

## Scaling-up the Management of Higher Education for Sustainable National Development

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the effective ways of scaling-up the management of higher education for sustainable national development. The paper listed some of the major challenges that hinder scaling-up management of higher education institutions in Nigeria for national development and also proffers solution to the above problems. The task of achieving sustainable development at national or global levels hinged on a thoroughly planned programmes of education. In order to achieve sustainable development locally and internationally, the adoption of education that transcended the propagating and dissemination of information, knowledge, skills, and values at all levels of education was advocated. Higher education is confronted with formidable challenges, which needs scaling-up the management of higher education to achieve the robotic goals and objectives of the nations as contained in the National Policy on Education. The paper therefore recommended that government should ensure the reform of curriculum from time to time in order to adapt to the global changes for sustainable national development, among others.*

**Keywords:** Scaling-up, Management, Education, National and Development.

### **Introduction**

The term scaling-up is used to describe a wide-range of processes for increasing impact, which are in a variety of ways (Menter, 2004). The inability to scale-up existing knowledge has been discussed by a range of scholars, researchers, education stakeholders and policy makers as a major barrier to overcoming many of the effective management of education problems. Scaling-up implies providing a greater distribution of benefits over a wider range of beneficiaries, it can also be seen to increase equity and

fairness (Gonsalves, 2001). The ability to scale-up successfully and sustainably is said to be an efficient and cost-effective way to increase development impact while promoting effectiveness (Hartmann and Linn, 2008, Fleisch, 2008). To achieve development goals such as in Higher education is crucial to the future of a nation. The nation's ability to prosper and thrive in an increasingly knowledge-based global society and economy largely depends on the country having a progressively well-educated population. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) identified the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria, to include among others to contribute to national development through the training and production of high level manpower, and to develop in their student's proper values, attitude, skills, knowledge and competencies which will make them self-reliant and patriotic citizens – who will contribute significantly to the national development and progress of their society.

In a complex, developing country like Nigeria with diverse ethnic and religious groups, higher education is also expected to foster national unity, interaction and understanding (Nwagwu, 2006). With globalization and information technology, tertiary institutions have the added responsibility of fostering international education, harmony, peace and cooperation among students which will strengthen national development. Tertiary institutions try to achieve the above lofty goals and objectives through teaching, research and community services. How well they have succeeded in their mission and goal attainment for a sustainable national development is the concern of this paper as well as proffering solution for way forward.

It appears that poor educational attainment has become the greatest barrier to self-actualization and economic transformation in Nigeria. Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) stated that it has become clear that graduates of tertiary institutions are often not suitably qualified to fill available vacancies or contribute effectively to national development.

Nigeria has continued to deal with the current poor economic conditions accentuated by losses of jobs, unemployment and a general recession that has affected most nations of the world. For instance more than half of Nigeria (54.4% or 76 million people) live in poverty, twice the rate in 1980 (United National Development Programme (UNDP), 2009) and earns less than \$2 a day. In response to the global call as provided in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Federal Government, in collaboration with relevant partners, has begun the process of delivering direct interventions to the poor and vulnerable through vocational training, skill acquisition and empowerment programmes.

As positive impact to self-reliance and reducing of poverty among youths, the quality of instruction at all levels, especially in the University must be oriented and tailored to inculcate the value and acquisition of competencies. There is need to adopt more effective governance structures and to make the appropriate strategic choices that will allow the school to better cope with competitive pressures. Schools that globalize successfully and offer innovative programmes will strengthen their competitive position while schools that successfully leverage their investment in information and communication technologies could overcome brain drain and reach a larger number of students more effectively and efficiently (Hawawini, 2005).

### **Educational Management and Sustainable National Development**

Scaling-up, educational management is a comprehensive effort dealing with the educational practices. It deals with educational institutions – right from primary schools and colleges. It is concerned with both human and material resources while sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends. Sustainable development is described by the World Commission on Environment and Development as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Umoh, 2006).

