

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

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Abstract

It is a fact that there are over 250 higher educational institutions in Nigeria and none is among the top-100-ranked in the world. This paper seeks to discover the strategies and who would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization. All the 284 higher educational institutions in Nigeria are the population and 10.56% (30) randomly selected from the six-geographical-zones and Abuja is the sample. Document analysis, literature review, validated researchers- developed questionnaire that was reliability tested, two research questions and two hypotheses were applied. Of the 6000 copies of questionnaire administered to the randomly selected university and non-university higher education staff of 30 sampled institutions, 91.32% (5479) were retrieved within a fortnight. Eight strategies, fourteen enhancers and no significant differences between staff were found. The study therefore concludes that strategies and those to enhance them are very vital for a progressive approach to internationalization of higher education in Nigeria hence, recommends diligent implementation of the identified strategies and adequate supports for those to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Keywords: Higher Education, Internationalization, Strategy, Personalities, Implementation.

It is an indisputable fact that education plays a very significant role in the overall development of an individual. And correctly speaking, it is these individuals that make up communities which eventually form the societies. Thus the integration of individual development is made possible through education which enhances the diversified interaction of persons and ideas in the general society that culminate into national development. As it is often said that a tree cannot make a forest and no one individual operates as an Island, so no one nation can operate individually/singly alone. Nigeria is a nation in the world of many nations. Furthermore, in Nigeria, education is generally accepted as an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development and it is leveled. In other words, there are three levels of education in Nigeria namely, the primary, the secondary and the tertiary or higher. Of these three, tertiary education is at the apex and the most contributor to national development through high level relevant manpower training. This paper therefore focuses on higher education in Nigeria as a progressive approach to internationalization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Discover the strategies that would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

2. Identify the personalities that would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Research Questions

The research questions to be answered by this study are the followings:

1. What strategies would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization?
2. Who should enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested by this study are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the university and non university higher education institutional teaching staff's evaluations of the strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between the university and non university higher education institution teaching staff's evaluation of the personalities to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be of great significance to many educational stakeholders. Firstly, all the tiers of government would find the outcome of this study very useful especially in the area of globalization that will enhance socio-economic development. Secondly, entrepreneurs, multinational corporations and firms would apply the outcome of this study as an equipment for investment and support that would enhance their spread, enlargement and profitability. On the other hand, higher education administrators and managers would be encouraged by the outcome of this study to be emulous in the effective and efficient performance of their functions. Higher education policy formulators would be equipped by the results of this study with factors to enhance policy decision making for higher educational goals achievement. Another group is the educational or academic scholars and researchers who would apply the outcome of this study for further research, especially in the area of literature review. Also, students desiring to further their educational pursuit may find this study useful in career choices and higher educational institutions to apply for admission and connectivity.

Related Literature Review

The review of related literature of the study entitled Higher Education in Nigeria: A progressive approach to internationalization shall be presented under the following subheadings: theoretical framework, education in Nigeria; higher education in Nigeria; higher education in Nigeria and internationalization; strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization and personalities to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Getzeds & Guba classical social process theory that was propounded in 1967 according to Kpee (2015). It states that there are different subsystems in a social system operating independently but together work to achieve the set goals of an organization.

Applicably, the goals of higher education in Nigeria cannot be achieved without the various institutions of the education sector and levels operating appropriately independently, but very cooperatively together. Thus higher education in Nigeria requires a progressive approach to internationalization by ensuring the independent working of all the subsystems collectively using the available human and material resources effectively.

Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, education is seen and generally accepted as an industry. Thus industry is where inputs in various forms are processed to produce outputs. To this end, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) clearly specifies the different types and levels of education as well as the philosophy and goals. Apart from giving in details how their objectives and goals shall be pursued, it goes further to comprehensively spell out the curriculum, funding, staffing, administration, supervision as well as planning. Perhaps this accounts for the reason why education in Nigeria receives the most active patronage and participation by all tiers of government, non-governmental organizations, communities, corporate bodies and firms, individuals and groups as well as churches and their societies.

