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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA AND GHANA

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Aburime, Aminat Ozohu & Okoro, Ngozi Priscilla

Abstract

The increasing complexity of the Nigerian and Ghanaian Societies as a result of social changes has had adverse effects on Curriculum Implementation at the tertiary level. The federal governments as well as some institutions have introduced some novel practices to counter these pressures. Some of which include, the privatization of higher education, the introduction of Post-JAMB Screening Tests, the substitution of subjective tests with objective tests in assessing students performance in semester examinations. This paper sets out the extent to which the innovative practices are achieving the set objectives, the reasons for privatization of higher education in Nigeria and Ghana, the emergence of privatization, the importance, virtues and demerits. The study also compared the quality assurance of private institutions in both countries and discovered that Ghanaian government sometimes funds private universities and this is not so in Nigeria. Hence, it was recommended that the government should raise the reputation of a small set of public higher education institutions above others to provide management example, government should help to monitor and control standards of both private and public higher institutions.

Keywords: *Comparative, study, quality, assurance, private universities.*

Introduction

The peculiar complex nature of the 21st Century has made different demands on the education systems, which makes it mandatory for our education systems to be relevant and functional, otherwise the country remains underdeveloped. Obanya (2003) confirm this when he asserts that for our education to satisfy the present demands, it must not just

produce human capital for the labour market rather it should produce "knowledge worker with flexible and adaptable skills" who can apply their critical and creative arsenals to generate ideas for the continuous regeneration of the society and the survival of humanity, confirming the three interrelated components of quality education, Iyanu and Edu (2005) asserts that the quality of education output is largely dependent on the quality of input and process. This contradicts Bergman (1996) who quotes Stenffens and Bergel as emphasizing the process and product dimensions as crucial indices of quality education.

Abdulkareem (2001) says a nation's growth and development is determined by its human resources. The provision of the much needed manpower to accelerate the growth and development of the economy has been said to be the main relevance of higher education (Ibukun, 1997). According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2007), the funds allocated to higher education should not be considered as a mere expense, but as a long-term investment of immense benefit to the society as a whole. The importance of higher education to the individual in particular and the society in general has made the demand for higher education increase astronomically in the last 20 years resulting in a very high percentage of unsatisfied demand every year.

The privatization and commercialization of higher education has occupied the minds of Nigerians over the years. Yushau (2006) quoted Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, the former Minister of Education "that we are not selling any Colleges but desire to inject new blood and sanity in our educational sector. This clarification came when she addressed a conference on the "National Brand and Economic Development" organized by Alder Consulting in Abuja.

Thus, privatization is the incidence or process of transferring ownership of a business, enterprise, agency or public service from the public. It occurs when a government transfers control of public owned resources to private uses. Yale Law and Policy Review 6 (1988); 6-41. Private participation in higher education is the active involvement of individuals, corporate bodies, and religious organisations in the provision of alternative organization in a higher education opportunity with a focus on quality and profit. Private participation in higher education came as a result of government reforms that move the education system closer to the private alternative. That is to say, that private activities on higher education have the capability of decreasing the involvement of the governments on the provision, administration and funding of education as well as reducing the number of people using public higher education system.

The establishment of private higher institutions in Nigeria and Ghana is not deregulation of higher education as misconstrued by some scholars because of the extensive interposition of government activity that mediates their existence and functioning. The Federal Government of Nigeria licenses private higher institutions for operation, JAMB mediates the admission of students into Universities and the NUC regulates academic standards and monitors their continued fitness for existence. Also in Ghana, the National Board for Professional and Technician Examination (NABPTEX) formulate and regulates the activities of higher education in Ghana. The occurrence of these strands of government activities in the existence and sustenance of private higher institutions; indicates that these entities are quasi-public actors and subject to the standards of public Law applicable to public higher institutions. The Nigerian higher educational sector is perhaps the largest in Sub-Sahara Africa both in the number of educational institutions and the population of students. Only 57% of adult Nigerians are literate, matching the rate for Sub-Saharan Africa; compared with 71% for all developing countries.

