

TOWARDS THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

University education plays an essential role in provision of people of high-level manpower for Economic and socio-political development of any nation. To this effect, the effective management of this educational sector most especially at the private level in Nigeria becomes very decisive or essential. This paper therefore aims at examining the birth of private institution, historical development of university education, development of private university education, distribution of private universities, by geopolitical zone, ownership and location of private universities in Nigeria, 14 steps/processes in licensing of private universities, benefits accruable from a good university education management, reasons for the establishment, challenges confronting and solutions to the challenges and future of private universities in Nigeria were mentioned. Conclusion and recommendation were made that government should work hand in hand with proprietors of private universities by giving the opportunity to tertiary education trust fund grant-in so as to enhance and promote effective performance of the private universities in Nigeria.

Keyword: *Effective Management, Private University, Education Distribution, Challenges.*

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria is a device par excellence for effecting national development. It has witnessed active participation by non-governmental agencies, communities and individuals as well as government intervention. It is therefore desirable for the nation to spell out in clear and unambiguous terms the philosophy and objectives that underline its investment in education. The National policy on Education seeks to fulfill this role.

National Policy on Education (2014) stated that for the benefit of all citizens, the country's educational goals shall be clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and people within the society in agreement with the realities of our environment and the whole world in general. After the 1969 National Curriculum Conference in Lagos, a Seminar of experts drawn from a wide Nigeria was convened in 1973. The seminar, which included voluntary agencies and external bodies which lead to expansion of schools due to the increase in population which gave birth to private institutions in Nigeria from pre-primary to University education.

According to Adeyemi (2001), University Education refers to a system which embraces much of the country's research capacity and provides majority of the skilled professionals that are required in the labour market. Beside, (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2009) also posited that universities either public or private undoubtedly have come to be regarded as the apex of Nigeria educational system. It is therefore expected of every university to be the think tank of the society in all areas of ramification, generate ideas and knowledge, and equally disseminate them (Ajayi, 2010).

According to the national policy on Education (2014) higher education is expected to;

- Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation.
- Develop and inculcate proper values for survival of the individual society, develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate the local and external environments.
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills for self-reliance and useful members of the society, promote and encourage scholarship and community service, forge and cement national unity and to promote national and international understanding and interaction (pp. 29).

Ojedele and Ilusanya (2016) also posited that the National Policy on Education specified how higher educational institution in Nigeria should pursue these goals, in view of the relevance of University education. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006) in Abiodun-Oyebanji (2011) submitted that the funds allocated to higher education should not be merely considered as an expense but a long term investment; of benefit to society as a whole.

Historical Development of University Education in Nigeria

The first higher educational institution, the Yaba Higher College, was established in 1932. The agitation of Nigerians for a more comprehensive higher education provision led to the constitution of Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education. Their reports in 1943 favoured the establishment of universities in Nigeria.

Consequently, in 1948, the University College Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. University College continued as the only University Institution in Nigeria until 1960 (Jubril, 2003).

In April 1959, the Nigerian government commissioned an inquiry (Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the new nation for its first two decades of Independence. Before the submission of the report in 2 September, 1960, the Eastern Region government established its own university at Nsukka. (University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1960). The recommendations of the Ashby Report includes among others:

1. The Federal Government should give support to the development of new Universities of Nigeria, planned in 1955 and open a few weeks before the publication of the Ashby Report in 1960;
2. A university should be established in the North using the old site of the Nigerian college in Zaria as its base;
3. All universities in Nigeria should be national in outlook;
4. A National Universities Commission should be set up to have undisputed control over the affairs of the universities, particularly in terms of finance, staff and courses among others.

Development of private University in Nigeria

Development of private University education, private universities have increased in number and scope of programmes in response to the need at providing higher education to a large number or proportion of the work force. Varghese (2004) identified three types of private higher institutions.

1. State Supported private higher institutions: these are institutions that receive some form of grant from government and hence are subjected to regulation of fees. For instance in India which state support for private colleges can account for more than 90% of recurrent expenditure.
2. Not-for-profit private institutions: These are owned and operated by trusts that depend largely on endowments and fees collected from students, examples are Harvard, Yale, MIT, Princeton fall in United States (US).
3. For Profit Institutions: These are institution established for profit, albeit marginal profit examples private universities in developing countries.

