

Managing University Education for National Transformation in Nigeria

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Abstract

University education is paramount for economic and social development. Therefore, it is an important tool for national transformation. The paper examined educational transformation within the context of the present Federal Government of Nigeria's Transformation agenda over viewing its educational planning implications. Conclusively the paper recommended a re-examination of students' admission processes and establishment of criteria in the appointment of critically necessary staff in Nigerian universities.

Introduction

Education contributes to the growth of national income and individual earnings. While land was the main source of wealth and income in agricultural societies, capital and machinery became important in industrial societies. In today's information societies, knowledge drives economic growth and development. Higher education is the main source of that knowledge-its production, dissemination and its absorption by any society (Varghese, 2007). University education plays a crucial role in generating new ideas, and in accumulating and transmitting knowledge. According to Hallak and Poisson (2007), the global market for higher education has changed radically. The number of university students worldwide rose from some 68 million in 1991 to 132 million in 2004. In response to this explosion in demand, the supply of higher education has become highly diversified, with creation of private educational institutions, campuses with-out walls, open universities etc., yet they have remained peripheral to development concerns.

The stakeholder are complaining bitterly about the poor quality of Nigerian universities graduate despite the benchmarking process and this is not only an indictment of the National Universities Commission (NUC), the custodian of Nigeria's university education, but the government of Nigeria, the Universities system, parents and the society

at large (Obadara, 2012). It is therefore an obligation for the Universities to explicitly prove to the society that they make effective and efficient usage of their resources and that their activities bear relevance to the employment market and national development which is achievable through modern management acting in accordance with the prevailing environment (Hintea, Ringsmuth and Mora, 2006). Therefore, management changes are necessary according to Keller (1983), as organizations rendering higher education services are among the worst managed organizations in society even in countries where higher education is perceived at a high level as in the United States of America.

Nigeria's university education comprises 37 Federal, 37 State and 50 private making a total of 124 universities (NUC, 2012). The goals of University education as highlighted in the National Policy on Education include the training of relevant manpower for national development, development of individual capability and intellectual skills to become useful members of the society. However, this goal can be achieved through teaching, research and community service as well as generation and dissemination of knowledge through staff professional development (FRN, 2004).

Management of University Education in Nigeria

The structures of university management can be examined in four fold: academic management which is related to academic functions; educational service management in terms of acceptance and maintenance of students; business management which involve finance, accountancy, procurement and support service management and public relations like institutional relationships with the media, former students, companies, government entities and other stakeholders.

According to Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009), Management of university education can be perceived from two dimensions; external and internal. The external perception involves the control by the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Universities Commission (NUC). The NUC is a body charged with the coordination of university management in Nigeria. According to Ibukun (1997), the main objectives of the NUC are to ensure orderly development of university education in Nigeria, maintain high standard and ensure adequate funding. Okojie (2007) posited that NUC activities include improving the quality of university education in the country through accreditation of courses, approval of courses and programmes, maintenance of minimum academic standards, supervision and monitoring of universities, giving guidelines for setting up of universities, Prevention of the establishment of illegal campus among others.

On the other hand, internal management of each university is represented by a simple organogram begins with the visitor who is usually the Head of State or the presidents for Federal universities, Governors for state universities and proprietors for private universities down to the Chancellor. Besides, at the apex of the management structure within each university is the Governing Council headed by the Chairman (Pro-Chancellor); the Senate, headed by the Vice-Chancellor with the Registrar as Secretary. The Senate regulates academic activities in the university following the general guidelines provided by the NUC. According to Mgbekem (2004), universities in Nigeria are run through committee system which are either responsible to the Council or to the Senate, among these committees which include: Finance and General Purpose committee, Development committee, Appointments and Promotion committee, Admissions committee, Academic Planning committee, Committee of Deans, Research Grants committee, among others.

According to Babalola (2008), University management in democratizing Nigeria includes: selection of students, determination of the number and standards of academic

programmes, determination of course contents, selection, appointment and retention of teachers, rewards systems for teacher and scholars, selection of what to teach and areas of research; and graduation from degree programmes.