The 'Why'

Privatization of education to some is the increase in the cost of education and for others is a positive move which implies more resources for the educational sector and a much better quality education for students. The trend towards educational privatization is strong both in Nigeria and Ghana and many other countries because the educational sector is a large expenditure item in government budgets and they often face pressure to privatize. Historically, Nigerian and Ghanaians are familiar with the private schools that were operated by the missionaries before they were taken over by the government. In general, the Nigerian and Ghanaian government performed poorly in maintaining and managing those schools. Therefore, Nigerians prefer the private institutions and choose to forgo the free public educational system; if they can afford it. This was not the issue with Ghana for the Ghana government tried as much as possible to maintain sanity in most of their public higher institutions even though some still prefer the private schools – though public higher institutions in Ghana later failed to meet expectations in terms of its coverage.

Over the years, the Nigerian higher education sector has suffered a lot of setback including inadequate students' housing, poor funding, by the state and federal government, poor technological advancement, poor educational planning for the pre-school, elementary, secondary and vocational schools, corruption in the ministries of education, non-

restoration of autonomy for tertiary educational institutions, non-functional facilities, disruption of academic calendars by lecturers strike, cultism and so much more.

To arrest the failures of the public higher educational system, the former Obasanjo administration issued licenses to private individuals and organisations to establish private polytechnics, monotechnics and universities. The number of private higher institutions has increased at the same time as increased fees have been introduced in some public institutions. This trend has emerged as a result of incapacity of the government to satisfy the increasing educational demands. The response to the new educational sector has been mixed; many Nigerians initially were generally opposed to the ideas but there seems to have been an apparent support from the international community. The strongest opposition had emerged from the National Assembly and the Labour Unions. The privatization crusade is, however, much more complex than a mere increase in private funding. It appears to be an answer to an increasingly diversified demand in terms of content, teaching, methods and to the desire of families to choose the school to which they send their children. The issue is not much of money but rather the freedom of choice, flexibility, regulation, quality and accountability. In developed countries, privately managed and regulated schools are generally supposed to be more effective, efficient and produce better results than schools managed by the government. Privatization may therefore mean that parents pay the cost of schooling rather than the government.

Emergence of Private Higher Educational Sectors in Nigeria

The recent emergence of private tertiary institutions in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon. They have evolved during two historical periods in Africa, the issues about the philosophy and goals of education during the post-colonial period were viewed within the broader framework of political ideologies spanning from pro-western liberal ideology and capitalist systems, (Botswana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire) to Marxist-Lennist/Socialist Ideology (Benin, Zimbabwe) to African socialism (Mali, Tanzania), (Assie-Lumumba, 2004). Regardless of their ideological and political choices, they all conceived higher education as an important agent of development with the mission of formulating relevant programmes as well as providing high level manpower for the actualization of the government's project of national development.

The first period was the period of Nigeria's second democratic experiment (1979/1983), private higher institution emerged without any

defined educational planning for their development and was later abolished by the military regime in 1984. Both prior to and during this period, official thinking followed mainly two Presidential Commissions on Higher Education in Nigeria. The Ashibu Commission (1962) and the Cookey Commission (1981); that were very conservative about the proliferation of Universities (public and private).

The second period in the evolution of private higher institutions (Universities) (under the Obasanjo government 1999-2000) occurred as part of planned development project. Since 1999, 34 applications received by the NUC, a Federal Government Agency charged with the regulation, accreditation, and monitoring of Universities both Public and Private.

Today, there are 51 Private Universities in the country and their establishment is seen by many as a positive development in our higher educational sector. There are 156 Universities (Federal, State and Private) today in Nigeria but their carrying capacity is abnormally low. Out of one and half million candidates seeking Universities admissions annually, only about 200,000 of them can be absorbed. Since there is a 9 year free and compulsory basic education in Nigeria, it is certainly going to throw up the proportion of more candidates seeking placement into Universities. That is why there was a need to come up with proactive strategies for creating more-higher institution spaces without compromising academic standards. It is time that these institutions are now embarking on an aggressive drive to generate funds internally, but they still rely heavily on government subventions, which are grossly inadequate. Regrettably, the bulk of their allocated fund (sometimes as high as 80%) are expended on salaries and emoluments of both academic and non-academic staff. Thus, the NUC granted some private universities approvals to open up their doors.