Higher Education in Nigeria

Higher or tertiary education in Nigeria is the final or third level of education after (i) primary education and (ii) secondary education. Section 8 (59) of the national policy on education, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) specifically states that the goals of tertiary education shall be to:

- a. contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- b. develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- c. develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- d. acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- e. promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- f. forge and cement national unity; and
- g. promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Sections 60-63 of the same policy clearly outline

- i. how tertiary educational institutions shall pursue the above stated seven goals (section 60).
- ii. the qualifications required from the teachers of tertiary educational institutions (section 61).
- iii. the funding of tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria (section 62).
- iv. the internal organization and administration of tertiary educational institutions specifying traditional areas of academic freedom and governments respect thereof.

Although tertiary or higher education in Nigeria is categorized into:

- a. University education (sec. 64-69)
- b. Teacher education (sec. 70-79)
- c. Technology (Polytechnic & Monotechnic) education (sec. 80-87) each of these three categories have their specific goals and how to pursue them which are not in conflict or in confusion with those stated previously under higher/tertiary education in Nigeria.

Higher Education in Nigeria and Internationalization

Higher education in Nigeria is the education given to desiring students after their successful completion of the secondary education. It is also called tertiary education and it is normally pursued in Universities, Colleges of education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and other approved institutions offering correspondence courses. There are over 284 tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, Williams (2012) JAMB (2015). These institutions are variously described: Public Institutions, Private institutions, State owned Institutions, Federal Institutions, Conventional Universities, Faith based Higher Educational Institutions etc. It is a fact that Nigeria is well known internationally. Firstly, it is widely regarded as the giant of Africa, Adesoji (2016) and secondly, as the most populous black country of the world, Rewane (2015) as well as a very leading member of the organization of petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) of the world, Nwabueze (2010).

Despite all the above, none of the higher educational institutions in Nigeria is listed amongst (a) the top-ten in Africa, (Africa University Ranking, 2017), (b) the Top-200 universities in the world, (World University Ranking 2017); but only the number 601st in the world, (Times Higher Education, 2016). The above apparent lamentable ranking positions occupied by Nigerian higher educational institutions globally, demand proper discovery of strategies and personalities to enhance internationalization.

Strategies to Enhance Higher Education in Nigeria for Internationalization

Generally speaking, a strategy is a planned series of actions to achieve something. Additionally, Freeman (2010), Egbo (2011) and Meenyinikor (2013) included the points that the planned series of actions and activities have to be articulated for the effective and efficient achievement of the predetermined objectives. For the case of higher education in Nigeria, this implies that there should be the absence of ownership competition even in the funding requirements.

There should be collaboration in funding by the stakeholders according to Ajianmagbon (2007), Okowa (2011) and Ogbonnanya (2012). State-of-the-art facilities that are of the world best standards are also essential enhancers according to Okebakola (2006) and Agabi of Uche (2006). The views of Ajienka (2012) and Aknegwu (2013) are that the human resources of the institutions have to be spread between nations or countries. To these views, Adeyemi (2005) and Meenyinikor, Asor & Johnson (2016) added the fact that regenerating or continuous training or retraining of these human resources is a panacea. Thus, Sokan (2006), Okecha (2007) and very recently, Asor (2017) concluded that these planned series of actions and activities would strengthen the organizations or institutions by technology upgrades, improvement in operations, process designs, etc to allow them attain their vision, mission and goals and also sustain them.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. This is due to the fact that the information needed was in existence in the various tertiary educational institutions and required no further requirement to obtain them. The target population consists of all the 284 higher educational institutions in Nigeria according to JAMB (2012) while 30 (10.56%) were randomly selected to cover the six-geopolitical-zones and Abuja. Researchers developed questionnaire that was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation from University of Port Harcourt was the instrument used to collect data. Also, the instrument was tested to have a very high reliability using the test-retest reliability technique. The respondents were 100 from each university

and 100 from each non-university (Teacher and Technology Education), that is, 200 teaching staff from the 30 sampled institutions, thus making a total of 6000. Within a fortnight, 5479 (91.32%) consisting of 2806 and 2673 university and non-university teaching staff respectively were retrieved for collation and sorting in readiness to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the study.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1

What strategies would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization?