Challenges of University Management in Nigeria

The story of university education in Nigeria today has largely been a story of mixed fortune. Ibukun (1997), observed that university governance in Nigeria today is nothing but crises management. Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe (2012), observed that the challenges facing university management include problem of carry capacity, infrastructure/facilities challenges, inadequate public financing, economic constraints, labor market failure, academic staff inadequacies and problem of curriculum and curriculum delivery. In the perceptions of Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009), some of the crises noticeable in Nigerian universities include:

Finance

Funding of education has become a perpetual problem in the management of university education. The problem of funding has reflected negatively on the infrastructural facilities and also innovative attempts in education (Akomolafe, 2011). Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006), remarked that the Nigerian government over the years has not met the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector for a consecutive period of time. The pattern of fund allocation to education is shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Share To Education In Nigeria's National Budgets(2005-2012)

Years	Total National Budget	Allocation to Education	% Share on Education
2005	1,846,000,000,000	92,000,000,000	4.98
2006	1,900,000,000,000	92,000,000,000	4.84
2007	2,300,000,000,000	186,000,000,000	8.09
2008	2,870,000,000,000	33,600,000,000	9.64
2009	3,101,813,750,626	216,639,437,111	6.98
2010	4,608,616,278,213	249,080,000,000	5.40
2011	4,226,191,559,255	339,481,528,685	8.03
2012	4,749,100,821,171	400,148,037,983	8.43

Sources: Durosaro, D. O. (2012) and Monimah, H.D. (2010)

Deteriorating Infrastructure

Infrastructures in Nigerian universities are often poor, inadequate and dilapidated. Closely associated with infrastructure is equipment inadequacy and obsolesce increasing running cost of such institutions. All the resources required for education production process are in short supply. Lecture halls, laboratories, students' hostels, library space, books, journals and office spaces are all inadequate (Ochuba, 2001 and Alade, 2011). Olagbemiro (2007) observed that some challenges confronting the Nigerian university/tertiary

education system include an unending list that still includes; funding, infrastructure, poor networking and development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), absence of synergy between curriculum and national needs, poor work ethics among others.

Brain-Drain Syndrome

Brain-drain refers to widespread migration of high caliber and scarce academic staff from low income countries to high income overseas countries or equivalent institutions where their services are better rewarded. According to Akindutire (2004), institutional deterioration and salary erosion during the past decade have prompted substantial "brain-drain" of academic staff and impeded new staff recruitment in low income countries like Nigeria and other Sub Saharan African countries. In the perspective of Okojie (2010), academic staffing positions in Nigerian Universities were 27,394 (Ph.D) holders while the actual number required was 74,000. Okojie (2010) described the production rate of Ph.D in Nigeria as lower than 1,000 in a year thus implying that Nigeria would require over 30 years to produce the required number of lecturers as at 2010. The situation today has become worse with more universities springing up on a daily basis.

Secret cults and Cult Activities on Nigerian Campuses

One of the challenges facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria today is how to handle the menace and aggressiveness of campus cult. Never before has the potential for the destruction of lives and property on campuses been as great, fast and horrible as it is in some tertiary institutions now (Ogunbameru, 2004). Smah (2007), pointed out that where cults exist, there is no guarantee that academic programmes and activities would run normally. Universities in Nigeria run the risk constant upheavals resulting into closures that could set back the pace of development.

Political Interference in Higher Education/Educational Administration in Nigeria

It has been observed that universities these days are not totally free from the hand of politics and politicians from outside the university system. Government of the day, most especially in the state-owned universities interfere in the selection and choice of Universities Chief Executive, Faculty Heads, Departmental Heads, Directors of programmes and above all the selection of Vice-Chancellors. Such activities have negated the academic objectives for which the ivory towers were set up. Most of such meddlings are designed to maintain the status quo in corruption, protect self and narrow minded interest of the godfathers in the institution and decimate academic excellence (teaching and research).

High Demand for University Education but Low Absorption Capacity by Universities

Nigerian universities experience massive explosion in student enrolment due to increasing number of prospective new entrants in the face of inadequate and obsolete infrastructure, insufficient academic staff reducing universities carrying capacities. See Table 2

Table 2:
Demand and Supply of University Education in Nigeria 2000- 2012.