This paper proffers scaling-up the challenges in management of higher education and sustaining national development in Nigeria, and is organized under the following sub-headings. Scaling-up higher education management and financing, Scaling-up the potential and the challenges of technology, Scaling-up deals with achieving greater efficiency in our educational management, Scaling-up qualitative evaluation, Scaling-up curricula with softer skills, Scaling-up brain drain to brain gain, Scaling-up entrepreneurship education.

### **Scaling-up of Higher education management through adequate financing**

The idea that education financing is tied to the scaling up education has been met with mixed feelings. However, of all the militating factors against effective management of higher education, none is more excruciating than the poor financing and inappropriate utilization of the available meagre resources amidst competing demands within the system (Okebukola, 2003). Resourcing as a concept of Education administration and planning according to Okunamiri (2002) is one of the major academic revolutions in recent times in most countries especially the developing countries of the Third world. According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006), the economic growth in Nigeria is no longer enough to fund, access, equity and quality management in education generally. The consequential neglect of human resources buildings, laboratory equipment, library and supplies has, therefore, become a source of concern for top decision makers in Nigeria in that both federal and state tertiary schools have suffered from inadequate funding for the past and present regimes in Nigeria. Though they both have received some form of direct or indirect government support to compliment income from tuition, while private institutions rely on revenue from programmed fees to fund the schools' activities. Lack of adequate funding of higher education by government calls for the attention of all and sundry to save the university from imminent collapse. While more universities continue to spring up every year, the existing ones keep struggling to survive, due to incessant industrial action by staff, unions pressing for adequate funding for sustainable development as well as better conditions of service to the nation. Inadequate funding of higher education and ineffective management of tertiary institutions have generally created uncondusive working environment for both staff and students in Nigeria. It is obvious in Nigeria, that government is seeking to reduce her inadequate support to education thereby encouraging institutions to look for alternative sources of funds (Adedeji and Bamidele, 2003). Technology Education Trust Fund (TETFUND was established as an intervention agency under the TETFUND Act of 2011. It was charged with the responsibility of managing, disbursing and monitoring education tax to government-owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria. TETFUND scheme was formed as a product of

Education Tax Act of 1993 and was established in 2011. As a result of poor funding of government owned universities. The scheme was designed to improve the managements of funds disbursed to these institutions for effective management.

The management and financing of higher education require the development of appropriate planning and policy analysis capacities and strategies, based on partnership established among higher education institutions, state and national planning and coordination bodies, so as to secure appropriately streamlined management and the cost-effective use of resources. Higher education institution should adopt forward-looking management practice that respond to the needs of their environment. Management in higher education must be responsive, competent and able to evaluate regularly, by internal and external mechanisms, the effectiveness of procedures and administrative rules, higher education institutions must be given autonomy to manage their internal affairs, but with the autonomy they must be transparent, prudent and accountability to the government, parliament, students and others.

The ultimate goal of management should be to enhance the institutional mission by ensuring high quality teaching, training and research and services to the students as well as lecturers. This objective requires governance that acts as a catalyst for bringing positive change in the nation. This would also serve as a vehicle for sustainability.

### **Scaling-up the Potential and the Challenges of Technology**

The rapid Breakthroughs in new information and communication technologies will further change the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. It is also important to note that the new technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning (Mintzberg, 2004). Higher education institutions should lead in drawing on the advantages and potentials of new information and communication technologies, ensuring quality maintaining high standard for education practices and outcome in a spirit of openness, equity and international cooperation by engaging in networks, technological transfer, capacity building, developing teaching materials and sharing experience of their application in lecturing, training and research, making knowledge accessible to students. This leads to producing sound graduates who have acquired knowledge and skills for innovations and attainment of sustainable development of the nation.

It should be borne in mind that new information technology does not reduce the need for lecturers but changes their role in relation to learning process and that the continuous dialogue that converts information into knowledge and understanding becomes fundamental (Hawawini, 2005). Technology is part of solution in attaining sustainable development in Nigeria.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) allows education to reach a significantly larger number of students around the world and satisfy the surging demand for education, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. ICT will also provide the opportunity for schools to respond to the new needs of the society. The emerging consensus of researchers (Bouchikhi and Kimberly, 2010; Mair, 2012); Pfeffer and Fong, 2013) is that these subjects can be taught and that schools should teach them. Hence societal issues should be incorporated into the education curriculum so that our graduates should be acquainted with the societal problems so as they will seek solutions to them in order to enhance the national development.