The Federal Executive Council presided over by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on January 1, 2005 approved the licensing of another seven new private universities in the country. The federal government has issued more licenses to the following Polytechnics: Abuja School of Accountancy and Computer Studies, Grace Polytechnic and Technology, Imo State Technological Skill Acquisition Centre, Universal College of Technology and Wolex Polytechnic.

Table 1.1 List of Private Universities by Date, Location, State, Type and Proprietorship

S/N	Name of Institution	Date	Location	State	Type	Proprietorship
1.	Igbinedion University	1999	Okada	Edo	Conventional	Chief Gabriel Igbinedion
2.	Badcock University	1999	Ilishan Remo	Lagos	"	Seventh-Day Adventist
3.	Madonna University	1999	Okija	Anambra	"	Rev. Fr. (Prof.) E. Ede
4.	Bowen University	2001	Iwo	Osun	"	Baptist Convention
5.	Benson-Idahosa University	2002	Benin City	Edo	"	Bishop Benson Idahosa
6.	Pan African University	2002	Lagos	Lagos	"	Prof. Pat Utomi
7.	Covenant University	2002	Ota	Ogun	"	Living Faith
8.	ABTI-American University of Nig.	2003	Yola	Adamawa	"	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar
9.	Redeemers University	2005	Mowe	Lagos	"	Redeemed
10.	Ajayi-Crowther University	2005	Ibadan	Oyo	"	Anglican
11.	Al-Hikmah University	2005	Ilorin	Kwara	"	Islamic
12.	Caritas University	2005	Ampriji Nike	Enugu	"	Catholic (The Sisters of Jesus the Saviour)
13.	CETEP City University	2005	Onike Yaba	Lagos	"	Chief Joseph Omoyajowu
14.	Bingham University	2005	Karu	Nasarawa	"	Evangelical Church of West Africa
15.	Katsina University	2005	Katsina	Katsina	"	Islamic
16.	Renaissance University	2005	Ojlagu-Agbani	Enugu	"	Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani
17.	Bells University of Technology	2005	Ota	Ogun	"	Chief (Gen.) Olusegun Obasanjo
18.	Lead City University	2005	Ibadan	Oyo	"	Eduserve Consul/ Prof. Jide Owoeye
19.	Crawford University	2005	Igbesa	Ogun	"	Apostolic Faith
20.	Wukari Jubilee	2005	Wukari	Taraba	"	JBC Seminar Inc.

	University					(Mission Organisation & Taraba community Project)
21.	Crescent University	2005	Abeokuta	Ogun	"	Prince Bola Ajibola
22.	Novena University	2005	Kwale	Delta	"	Mr. Chuks Ochongor
23.	University of Mkar	2005	Gboko	Benue	"	Nongo u kristu U Sudan hen Tiv (NKST) or the Church of Christ in Sudan among the Tiv
24.	Joseph Ayo Babalola University	2006	Ikeji-Arakji	Christ Apostolic	"	Christ Apostolic Church
25.	Obong University	2007	obong-Inta	Akwa-Ibom	"	Individual
26.	Caleb University	2007	Ikoyi	Lagos	"	Individual
27.	Fountain University	2007	Osogbo	Osun	"	Islamic
28.	Salem University	2007	Lokoja	Kogi	"	Foundation faith
29.	Tansian University	2007	Oba	Anambra	"	Individual
30.	Veritas University	2007	Abuja	FCT	"	Catholic
31.	Western Delta University	2007	Oghara	Delta	"	Individual
32.	Wesley University of Science & Technology	2007	Ondo	Ondo	"	Methodist
33.	Achievers University	2007	Owo	Ondo	"	Individual
34.	African University of Science & Technology	2007	Abuja	FCT	"	African Union
35.	Wellspring University	2009	Evbubansa	Edo	"	Individual
36.	Paul University	2009	Awka	Anambra	"	Individual
37.	Rhema University	2009	Obeama-Asa	Rivers	"	Individual
38.	Oduduwa University	2009	Ipetumodu	Osun	"	Individual
39.	Afe Babalola University	2009	Ado-Ekiti	Ekiti	"	Barr. Afe Babalola
40.	Godfrey Okoye University	2009	Ugwuomu-Nike	Enugu	"	Chief Godfrey Okoye
41.	Nigeria Turkish University	2009	Abuja	FCT	"	Individual