Year	No. of Universities	Total Application	Total Admission	% Admitted	Total Unplaced
2001/2002	39	749,417	90,769	12.1	658,648
2002/2003	53	994,381	51,843	5.2	942,335
2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	10	941,793
2004/2005	56	841,878	122,492	14.5	719,386
2005/2006	75	916,371	76,984	8.4	839,387
2006/2007	76	806,089	123,626	15.3	679,846
2007/2008	89	911,653	107,370	11.8	804,284
2008/2009	113	1,054,060	128,595	12.2	925,465
2009/2010	114	1,369,491	188,442	13.8	1,181,049
2010/2011	117	1,493,604	356,981	23.9	1136623

Sources: Aluede, O.; Idogho, P.O. & Imonikhe, J.S. (2012) and Alani, R. A. (2008).

Transformational Concepts in Contemporary Societies and Nigeria

The term "transformation" is derived from Latin roots 'trans' (across, or more loosely to change) and 'forma' (that which has been shaped). Webster (2004), defined transformation as an act, process, or instance of change in structure, appearance, or character, a conversion, revolution, makeover, alteration, or renovation. Whichever meaning one adopts, it is clear that the term connotes some process and intent surrounding a profound, deep, intense, and penetrating alteration in the status quo. It implies a formation of and an effort to realize a vision that is palpably different from what existed before—a conscious decision to substantively alter and "make a difference" in a given reality (Mazade, 2005).

Transformation has often been characterized with "quantum change" (Miller & Friesen, 1982), "second order change" (Bartunek, 1984; Bartunek & Reid, 1992), "re-creation" (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985), "restructuring" (Hinings, Greenwood & Cooper, 1999), "reorientation" (Greenwood & Hinings 1988), "evolution" (Tushman & Romanelli 2008), "frame-breaking" (Nadler & Tushman, 1989), and "revolutionary change" (AJA, 2004) in Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009). Transformation "deals with the deep issues of personal growth, vision, trust, creativity, purpose, leadership, mastery and cultivating organization and individual spirit" (Reid Group, 2001:2). Transformation actually means a complete change from one situation to another; a total departure from the old order to a new one. Transformation does not come accidentally, but require deliberate effort. To change from a failure to a successful person call for performance of some activities that will facilitate the actualization of such dreams. Transformation calls for practical actions and go beyond mere expression or verbal pronouncement hence it requires a number of tasks to be performed. So it is logical to say it takes a performer to be a transformer.

Nigeria's Transformation Agenda (2011-2015)

Nigeria's development efforts have over the years been characterized by lack of continuity, consistency and commitment (3Cs) to agreed policies, programmes and projects as well as an absence of long-term planning. The culminating effect has been growth and

development of the Nigerian Economy without a concomitant improvement in the overall welfare of Nigerian citizens. Disregard to these 3Cs has resulted in rising unemployment, inequality and poverty. The need for a holistic transformation of the Nigerian State has necessitated a strategy that gives cognizance to these 3Cs. Nigeria's current administration has responded to this need in its 'Transformation Agenda' that covers the period 2011 – 2015. The Transformation Agenda which is based and draws its inspiration from Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 programme and 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) aims to deepen the effects and provide a sense of direction in the area of national development for the current administration over the next four years. The agenda is based on a set of priority policies and programmes which when implemented will transform the Nigerian Economy to meet the future needs of the Nigerian people.

The Transformation Agenda covers issues such as macroeconomic framework and economic direction, governance, sector priority policies, programmes and projects of the following key thematic areas. (i) Real sector, (ii) Infrastructure, (iii) Human Capital, (iv) Enablers (which include private investment, finance mobilization, external economic relations and diplomacy) and (v) Monitoring and Evaluation.

1. Macroeconomic Framework and Economic Direction: Job Creation and Public Expenditure Management
2. Governance: Political governance, economic governance, corporate governance and effectiveness of institutions.
3. Human Capital Development Policies, Programmes and Projects: Education, health, labour and employment and women affairs
4. Real Sector Policies, Programmes and Projects: Agriculture, water resources, solid minerals, manufacturing, oil and gas, trade and commerce as well as culture and tourism.
5. Infrastructure Policies, Programmes and Projects: Power, transportation, housing, ICT, FCT and Niger Delta.