### **Brain Drain to Brain Gain**

In the recent past, brain drain has remained one major problem of Nigerian Universities that is linked to poor funding and conditions of service. One of the main sources of funding Nigerian Universities, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) manage, disburses and monitor funds meant for government owned institutions though the funding for education generally has not been commensurate with the demand of the education sector. Reportedly, the percentage of Federal budgetary allocation to the education subsector has been dwindling. Documentary evidence indicates that it was 10.0% in 2012, 8.70% in 2013, 10.6% in 2014, 9.5% in 2015, 6.09% in 2016 and 6.14% in 2017 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2017).

This shows a clear negligence from the federal government on education. The 2017 Federal Government budget is about N7.298 trillion, a total of about N485b has been allocated to education. Out of this, only N50b will be spent on capital projects such as facilities and other very important projects that can bring about development of education, and the rest on recurrent expenditures. In the 2017 national budget, approximately 0.182% of our GDP was spent on education, compared to Norway and Ireland who according to the United Nations Human Development Report in Education Index spent 6.6% and 6.2% of their GDP on education respectively. The question is, how can a country that spends bulk of its money on paying salaries rather than improving its standards and human capacity grow?

The repercussions of the aforementioned poor funding indices are industrial disputes and union rivalries in the Nigerian University system. In recent time, failure of government and the academic staff union to reach agreement on issues of funding has culminated into series of strikes on campuses of Nigerian Universities. This situation coupled with poor remuneration packages and other shortcomings in the system exacerbates the mass exodus (brain drain) of experience academics to countries with better working conditions. The impact of brain-drain on the Nigerian university system has led to: Reduction of quality skilled manpower in Nigerian universities, It has increased the level of dependence on foreign assistance by Nigerian universities, It raises the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the receiving country and conversely reduces the (GDP) of the releasing country and it retards the technological advancement of the releasing country. These challenges has adversely affected the national development and the only way forward is to reverse the brain drain to brain gain through: Improving funding, by encouraging universities to charge reasonable and affordable tuition fees. The federal and state governments should increase budgetary allocation to the education sub-sector. Improve staff conditions of service to conform to what is obtainable in developed nations, Encourage foreign linkages with Nigerian Universities especially in the area of research, There should be deliberate efforts by government to attract the return of skilled university migrants and other professionals to their countries of origin. Where this option fails, the diaspora option or 'virtual participation approach' should be employed by encouraging highly skilled brains to contribute their skills and experience to the development of their home countries without necessarily relocating to their home countries. At present there are about 41 expatriate – knowledge networks in the world, with the explicit purpose of interconnecting the expatriates themselves and with their countries of origin, 6 of which are linked to countries in Africa (Barka, 2000).

Okojie (2014) said that for the educational system in Nigeria to contribute meaningful towards sustainable development in the contexts of the globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century world, reform of the curriculum must be ensured so as to produce graduates who can address global issues as it is imperative in ensuring sustainable development.

The various foreign governments represented in Nigeria should be prevailed upon to realize that investment in the development of academic infrastructure would enhance the overall growth and national development of Nigeria with a big market capable of absorbing and trading in goods produced by our foreign trade partners, as well as having an enabling environment for foreign investment.

### **Scaling-up Qualitative Evaluation**

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional concept which will embrace all its functions: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarships, staffing, students, building, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. Qualitative evaluation is vital for enhancing quality higher education. Quality also requires that higher education should be characterised by the international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of lecturers and students and the international research project in enhancing sustainable development of a nation. To attain and sustain national development, certain components are particularly relevant, notably, careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programmes for academic staff development, including teaching/learning, methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as students' mobility within and between countries. It is worth of note that the development of any nation is predicated on the education of its citizenry. So, education is the key to development.