Table 1: Strategies to Enhance Higher Education in Nigeria for Internationalization

S/N	Strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization	3000 University			3000 Non-University			6000 TOTAL			Remarks
		f	%	Ranking	f	%	Ranking	f	%	Ranking	
1	Absenteeism of ownership competition	254	86	1	2768	92	1	5342	89	1 st	All accepted for scoring above 50%
2	Stakeholders collaborative funding.	2020	67	5	1820	61	6	3840	64	6 th	
3	Global mode of students admission.	2309	77	3	2191	73	3	4500	75	3 rd	
4	40:60% internationalization to national human resources ratio	2167	72	4	2153	72	5	4320	72	4 th	
5	Principal officers international recruitment process.	2490	83	2	2369	79	2	4859	81	2 nd	
6	Globalization of exchange programmes and linkage.	1926	64	6	1672	56	7	3598	60	7 th	
7	Staff and students avoidance of local & international politics.	1821	61	8	1603	53	8	3424	57	8 th	
8	Provision of works-class of state-of-the-arts facilities/methodologies.	1898	63	7	2185	73	4	4083	68	5 th	

Table 1 shows that there are 8 strategies that would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization. Apart from individually specifying the strategy, it goes further to indicate the frequency (f), the percentage evaluation (%) as well as the ranking for the university and the non-university staff. Thus the strategy with the serial number 1, Absenteeism of ownership competition with a total frequency of 5342, 89% evaluation score and ranked 1st while the strategy with serial number 8 provision of world-class and state-of-the-Arts facilities/methodologies, has a frequency 4083, 68% evaluation score and is ranked the 5th.

Research Questions 2

Who would enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization?

Table 2: Those to Enhance Higher Education in Nigeria for Internationalization

S/ N	Those to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization	University staff N=3000			Non-University staff N=3000			TOTAL N=6000			Remarks
		f	%	Ranking	f	%	Ranking	f	%	Ranking	
1	Owners of high educational institutions	2740	91	2	2672	89	1	5412	90	2	All accepted for scoring above 50% Except numbers 8,9, and 11
2	Students	2669	89	4	2646	88	4	5315	89	3	
3	Staff	2712	90	3	2455	82	6	5167	86	5	
4	Media personnel	2500	83	6	2121	71	8	4621	77	8	
5	Alumni	2621	87	5	2599	87	5	5220	87	4	
6	All tiers of government	2758	92	1	2670	89	2	5428	91	1	
7	Government functionalists & civil servants	2584	80	8	2649	88	3	5033	84	6	
8	Religious leaders & followers	1493	50	13	616	21	13	2109	35	13	
9	Traditional leaders and subjects.	1451	48	14	473	16	14	1924	32	14	
10	Parents and guardians and siblings	2445	81	7	2308	77	7	4746	79	7	
11	Foreigners and expatriates	1607	54	12	1153	38	12	2760	46	12	
12	Host communities and members.	2340	78	19	1927	64	9	4267	71	9	
13	None governmental organizations.	1666	56	11	1700	57	11	3366	56	11	
14	Philanthropists & entrepreneurs	2064	69	10	1836	61	10	3900	62	10	

Table 2 supplies the particulars to answer research question2. Specifically, it gives the names of those to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization. Serially, Number 1: Owners of Higher Education Institutions has a frequency of 2740, scored 91% and is ranked 2nd by the University Staff while the Non-University Staff frequency is 2672 evaluative score of 89% and is ranked 1st. On the whole, the total frequency for serial number 1 is 5412, scored 90% and is ranked 2nd. Similar explanations follow till serial number 14; Philanthropists & Entrepreneurs having frequency of 2064, scored of 69% and ranked 10th for the University Staff; frequency of 1836, score of 61% and also ranked 10th for the Non-university Staff and total frequency of 3900, score of 62% and also ranked 10th by the study. Thus there are 14 personalities to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis H₀1:

There is no significant relationship between the university and non university higher education institutional teaching staff’s evaluations of the strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Table 3: Particulars for Testing Hypothesis H₀1

Higher education teaching staff	α alpha	df	\sum Scores	\sum squares	\sum product	Calculated		Critical/Table	
University	0.05	14	573	41673					
Non university			558	40030	40691	0.8650	0.497	H ₀ .1 accepted	Not

Table 3 supplies the particulars for testing hypothesis number H₀.1. Specifically it shows that at 0.05 significant level of sconfidence with 14 degree of freedom, the Pearson’s product moment coefficient of correlation (r) of 0.8650 calculated is greater than the critical/table value of 0.497. Therefore the stated hypothesis H₀1 is not accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the university and the non university higher education institutional teaching staff’s evaluation of the strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Hypothesis H₀2:

There is no significant relationship between the university and non university higher education institution teaching staff’s evaluation of the personalities to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Table 4: Particulars for Testing Hypothesis H₀2

Higher education teaching staff	\sum Scores	\sum squares	\sum product	α	df	<i>r</i>		Remarks
						Calculated	Critical	
University	1043	81351	74 216	0.050	26			
Non university	928	69800				0.924	0.374	H ₀ .2 Not accepted

Table 4: contains the particulars for testing hypothesis H₀2. Summarily, it shows that at 0.050 alpha level of significance with 26 degree of freedom, the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation (r) calculated as 0.924 is greater than the critical table/book value of 0.374. Therefore the stated hypothesis H₀2 is not accepted. Thus the conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between the university and non university higher education institutional teaching staff’s evaluations of the personalities to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization.

Discussion of Findings

The study discovered eight strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization. The high percentage scores of these strategies from the evaluation of the higher education institutional teaching staff are indicative of the concern and need for internationalization. This supports the fact that African university ranking (2017) and World University ranking (2016) revealed that no higher educational institution in Nigeria is in their top-ten and top-600 rankings respectively. The highest evaluation of 89% to the absenteeism of ownership competition as a strategy

supports the internal wrangling between federal, state and private ownership of higher educational institutions that affects funding Okowa (2011), Ogbonnanya (2012) and the provision and supplies of other facilities and logistics, Okebukola (2006) and Agabi & Uche (2006). The study cited the second highest score of 81% for principal officers international recruitment process which supports the recommendation and points of view of Meenyinikor (2013), Okeocha (2007) Adeyemi (2005) and Sokan (2006) regarding human capital regeneration. On the whole, the strategies agree with the philosophy and goals of higher education in Nigeria as shown in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001, 2004 & 2015).

Conclusion

Unarguably, higher or tertiary education is the highest form of education all over the world. In Nigeria, it is categorized into university education, teacher education and technology education. This implies that it is the most vulnerable level of education that has the capacity and capability for generating the connectivity and generality necessary for local, national and international relations and recognitions. To this effect, it is paramount not only to draw strategies but also to specify the appropriate personnel for such requirements. Therefore, the identification of strategies as well as the specification of those to enhance their effective implementation are very vital as a progressive approach for internationalization of higher education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. There should be diligent implementation of the identified strategies to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization by the appropriate stakeholders especially the owners of higher educational institutions and all the tiers of government, there universities, agencies and parastatals.
2. Adequate supports in various forms should be given those to enhance higher education in Nigeria for internationalization especially in the areas of policy formulation, financial contributions and other forms of logistics and physical material.
3. Special facts and information concerning the comprehensive classification of staff, students and Alumni as well as outstanding contributions from the higher educational institutions should be published on annual convocations days for local, national and international consumption.
4. All forms of local media and publications should be adopted to promote the positive image of higher educational institutions locally, nationally and internationally by media personnel within and outside their institutions.

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