The key priority programmes and projects to drive the Transformation Agenda are selected from 20 MDAs and sectors. A total of 1,613 projects have been identified out of which 385 (22) % are new while 1,361 (78)% are on-going. After thorough scrutiny and on the basis of its selection criteria, adopted 685 projects (39) % of total projects considered were admitted into the programme for the 2012-2015 periods (FRN, 2011).

Need for Transformation and Proposed Transformational Process in Nigeria

Nigeria is well endowed with vast human and material resources that can guarantee sustainable economic growth and development. The country has a land area of 923,773km², with varied vegetation and soil types that are suitable for a variety of agricultural purposes. The country has large reserves of solid minerals including bitumen, topaz, lignite, coal, tin, columbite, iron ore, gypsum, barite and talc. The proven reserves of crude petroleum are well over 37 billion barrels while reserves of natural gas stand at over 187 trillion standard cubic feet. This is why the country was a veritable source of raw materials for industries in Europe, especially Britain during the colonial era.

After fifty years of political independence, the productive base of the Nigerian economy remains weak, narrow and externally-oriented with primary production activities of agriculture, mining and quarrying (including crude oil and gas) accounting for about 65 percent of real gross output and over 80 percent of government revenues. The Nigerian economy continues to grapple with a number of challenges that has hampered efforts at economic transformation. First, the economy is yet to achieve the necessary

structural changes required to jump-start rapid and sustainable growth and development. Aside disarticulated and narrow productive base, sectoral linkages in the economy are weak. Primary production comprising agriculture, mining and quarrying inclusive of oil and gas dominate national output while the manufacturing sector role in the economy is decidedly small in terms of share of gross output, contribution to growth, foreign exchange earnings, government revenues and employment generation.

The economy also confronts monumental challenges in form of dilapidated and chronically non-functional infrastructure. The decay in the country's infrastructural base reflects decades of poor maintenance and weak technological base. The weak technological base is a consequence of low research and development efforts and disconnect between research findings and industry. The private sector is equally weak and diffuse with poor response record to industrial incentives. Although the economy experienced respectable GDP growth rates, averaging over 6.5 percent per annum between 2006 and 2010, this growth did not spawn corresponding employment nor resulted in attenuation of poverty. Moreover, growth rates of the non-oil output remains unsatisfactory. Concomitantly, there has been gradual decline in the level of competitiveness of the Nigerian economy to the extent that the country has become one of the least competitive economies in Africa.