The involvement of Nigeria and South Africa into the scene” In 1996 and 1997 respectively changed the face of private higher education in the region. But today, in Africa continent most countries are now having private higher education institutions, mostly, universities, offering programmes in market attractive areas/disciplines like, Banking and Finance, Science and Technology, Medicine, Law and Information and Communication Technology.

Likewise, the establishment of private universities in Nigeria dates back to 1979 when the education was placed on thee concurrent list in nation’s constitution permitting individuals and organization to establish and run such institutions.

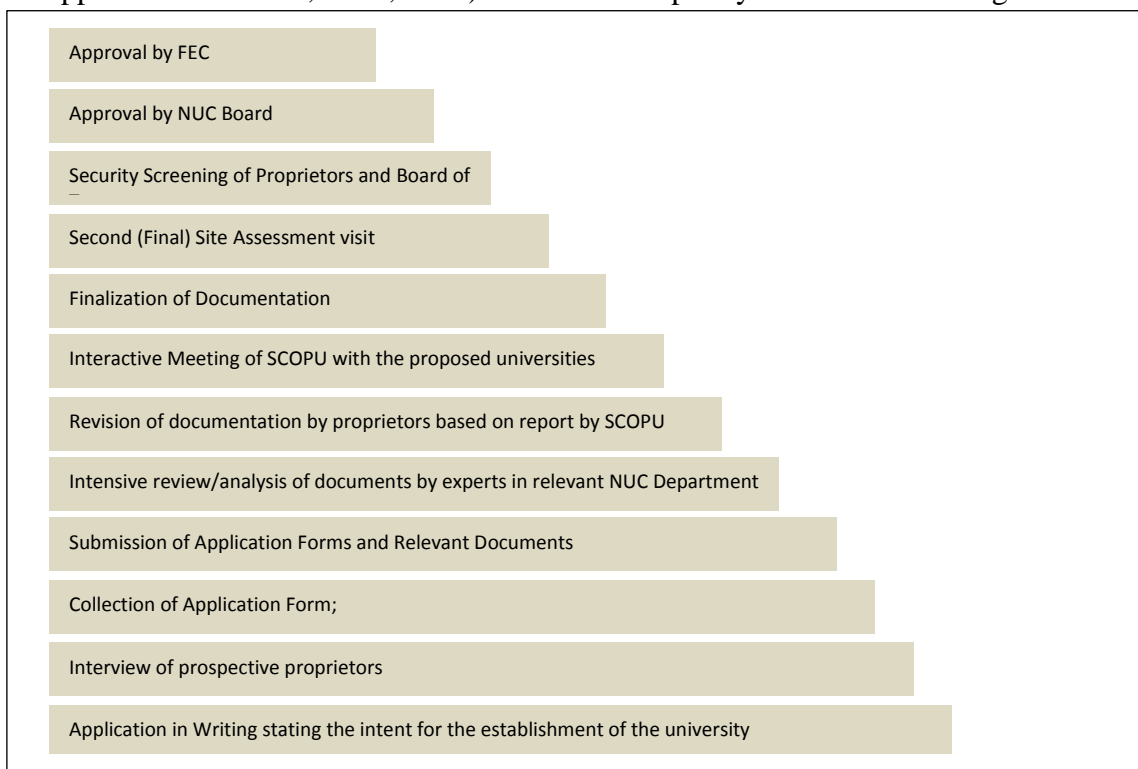
Through the provision of the constitution, individuals, private entrepreneurs and organization were empowered along with the state and federal government to establish and fund such institutions.

Within a period of four years, twenty-four of such universities were established. The universities were rushedly established without regard for proper planning and implementation. It was observed during this period, that the threat to qualitative university

education was so real that its subsequent devastating effect would be irreparable hence the promulgation of decree (Act) No. 19 of 1984 and 16 of 1985 to sanitize the system (Obasi, 2007).

The increase in the enrolment number of prospective candidates for admission into universities and increasing inability of existing public universities to cope with the increase in demand for university placement necessitated a review of the 1984 ban.

