	1990s** (%)	2000s** (%)
Migration Purposes	(24) 12	(56) 28	(34)17
Job opportunities overseas	(122) 61	(60) 30	(46)23
Schooling only and coming back home for employment	(54) 27	(84)42	(120)60
Total	200	200	200

**Data from the two Universities (Ibadan and Benin)
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2007.

Table 5. Education and certificate acquisition on the nations industries.

Industries	Fallen (%)	Risen (%)	NR*(%)	Total
Banking Industries	(78) 65	(18) 15	(24) 20	(120)100
Nigerian Breweries	(65) 54	(32) 27	(23) 19	(120) 100
Telecom Industries	(12) 10	(96) 80	(12) 10	(120) 100
Cadbury	(76) 63	(35) 29	(9) 8	(120) 100
PZ	(11) 9	(77) 64	(32) 27	(120) 100

*NR: Non response
Source Author's Field Survey, 2007.

ranking highest 42%; job opportunities abroad 30% as against migration 28%. Similarly the trend continued from the 1990s through to 2000s, with 60% of the respondents claiming that schooling and coming back home for employment is the highest behind the rush and option. This can be linked with the increasing industrialization and expansion taking place in Nigeria especially in the telecommunication and banking industries (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2001). The present trend shows a complete reversal of the situation twenty years ago in the 1980s, when the motivation was to find job opportunities abroad.

Education and certificate acquisition on the nation's industries

The placement of too much emphasis on academic qualifications, especially on Bachelor and Masters degree over polytechnic education which entails more of technical (practical) education over theory and which is also needed for technical development of the nation's labour and manpower call for concern. The effect of 'certificate education' from this study shows that acquisition of certificates rather than education has not help matters. Of the 600 (two hundred) respondents across the Banking industries, Nigerian Breweries and Telecommunications industries, the effect was recognized to have fallen in the Banking sector and in Nigerian Breweries as shown by Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents in the Banks and 54% in the Brewery as shown in Table 4.

Quoting a director in Nigerian Breweries; to buttress

this point, he claimed that:

"There is a decline, as many of these returnees are a bit lazy and find it difficult to cope with the prevailing economic, political and social atmosphere of the nation. The only advantage of such in any establishment is the status and symbol they give to the organization".

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents in the Banking Industries (65%); Nigerian Breweries (54%) and Cadbury (63%) had a view that education and certificate acquisition effect in the industries had fallen. However a contrary view was held by respondents in the Telecommunication industries (80%) and also in the PZ manufacturing company (64%) that the effect has actually risen. It is important as mentioned earlier that the telecommunication industry today in Nigeria have come up vibrantly in recent years precisely in 2001/2002 since the democratic regime of President Obasanjo, so also is the manufacturing companies finding their bearing gradually. Secondly, the industry is basically controlled by foreign multinational companies, like MTN, Vodafone and Multilinks-Telcom etc.

A manager in one of the nations leading telecommunication companies puts it this way:

"We can not fall short of employing staff that are properly trained, we seek the best hands, emphasize more on technicalities because of the huge amount of investments on ground, the competition from other rival companies; so therefore we have to make our staff world class. This situation no doubt has led us to recruiting many staff with

“foreign touch” I mean those who had their schooling/training outside Nigeria; in places like Germany, Ireland, Scotland, England etc. We also select some hard working staff at random for training abroad to sharpen their skills and knowledge in areas that they are deficient. Financial constraints sometimes do make us employ staff (Nigerians) with local qualifications over others abroad, especially in the technical departments or units dominated by foreign expatriates”.

A younger female manager in one of the newly merged banks concluded that

The Nigerian working environment is faced with incessant movement of workers from one company or industry to another within a short period of time. This like brain drain outside Nigeria is not palatable, reason basically is not far fetched as many companies do not help matters, as workers are either given too much targets for little salary and failure to meet these targets could easily result into dismissal or disengagement in the workplace. These situations have brought about the belief that it is better to work in an organization where one can easily make his or her money on time and venture into personal business. From my experience as someone who has worked in five banks within the space of 10 years and becoming a manager, this could not have been possible if I had remained with my first employer”.

On degree holders from foreign universities, she went further to say:

“It is a policy statement in our organization to get the best educated staff within Nigeria, but in practice those with degrees/certificates outside the shores of the nation are usually considered first because of the belief - that for them to have schooled abroad, they must have come from a relatively stable economic/influential family background. This serves as a major advantage to the industry, in sourcing for customers, investors etc. But the major problem is that these peculiar set of staff do not work for long, they are those we call great-movers because they are easily brain drained by other companies within and outside the shores of the country. To curb this, our organization like many others have developed a standing rule or order that such staff should sign a bond to work for nothing less than two years and at least a minimum of 3 - 6 months notice before disengaging. This though has not reduced the syndrome”.