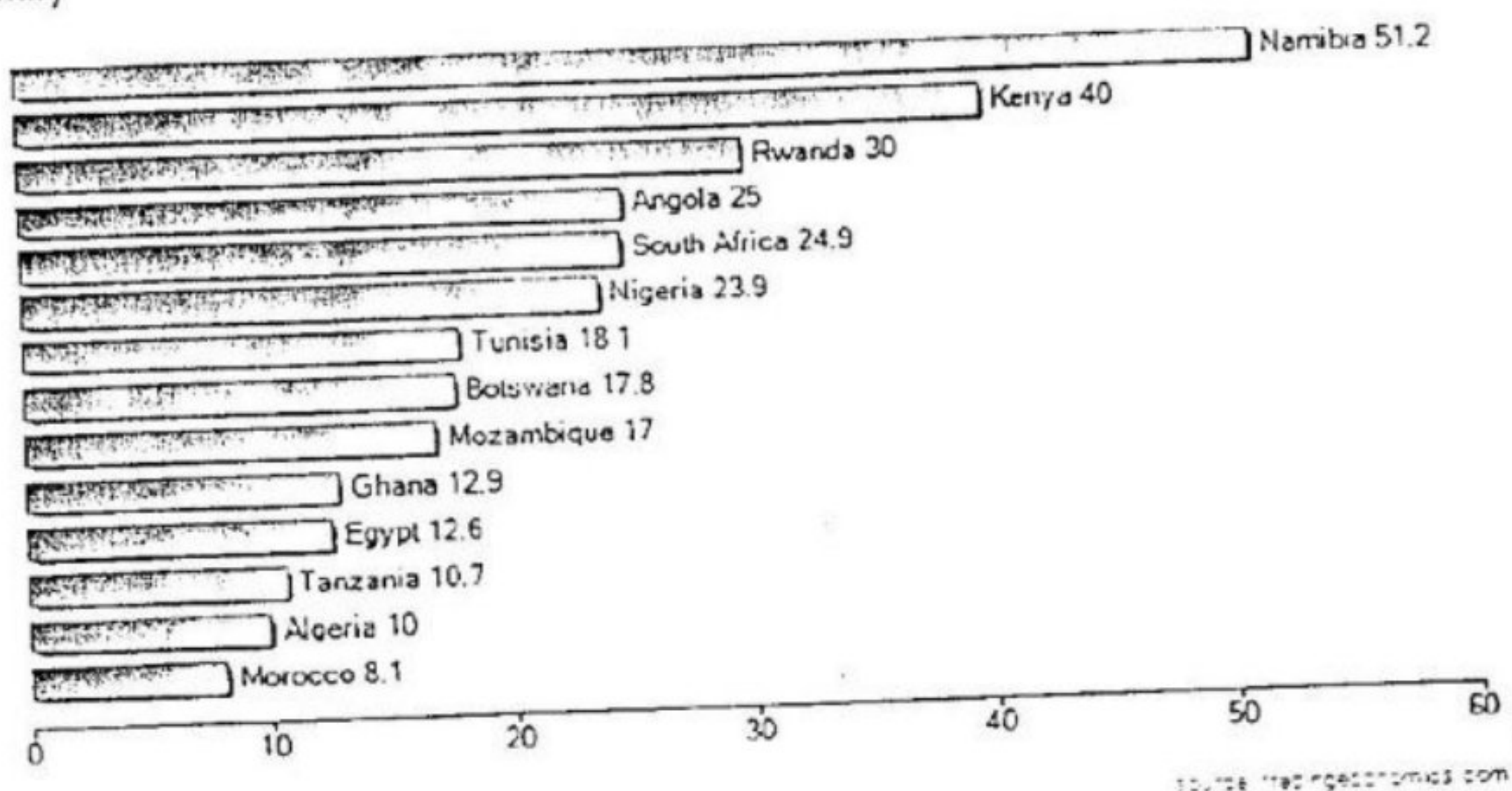
Table 3: Real GDP: Nigeria and Comparator Economies in 2010

US\$ 'Billion	
World	50,158.97
Sub-Sahara African	802.52
Netherlands	621.22
Turkey	395.38
Indonesia	393.86
Belgium	389.00
Sweden	381.51
South Africa	255.27
Egypt	131.89
Nigeria	124.92

Source: World Bank Development Indicator, International Financial Statistics of the International Monetary Fund.

The composite employment data showed that the rate of unemployment surged from 11.9% in 2006 to 14.6% in 2007 and 19.7% at end-December 2009. The recently published employment survey data by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) also revealed that unemployment rate for January, 2010 was 21.1%. As shown in figure 1.

Fig. 1: Unemployment Rates, List by Country



The survey of Business Environment in Nigerian States (BECANS), carried out in 2010 revealed that using 2007 as baseline which is the year of the last survey, the country performed worse in two components and slightly better in two others in 2010. Table 3 presents the performance of the country in the component parts of business environment.