Sources: *Punch Newspaper* (2007, October, 8)
The Mirror Newspaper 2007, May, 4-10)
Punch Newspaper (2009, October, 22)

Private Universities in Ghana: The Ghanamates.com List

1. All Nations University Koforidua Website: <http://www.allnationsuniversity.org>
2. Anglican University College of Technology B/A Website: <http://www.angutech.edu.gh>
3. Asheshi University Accra Website: <http://www.ashesi.edu.gh>
4. Baptist University College Abuakwa, Kumasi Website: <http://www.gbue.edu.gh>
5. Catholic University College of Ghana Fiapre, Sunyani Website: <http://www.fiuc.org/cucg>
6. Central University College Accra Website: <http://www.centraluniversity.org>
7. Christian Service University College Kumasi Website: <http://www.csc.edu.gh>
8. Data Link University College Tema Website: <http://www.datalinkuniversity.com>
9. Dominion University College Accra Website: <http://www.duc.edu.gh>
10. EP University Ho Website: <http://www.epuniversity.org>
11. Garden City University College Kumasi Website: <http://www.geuc.ud.gh>
12. Ghana Christian University College Accra Website: <http://www.ghanacu.org>
13. Ghana Telecom University College Accra Website: <http://www.gtuc.edu.gh>
14. Islamic University College of Ghana Accra Website: <http://www.islamicug.com>
15. Jayee University College Accra Website: <http://www.jayeeuniversity.com>

16. Knutsford (University) College Accra Website: <http://www.knutsford.edu.gh>
17. Maranatha University College Accra Website: <http://www.muc.edu.gh>
18. Meridian University College McCarthy Hill, Accra Website: <http://meducol.edu.gh>
19. Methodist University College of Ghana Accra Website: <http://www.mucg.edu.gh>
20. Pan African Christian University College Winneba Website: <http://www.pacue.edu.gh>
21. Pentecost University College Accra Website: <http://www.pentvars.edu.gh>
22. Presbyterian University College Abetifi-Kwahu Website: <http://presbyuniversity.edu.gh>
23. Regent University College of Science and Technology Accra Website: <http://www.regentghana.net>
24. The Bible College of Ghana Akuapem Website: <http://www.myghana.org>
25. Trinity Theological Seminary Accra Website: <http://ttsem.net/>
26. University College of Management Studies Accra Website: <http://www.ucoms.edu.gh>
27. Valley View University Accra Website: <http://www.vvu.edu.gh>
28. Wisconsin International University College Accra Website: <http://www.wiu-usa.edu/>
29. Zenith College Accra Website: <http://www.zenithcollegeghana.org>

Quality Assurance of Private Higher Institutions in Nigeria and Ghana

Osokoya, (2004) highlighted the following aims of higher education:

- Developing and inculcating proper values for the survival of the individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- Developing the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.

- Developing physical and intellectual skills of individuals.
- Promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service.
- Promoting national and international understanding and interaction.
- Promoting national development through relevant high level manpower training.

Though it may be difficult to generalize the quality of private higher institutions in Nigeria and Ghana, but this could be assessed based on factors such as infrastructural facilities, types of courses offered, quality of staff, performance of students, students' admission requirements and funding.

Infrastructural Facilities

Private higher institutions in Nigeria and Ghana are established by some legal provisions which normally stipulate some minimum requirements for infrastructural facilities. Only institutions that meet the basic requirements are officially licensed by the governments. In Nigeria, a private higher institution is expected to be accredited by the Federal Government through its agency the (NUC) and in Ghana through (NABPTEx) before granting license to operate. These bodies usually set-up panels with duties to inspect the infrastructural facilities, curriculum as well as quality of staff. Thus, they adhere strictly to the minimum acceptable requirements before granting license. Commenting on adherence to the basic requirements on private higher education in some African States, Varghese (2004a) noted that though many countries had strict legislations on the infrastructural facilities to be provided, some of the private institutions did not comply e.g. Cameroon.

Quality of Programme

All private institutions are self-financing; majority of them offered courses in subject areas which require limited investment in infrastructure. Courses in theology, humanities, law, social sciences and education for instance demand less facilities than those of science and engineering and medical courses. Hence, most of the private institutions in Nigeria and Ghana were said to be better equipped than most of the public institutions.