The revisit led to the enactment of Decree No: 9 of 1993, which allowed individuals, organizations, corporate bodies as well as local governments to establish and run private universities upon meeting laid down guidelines and obtaining approval of government. The decree spelt out the conditions that must be met to enables the National Universities Commission (NUC) access the Adequacy or otherwise of application for government approval (Okebukola, 2002; 2004). The criteria specify and indicated in figure below:



Source: Okebukola (2015)

Fig 1: The NUC 14 – step process in the licensing of private universities

After six years of promulgation of degree 9 of 1993, the first set of private universities was licensed. These are Babcock Universities, Ilishan – Remo, Ogun State, Igbinedon University, Okada, Edo State and Madonna University, Okija, Anambra State and another five were licensed between July 31st, 2001 and May 28th, 2003. In the year 2016, private universities were established and the rate had maintained a slow and steady climb bringing the total number of 69 as at 30th of November, 2016. The location of the universities by geopolitical zone in fig 2 and state are listed in table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1: Six Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria

Zones	States in each Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria
North East	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe.
North Central	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, FCT
North West	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara
South East	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
South South	Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Akwa-Ibom
South West	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo

Table 2: Distribution of Private Universities by States (2016)

State University	No. of Private Universities	State University	No of Private Universities
Abia State	02	Kano State	00
Adamawa State	01	Katsina State	01
Akwa Ibom State	02	Kebbi State	00
Anambra State	03	Kogi State	01
Bauchi State	00	Kwara State	04
Bayelsa State	00	Lagos State	05
Benue State	01	Nasarawa State	01
Borno State	00	Niger State	00
Cross River State	01	Ogun State	11
Delta State	04	Ondo State	03
Ebonyi State	01	Osun State	07
Edo State	04	Oyo State	04
Ekiti State	01	Plateau State	00
Enugu State	04	Rivers State	01
Federal Capital Territory	04	Sokoto State	00
Gombe State	00	Taraba State	01
Imo State	02	Yobe State	00
Jigawa State	00	Zamfara State	00
Kaduna State	00	Total	69

Note: Data as at November 30th, 2016, Authors.

Ogun state with eleven (11), Osun state seven (7), Lagos state five (5), Delta, Enugu, Kwara, Edo, Oyo states and FCT four (4), Anambra and Ondo states three (3), Akwa Ibom, Abia, and Imo states two (2), Adamawa, Benue, Cross-River, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Kastina, Kogi, Nasarawa, Rivers and Taraba states one (1), Bauchi, Bayelsa, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kebbi, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara states have no private university.

Table 3: Distribution of Private Universities by Geopolitical Zone in Percentage

Geopolitical Zone	No. of Private Universities	%
North East	02	2.9%
North Central	11	15.9%
North West	01	1.4%
South East	12	17.4%
South South	12	17.4%
South West	31	45%
Total	69	100%

Source: Authors, 2016

As clearly indicated in Table 3, it shows that two (2) private Universities is in North-East of Nigeria representing 2.9%, eleven (11) Private Universities in North Central which is 15.9%, North-West only having one (1) Private University 1.4% which is the least in Nigeria. South East and South-South having twelve (12) Private Universities with 17.4% each and South West is thirty one (31) Private Universities with 45% having the highest number of Private Universities in Nigeria. The total number of Private Universities is sixty Nine (69).

Table 4: Year of establishment, And Location of Private Universities in Nigeria with the percentage

Year Establishment	University	Location	No. of Uni.	Percentage
1999	Igbinedion University Okada	Edo State	3	4.4
	Madonna University, Okija	Imo State		
	Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo	Ogun State		
2001	Bowen University, Iwo	Osun State	1	1.5
2002	Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos	Lagos State	3	4.4
	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	Edo State		
	Covenant University Ota	Ogun State		
2003	American University of Nigeria, Yola	Adamawa State	1	1.5
2005	Kwararafa University, Wukari	Taraba State	15	21.7
	Lead City University, Ibadan	Oyo State		
	Novena University, Ogume	Delta State		
	Redeemer's University, Mowe	Osun State		
	Renaissance University, Enugu	Enugu State		
	University of Mkar, Mkar	Benue State		
	Ajayi Crowtlier University, Ibadan	Oyo State		
	AI-Hikmah University, Ilorin	Kwara State		
	AI-Qalam University, Katsina	Katsina State		