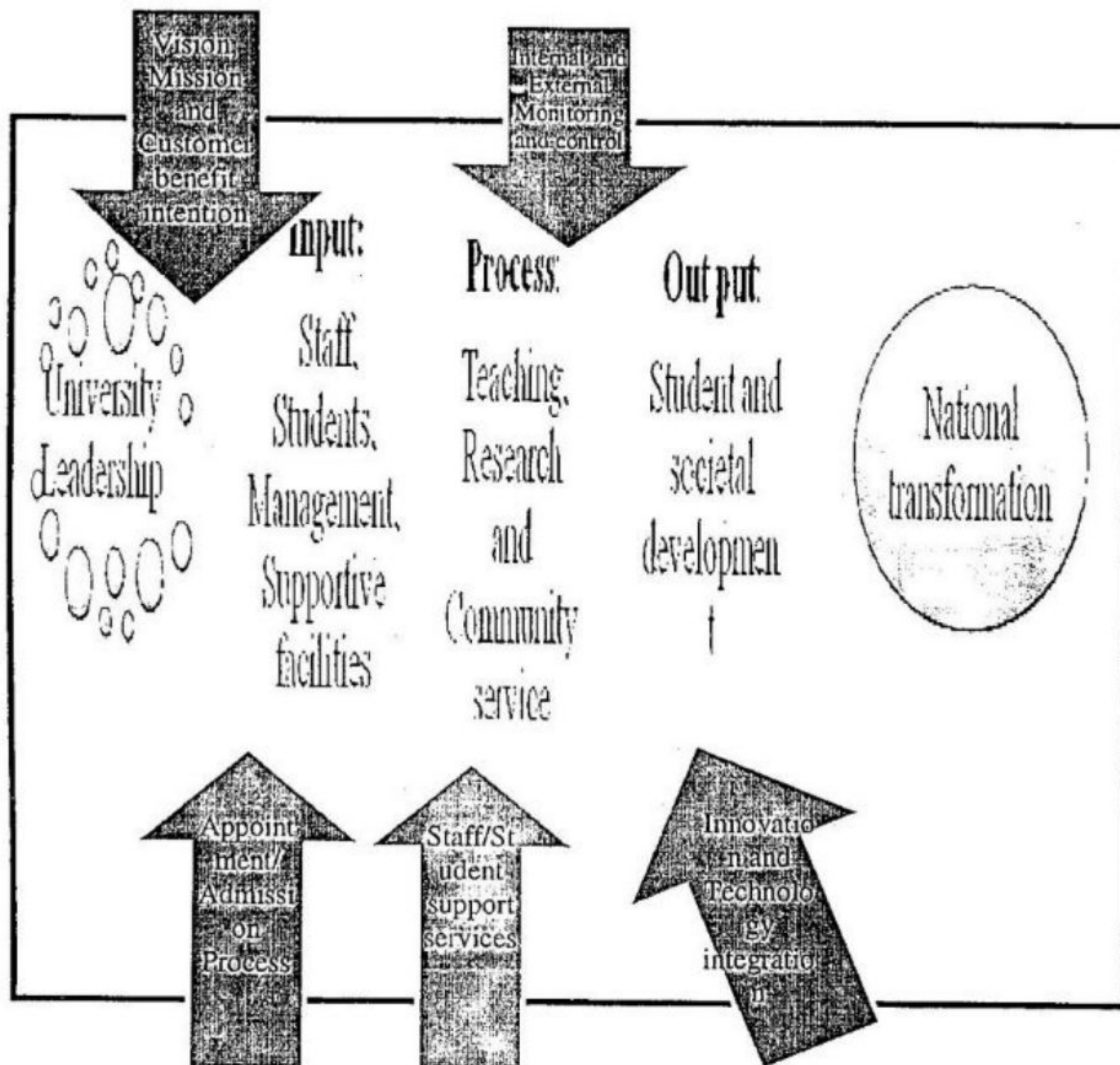
Table 4:

Nigeria's Performance in Business Environment: 2007 and 2010

S/No	Component	2007	2010
1.	Security	62.69	49.49
2.	Regulatory Service	41.32	45.48
3.	Infrastructure	49.76	51.76
4.	Business Dev. Support & Investment promotion	43.63	33.48

Source: BECANS-II, 2010. The surveys were carried out by a team of researchers led by Prof Eric Eboh with collaboration from the States government in 2007 and 2010

Fig. 2 Proposed Transformational Process



Educational Planning Implications for Transformation

In the current market reality, the university can be considered as a "company" providing educational services to its clients, students and employers. Similar to other companies and institutions, it should also be natural for higher education institutions to change their ongoing processes and activities, and implement a new institutional model reflecting the provision of educational services within a new social environment (Drozdová, 2008). Hence, at the very core of universities is a need to be companies of knowledge, developing teaching, research and outreach activities without ever losing sight of the business vision contained within its administrative structure (Clegg, Hardy & Nord, 1996); Bryde and Leighton, 2009).