The rush to free tuition institutions by Nigerian students

Transcripts acquisition in the two universities (Benin and Ibadan), have shown that over 10,000 (Ten thousand) graduates of these institutions apply for transcripts to institutions in the Nordic countries, of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland yearly. Many of these graduates are either employed or still searching for jobs.

Records from University of Benin Exams and Records office showed that of the 6,000 (Six thousand) requests for examination transcripts between October and December 2007, Four thousand eight hundred and twenty were addressed to Universities and Colleges in the Scandinavian bloc, while One thousand, one hundred and eighty were address to other universities in Western Europe and America. A similar situation was also observed with the University of Ibadan: of the five thousand two hundred requests, two thousand five hundred were dispatched to countries of the Nordic while others are either to the United State, Canada or United Kingdom. The rush to Sweden and other countries of the Nordic is basically attributed to free tuition, lower cost of living and the easier immigration (Visa procurement) processes involved compared to the US and UK. This over 80% unanimously agreed as the reason for choosing some of these countries and institutions for study.

From the courses, these intending students seek to do, the observations showed clearly that many are not really bothered about the courses but the admission, so as to relocate to Europe, using the Scandinavian countries as transit. Immediately they get the admission or after the completion of their programmes they are either faced with the options of returning home for better jobs or to relocate permanently to other countries in Europe or America.

An interviewee (a male applicant/a Postgraduate student) captured this:

“My intention is to travel abroad first and foremost and not really to study and if by chance I eventually decide to study....., (which will only take the grace of God). I need to work to cover up for the wasted years. Imagine after two years of graduating with a Second Class Honours I have not been able to secure a job, for this reason alone, I need to follow the trend by doing what other students are doing, using education as a means of leaving the shores of country. This year alone I have applied to about eight schools in Sweden, Finland and other part of Europe and I am hoping at least to get an admission before I complete my postgraduate programme here in Nigeria”.

When asked about the course/subject of study, his comment was:

“I chose Electronic Philosophy and Science though it is not related; as one would have thought I would have gone for related Engineering sub field. But the competition I guess will be lesser in this field. This will increase my chances in the admission process. I am not really interested in the course but the opportunity to leave”.

Recommendations and Conclusion

University autonomy and academic freedom as solution to the problems of education in Nigeria

The major greatest bane of the Nigerian educational and

University system is under-funding by the major stakeholders, from various governments since the military era to present civilian regime. Funding of programmes, research and staff adequately will definitely solve a large proportion of the problems over which individuals, students and companies have little or no control. There is no reason why a University, State or Private should seek to offer courses across all disciplines in the face of limited funding. The desirable and sensible thing to do is to specialize, so that all available resources could be channelled into making the university and educational sector a viable and productive venture to corporate organizations. Finance is an important factor that determines the quality of education output. How adequate the incentives a country offers its teaching staff, goes a long way to ensure quality education. Quality of teaching is another important aspect of quality education, if teachers examine memorization, then students learn to memorize; whereas if teachers examine creativity students will work towards creativity/innovation. And also quality of teachers, the curriculum, infrastructure and the environment in which students learn must not be held with levity.

The time has come for Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and other educational associations or groups to begin to nudge Universities to maximize their strength and resources through specialization. Specialization would allow Universities to offer programmes which meet requisite academic standards; it would enable them contribute more meaningfully to the overall development of the nations manpower. The commission and private organizations, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Media interested in education should begin to fashion modalities for rating universities according to various criteria. This will spur competition within the University system and give corporate establishments and employers of labour generally, parents and students a means to make informed choices as to which institution will best meet their expectations. Employers too would be compelled to stop the discrimination among products of/from Nigerian educational institutions as standard and quality would have been improved upon, with these measures in place.

In this regard, licensing of new Universities should be encouraged until there is equilibrium in supply and demand. The Nigerian University Commission should be uncompromising in its oversight responsibilities; it should continue to weed out Universities established for prestige and political purposes and which are unable to maintain academic standards. It is also important here to make mention that those entrusted with the management and administration of the Nigerian academic system and indeed the Nigerian people to make Technical and Business education compulsory courses in the country. This will equip the Nigerian graduates to face the challenges of venturing into businesses after graduation.

This will go a long way to enlighten Nigerian graduates on business and economic matters, and in reducing the poverty level among Nigerian graduates. If all these are put in place the nation would have gone a step further in building national and international confidence in the education and university system, as well as eliminating the discrimination on employment based on foreign degrees. Parents are not left out, they have a crucial role to play in re-socialising their wards on courses to be studied abroad if need be, and then a total reformation of the Nigerian educational system would have been achieved.

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