	Bells University of Technology, Otta;	Ogun State		
	Bingham University, New Karu	Nasarawa State		
	Caritas University, Enugu	Enugu State		
	CFTEP City University, Lagos	Lagos State		
	Crawford University Igbesa	Ogun State		
	Crescent University,	Ogun State		
2006	Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji	Osun State	1	1.5
2007	Fountain University, Oshogbo	Ogun State	10	14.5
	Obong University, Obong Ntak	Akwa Ibom		
	Salem University, Lokoja	Kogi State		
	Tansian University, Umunya	Anambra State		
	Veritas University	Abuja		
	Wesley Univ. of Science &Tech.,Ondo	Ondo State		
	Western Delta University, Oghara	Delta State		
	Achievers University, Owo	Ondc State		
	African University of Science & Technology, Abuja	Abuja		
	Caleb University, Lagos	Lagos State		
2009	Godfrey Okoye University, Ugwuomu-Nike - Enugu State	Enugu State	7	10.1
	Nigerian-Turkish Nile University, Abuja	Abuja		
	Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu - Osun State	Osun State		
	Paul University, Awka - Anambra State	Anambra State		
	Rhema University, Obeama-Asa -Rivers State	Rivers State		
	Wellspring University, Jvbuobanosa - Edo State	Edo State		
	Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti - J_kit[State	Ekiti State		
2011	Landmark University,Omu-Aran.	Kwara State	4	5.8
	Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa.	Edo State		
	Adeleke University. Ede.	Osun State		

	Baze University	Abuja		
2012	Evangel University, Akaeze	Ebonyi State	5	7.2
	Gregory University, Uturu	Abia State		
	Mcperson University, Seriki Sotayo, Ajebo	Ogun State		
	Southwestern University, OkunOwa	Ogun State		
	Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin	Ondo State		
2015	Hallmark University	Ogun State	11	15.9
	Hezekiah University, Umudi	Imo State		
	Kings University	Osun State		
	Michael & Cecilia University	Delta State		
	Mountain Top University	Ogun State		
	Ritman University	Akwa Ibom		
	Summit University	Kwara State		
	Augustine University	Lagos State		
	Chrisland University	Ogun State		
	Christopher University	Ogun State		
	Edwin Clark University, Kaigbodo	Delta State		
2016	Achor University, Lagos	Lagos State	8	11.5
	Anthur Jarvis University	Cross-River State		
	Clifford University	Abia State		
	Coal City University	Enugu State		
	Crown Hill University, Eyenkorin	Kwara State		
	Dominican University, Ibadan	Oyo State		
	Kola Dansi University, Ibadan	Oyo State		
	Legacy University, Okija	Anambra State		

Source: Researchers, 2016

Federal = 40, State = 44, Private = 69; Total Universities in Nigeria = 159

The data on table three above shows that Nigeria has sixty nine private universities. Since 1999 to 2016, and 2005 was the year that have the highest-15(21.7%), 2015 second, 11 (15.9%), 2007=10(16.4%), 2016=8(11.5%), 2009=7(10.1%), 2012=5(7.2%), 2011=4(5.8%) 1999 and 2002 had 3 (each (4.4%) while 2001, 2003 and 2006 had 1 private university each which is 1.5%

Management of private university education in Nigeria

Management of private university education can be looked at from two dimensions: the internal and external levels. The internal management of a private university is represented by a simple of anagram. The titular head of university by law is Chancellor, who lays precedence before all other members of the university and when he is present, presides at all meeting of the convocation held for conferring degrees.

The external level, this the control by the federal government through National Universities Commission (NUC) a body charged with the coordination of university management in the country. In the words of Okojie (2007) in Oyebanji-Abiodun (2011), improving quality of university education, in the country include accreditation of courses, approval of the courses, and programmes, maintenance of minimum academic standards, monitoring of universities, giving guideline for setting up of universities, monitoring of private university, prevention of the establishment of illegal campus and implementation of appropriate sections.

According to Mgbekem (2004), universities whether private and public are run through committees system which are either responsible to the council or the senate, prominent among these committees are finance, and general purpose committee, development committees, appointment and promotion committee, admission committee, academic planning committee, committee of deans, research grants committee, timetable committee, quality assurance committee, ceremonies committee and so on.

Challenges Confronting Private Universities Management in Nigeria

Higher educational institutions in Nigeria, most especially private universities are confronted with several challenges. The challenges facing Nigerian higher institutions are complex. It is a combination of limited access, increasing cost, decreasing quality, and inflexibility in course selection.

Courses Offered by Private Universities

The public universities are large institutions offering courses in variety of disciplines. The academic interest and advances in frontiers of knowledge decide the type of courses offered in the public universities in Nigeria. The purpose behind the establishment of private universities is different from that of public universities. The type of courses offered depend on the basic orientation of the private universities, those who are self-financing and profit generating offered courses closely aligned to the private sector employment, especially in the manufacturing and service sectors. Courses on Information Communication Technology (ICT) private universities in Nigeria Management, and Business Administration, Accountancy, Banking & Finance are more common among courses offered by private universities in Nigeria. These are market driven courses where demand will be sufficient to break even.