Management of educational institutions is becoming more and more difficult because of very fast changes in their environment. Changes in the environment forced the introduction of innovative activities in a very fast tempo making the subjects responsible for the costs and they are very difficult to foresee. Universities are dealing with a lot of

problems: how and by what means planned activities should be done receiving the best economic effectiveness and not missing quality of offered education (Dobrzański & Roszak, 2007).

A strategy and long-term plan for the management of human resources in higher education is vital. Dunkin (2003) suggests an outline for a basic strategy which comprises the following measures:

- determining how many people are needed;
- identifying shortfalls and skills needed;
- attracting and retaining people;
- managing performances;
- developing a system of rewards;
- creating professional development possibilities for the staff.

Regardless of whether the development of strategies for managing higher education staff is the task of central or institutional authorities or is a combined effort, there needs to be a reflection on the best use of resources.

According to (STC, 2004) in Mazade (2005), methodologies supporting transformation efforts include:

- Conducting a "readiness assessment" to understand the willingness of an organization to embrace change and to gauge its ability to adapt to proposed changes without damaging critical structures;
- Defining clear principles to guide the transformation effort;
- Conducting a thorough analysis of the status quo—where the organization is at this time;
- Clearly defining a "perfect world" vision;
- Documenting "organizational requirements" to guide the development of the structures and processes that support the idealized vision;
- Conducting a "gap analysis" to describe in detail the difference between the status quo and the ideal;
- Creating a road map (plan) of specific initiatives that close the gaps, moving the organization closer to the ideal state; and
- Identifying issues and problems that and how to address them.

Conclusion

The pressures encountered by universities, driving them to become more competitive, efficient, effective and better adapted to the needs of their stakeholders have all led to a growing and unprecedented level of interest in organization performance evaluation (Morrison, 2010). As a result, performance management systems have been implemented in some universities and many of these institutions have already begun to rethink their organizational, administrative and managerial approaches and frequently moving on from traditional participative management models (a mixture of bureaucratic and collegiate models) to embrace more business style models (Vilalta, 2001; Dickeson, 2003; Michael, 2004).

As the long term expected results, they seek to build a well-educated society and contribute towards economic development (Boland and Fowler, 2000 in Mainardes, Arves and Raposo, 2011). Hence, the University of this New Century should be more concerned with results than with processes (Reisz, 2007). Within the space of five years, higher education institutions were confronted with many challenges, including the need to

diversify their income streams while doing more, and different, things with increasingly less reliance on the government; reconfigure their institutional missions and the ways in which they traditionally produced, packaged and disseminated their primary product (knowledge) in order to meet the challenges of a diversifying student population, as well as an increasingly technologically-oriented, and globalizing, economy; and build new kinds of relationships with other knowledge producers within and outside higher education, especially in industry and the private sector (Kulati, 2000).

Recommendations

If the universities in Nigeria are to be managed for national transformation, the following recommendations are suggested:

There is a need to review the admission policy of Nigerian universities so that brilliant applicants will not be denied of admission and the university system will not be producing unproductive university graduate

The staffing process in the Nigerian universities also needs an urgent attention in the areas of appointment and promotion. Politics should not be the most priority in staff selection process because lecturer cannot give what they don't have to their students. Therefore, there is need to follow due process in the appointment and promotion of staff for quality assurance

The 26% of budgetary allocation to education should be implemented so as to ensure effective and efficient management of material and human resources. There is also the need of re-introduction and adequate funding of student bursaries, grants, loans and scholarships to enable their upkeep and payment of necessary fees in the school

Students support services is an important aspect in university management and it should be adequately provided as this will improve the quality of graduate produced and formation of good character in the students will be enhanced

Discipline also serves as an important aspect of university management and internal monitoring to detect early and punish academic and social vices should be on the priority list of every university manager as this will help to curb the menace of examination malpractice, cultism and manipulation of results.

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