Quality of Staff

Quality of staff is another important factor affecting the quality of higher education in Nigeria and Ghana. The private higher institutions are claimed

to be better placed because they depended heavily on part-time staff drawn mainly from public Universities. Facilities for staff development and research opportunities for staff are limited in the private higher institutions.

Financing

Public Universities receive a major share of funding from the government, while private institutions seldom obtain financial aid from public authorities. Tuition fees therefore form the financial backbone of many African private higher institutions. The tuition fee in the private higher institutions are therefore normally higher than the public institutions. However, the tuition fee in the private higher institutions varies particularly between the non-profits oriented institutions and profit oriented higher institutions (Varghese, 2004a).

Importance of Privatized Higher Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian private higher educational sector has enormous importance and its increasing advantages are clear. The extra-ordinary growth and potentials of Nigerian private higher education in major news is usually uncontroversial. Private higher educational institutions are devoid of the burden of collective management. Decisions are usually made by the Vice-Chancellor or Presidents. The roles of the Senate and the Faculty Council, which confers the academic degrees, are advisory in nature. Private higher institutions can respond rapidly to the changing needs of educational demand and labour market needs. They are decidedly more expensive for students than are the public. Private institutions are more flexible and definitely offer higher quality services than their public counterparts. Nearly 100% of private institutions are funded from tuition fees and not from the state budget. They are entirely dependent on their markets.

Virtues and Demerits of Private Higher Institutions in Nigeria and Ghana

Apart from the ideological argument for and against privatization, efforts to rigorously document the specific advantages and disadvantages of higher education privatization in Nigeria have proved inconclusive. The merits and drawbacks of privatization have been subject of considerable debate among business people, community leaders, parent and public employees alike. Indeed each element of privatization from its apparent satisfying educational demands to its possible positive impact on the low income families provokes strong reaction. About the only thing that everyone can agree on is that the trend has been enormously beneficial

to owners of the private institutions.

The following issues are the controversies engulfing the operation of private higher education in Nigeria and Ghana. Public and private provider needs to consider the following:

1. Cost of privatized higher education.
2. Employee – Student Union Affiliation.
3. Standard Rules and Regulations.
4. Conversion of the Polytechnics to Universities.
5. Student Cultism.

Conclusion

Despite the remarkable rate of change that marks Nigeria's private higher educational sector today; seven forces are undeniably spurring the spread of privatization in Nigeria and Ghana higher educational sector:

- a. The rise of an information base economy.
- b. Redistribution of wealth.
- c. Changes in demographics.
- d. An increase in public scrutiny.
- e. The advent of new technologies.
- f. The convergence of knowledge-based organisations; and
- g. A decline in public trust in government.

It should be noted that a completely free market of higher education would be both unfair to the majority of the population and uneconomical to the Nigerian and Ghanaian society where skilled manpower has been considered as a major constraint to socio-economic development. Thus, a shift towards more privatization in Nigeria and Ghana is in good direction because it will change the present pattern of public subsidy and the huge financial resources, which government expend on higher education.

Recommendations

The federal government can help public post secondary systems respond to these forces by helping define academic quality and student achievement. Eliminating overlap and duplication, ensuring accountability and more efficiently; utilizing the capacity of providers of post secondary learning. The private higher institutions in these countries should aspire

to be self-reliant. They must also be self-regulating like the public institutions, but they must be able to impose upon themselves a sense of responsibility. Like in other advanced countries like America and Japan, governments should monitor and control the standards of both private and public higher institutions. Such monitoring should include the tuition fees charged as well as the quality of research and standard of education. They must also be self-governing and self-regulating like the public institution but they must be able to impose upon themselves a sense of responsibility.

Government should highly subsidize students in private higher education so as to reduce the burden of financing private higher institutions, which is usually borne by parents. Government scholarship as well as bursary awards should therefore be extended to students in the private higher institutions. Both sectors of higher education should be seen as working hand-in-hand for the success of the society.

Also, the government should raise the reputation of a small set of public higher education institutions above others to provide management example or leadership for private institutions. The Federal Universities in Nigeria and Ghana could serve as models for other public and private higher institutions.

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