### **Scaling-up Curricula with Softer Skills**

Education is designed to impart a large dose of quantitative skills and techniques in students; which increasingly demand so called softer skills of two types (Hawawini, 2004); behavioural and societal. Behavioural skills include the ability to work with others, to communicate effectively, to display multicultural awareness, and to exhibit some entrepreneurial and leadership qualities (Mair, 2012). In general, these skills have been fairly well integrated into the curriculum of most schools. The term 'Societal Skills' for more "Societal Values" refers to the ability to make decisions that are ethical and which take into account corporate social responsibility and sustainable development (Pfeffer and Fong, 2003).

The challenges posed, particularly on ethical dimension are: Can these values be taught? Should schools teach them? Which level of education should teach them? If the answers to these questions are positive, then how should they be taught and how much time should be devoted to them? Hence societal issues should be incorporated into the education curriculum; so that our graduates should be acquainted with the societal problems so that, they will seek solutions to them in order to enhance the national development.

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

There has been widespread recognition that entrepreneurship is the engine that drives the economy of most nations. This has resulted in a growing interest in the

development of educational programmes that encourages entrepreneurship (Gorman, Hanlon and King, 1997). Perhaps the younger generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century is becoming the most entrepreneurial generation due to the fact that most major economies of the world are in recession and entrepreneurs are more valued and appreciated during economic depression when efforts are made to find solutions to recession, inflation and mass poverty. Nigerian university education is currently at crossroads regarding the production of adequate and competent individuals who will effectively compete in the global market place. It appears that the products of the university who are youths and future of the nation are not sufficiently trained on how to 'create or make a job' but towards 'taking a job.' This accounted for the high unemployment rate among graduates.

Alaezi (2009) stated that Nigeria has about 100 universities which produce 200,000 graduates yearly but 75% of its graduates are either unemployed or underemployed, while Nebo (2007) stated that the Nigerian youth lacked the requisite skills and empowerment that will enhance self-employment and advancement. As positive treatment and solution to this issue there is need to reposition, redirect and focus our youths on entrepreneurship education. Many of our small industries and businesses like gas, limestone, bitumen, etc, are yet to be tapped due to lack of right entrepreneurial acumen by our unemployed young graduates (Alaezi, 2009). There is need to sufficiently raise the level of awareness of our youths, train and mentor them with entrepreneurial mindset. This can be achieved through the process of education which requires adequate planning and effective management at the tertiary level.

The Federal Government of Nigeria had in 2006 directed all higher education institutions in the country to include Entrepreneurship Education (EED) as a compulsory course for all students with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. It is hoped that the new curriculum which aimed at value re-orientation, poverty eradication, critical thinking, entrepreneurial and life skills will correct the defects in the former curriculum which was lacking in the areas of human capacity development (Ikeme, 2007). Hence there is need to encourage innovations through entrepreneurship for attainment of economic and national development.

The solution for effective scaling-up the management of higher education for sustainable national development among others include; to reposition, redirect and focus on youths on entrepreneurship education; to sufficiently raise funds in education sectors; to direct all higher institutions to include entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course; to incorporate societal issues into the education curriculum as well as to invest in the development of academic infrastructure for growth and national development.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has tried to review most challenges facing scaling-up in effective management of education in higher education and made some suggestions on how to solve these challenges in order to innovate, reform and scale-up some of the issues for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made on the study:

1. Government should adequately fund higher education for effective management so as to enhance the knowledge and skills of the graduates who, will man the technology of the nation for national development.
2. Government should establish more ICT centres especially in rural areas, as there are lots of benefits associated with it in the society. It provides the opportunity for schools to respond to the new needs of the society.
3. Government should ensure that reforms of curriculum must be carried out from time to time to enable higher education institutions produce graduates who can address the global issues for ensuring sustainable national development.
4. Government should develop strategies to convert the brain-drain to brain-gain through collaboration and partnership with their citizens, in order to enable them contribute to national development of their countries and in diaspora.
5. Entrepreneurship education programme should be faculty based and coordinated by the centre. Only lecturers and staff within the relevant training and skills should be allowed to teach in this scheme. This will give students more opportunity for more practicals in the skills they have acquired.

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