The Academic Staff in Private Universities in Nigeria

Many of the private universities in Nigeria are relatively new and operate with a limited number of academic and other staffs. One of the unique qualities of private universities in Nigeria is that they have very few regular staff. The general trend is that of a large number of part-time academic staff or sabbatical staff and a very few number of full-time academic staff. In a study carried out by Varghese (2004) it was found out that reliance on part-time academic staff is a common feature of private universities irrespective of their location and orientation.

He also found out that, there are occasions where private universities operate without any regular staff.

Those on regular appointment with private universities are young graduates who are not Ph.D holders as prescribed by NUC to be the minimum appointment in the public university where they will equally enjoy better condition of service. There is most likely to be dearth of academic staff in private universities in the future if their condition of service remains unattractive.

The Student Problem

The approval of private universities by the federal government and the NUC gave an opportunity to Nigerians who can afford the cost of private university to attain their educational desires. The facilities available initially were enough. When some private universities took-off, they started with less than 1,000 students e.g. Babcock, Madonna etc, but now, there is explosion in student enrolment, the available facilities are no more enough and this brings in a lot of vices into the system e.g. examination malpractices, copying, bringing-in scripts into the examination hall, cultism that was alien in the private universities is now gaining ground. Presently admission to public universities is highly competitive; most of the students that seek admission into private universities are those who do not meet the public universities admission standard. In other words, the criteria for admission into most private universities in Nigeria are lowered than that of the public universities to attract more students.

Money and Management/The Running Cost

Ajuzie (2001) said, "The existing orthodox education in Nigeria seems to suffer from inadequate funding" (p.136). Babalola said, "The schools today are ill-equipped and teachers are poorly trained. Standard is falling in all departments". "Over 70 percent of the laboratory equipment and library books in today's Nigerian universities, for example, were bought and placed between 1960s and 1980" (Nigeria university systems. Chronicler, December 2004, p.18). These are largely due to insufficient funding of the higher education system in Nigeria.

According to Oyeneye (2006) and Adegbite (2007); the major challenge facing the management of university system in Nigeria, whether public or private is inadequate funding and the apparent shortage of fund available to the university system has been responsible for inadequate facilities in many of these universities; many of them seem to be groaning, silently for lack of funds (Olugbamila, 2008). Fadipe (1999) opines that the high cost of facilities such as building for classrooms, offices, furniture items for students and staff, laboratory equipment, relevant books and journals in the library in terms of procurement and maintenance, however, constitute a very serious problem to private universities.

Problem of shortage of manpower/faculty members: Many Nigerian private universities are in dire need of adequate human capital, modern infrastructure without which one cannot run and manage an ideal university that is globally competitive and locally relevant. Some of the needed or required manpower are not available to some of these private universities. Majority of their staff, especial academic staff are bottom heavy in terms of mix. Many of these private universities are contending with the problem of shortage of faculty members to drive or beef up their universities.

Ali (1999) said "That many experienced and young lecturers are fleeing from the frustration of university life into more rewarding and more challenging sectors of the

economy and even to overseas countries" The result of the faculty exodus is seen in the quality of graduates that our university produces.

Wideness of social gap: Education Services provided by Private individuals do create inequality and widen the already existing social gap between the children of the well-to-do Nigerians and that of commoners. The children of the rich have more access to private universities than the children of the poor and this has continued to aggravate the social gap between the rich and the poor in the country. Olujuwon (2004) commented, "The tertiary institutions that are established to promote intellectual excellence, good virtues etc; have deviated. We are faced daily with reports of students caught in armed robbery, rape, assassination. The majority of these institutions have misplaced their goals and allowed social, political factors of their environment to create crises in their academic community. It is a known fact that tertiary institutions do not get their entire approved annual budget (p.6). All these and more threaten the academic autonomy and stable academic calendar.

The quality of education in private universities in Nigeria

The quality of education in the private universities could be based on various factors such as the level of infrastructural facilities, the quality of the programmes as assessed by the National Universities Commission (NUC), the qualification of the academic staff, and students' academic and performance in the labour market. There are requirements set by NUC to control the quality of programmes offered in Nigeria Universities, the universities and programmes that meet the requirements are accredited by NUC. Most of the courses on offered in the private universities do not meet the set accreditation criteria; some of the courses are recognized but not accredited and since there is no penalty for any university for offering courses not accredited, this make private universities in Nigeria, Ajadi,(2010:23). The facilities for staff development and research opportunities are limited in private universities, this equally reduce the quality of education in private universities in Nigeria.

Management Style and The Structure Of Nigeria Universities

Another area of close examination is the management style and the structure of our universities. There are allegations of politically motivated decision-making, mutual back scratching, patronage and partisanship that have permeated our universities. Also the politicization, lack of resources, and frequent crisis of authority have further exacerbated this situation. Added to this is the proliferation of academic programmes. In the 1960 till late 70s, each Nigerian university was known as an expert in certain programs. Today, it is a different scenario, as many Nigerian universities want to run all programs from University teaching hospital to having a nuclear department, Alele-Williams (1996).

Motive for profit maximization: It is generally believed that many operators of private universities are out to rake in much profit. Majority of the private universities being run in Nigeria are profit making ventures. Ajayi & Ekundayo (2010) in their words opined that they charged high fees which many Nigerians cannot afford but only the few rich or privilege ones.

Adewole (2011) further argued that some private university operators are after profit and according to him, in this business of running a university, one may have to wait for between 20 and 25 years before one can talk of profit. So, anyone that came with the mindset of a "trader" will get his or her fingers burnt, because university is a capital intensive venture and to sustain a university is beyond what an individual can do, Adewole (2011) submitted. Many private universities owner appear to be motivated by profit rather than service.

Solutions to the challenges of private universities in Nigeria

It is now impossible to over-emphasize the fact that the emergence of private universities in the Nigerian educational system is a very welcome development that must not only be encouraged but sustained. The challenges outlined above should, therefore, be seen as the elixir that they need to “change metal to gold”. In order to achieve this, private universities must begin to learn to think outside the box. They cannot rely on the remedies that are available to public universities, either because such remedies are not available to them or because they cannot be expected to produce the same or desired results in private university settings. While they may “adapt” and customize some of the conventional strategies of public universities, emphasize and mainstream some that are considered marginal to public universities, they may need to craft new ones to address their unique challenges. Some of the areas that private universities will need to emphasize and strengthen in their quest to justify not only their licenses but that they are indeed the preferred alternative in the Nigerian university system are presented below:

Alumni Relations and Associations

According to Babalola et al (2006:146), in most developed nations, alumni associations are like tonic for the virility of their universities. This is so because many universities have come to rely on their alumni associations for timely and useful advice and suggestions for the continued relevance and responsiveness of the school’s programmes to society. In addition, many universities in Western Europe and the Americas rely heavily on the financial and cultural support of their alumni associations. Apart from being a rallying point for old students, an alumni association also provides an interactive forum for both the old and new students of the school, and provides them the opportunity to reflect on the past, examine the present and map out strategies for the maintenance of the good tradition of the school. (Ogunyemi, 2013).

Consultancy Services

Universities are perhaps the most virile consultancy platforms that can be accessed anywhere and for any purpose. This is so because universities have enormous resources of calls “gold mines of intellectual knowledge” and counsels that universities must dig deep inside this resource base. Universities have an uncommon assemblage of competent scientist, engineers and technocrats with current skills for global best practices in practically all areas of societal challenges (Odetunde, 2004).

LINKAGES/PARTNERSHIPS

In an era of globalization, synergy and networking, no institution, no matter its age, size and the resources available to it, can pretend to be able to survive operating in isolation, and private universities are not excluded. Because of their unique challenges, private universities need to identify, cultivate, nurture and sustain partnerships in a globalized world. Linkages are needed for various purposes. Some linkages are for “mentorship”, where a young university is considered to need the oversight of an older, more developed one. For instance, the National Universities Commission licensed Wellspring University, Irhiri, Benin City, in November 2009, and placed it under the oversight of the University of Benin, Benin City for the first few years.

However, in most cases linkages are for mutual collaboration and exchanges. For instance, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, owned and operated by the Seventh Day Adventist Church Worldwide, is administered essentially at the same level of commitment and administrative arrangement as all the 110 Seventh Day Adventist universities worldwide.

They are, therefore, necessarily linked and networked with all members of the group, especially, with their parent university in the United States of America. They exchange faculty and students. Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, has maintained very close linkage with Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA since its inception. Among the benefits of this linkage are mutual exchange of faculty and generous donations of books and equipment by Oral Roberts University. Benson Idahosa University also has linkages with the Universities of Delaware and Pennsylvania, both in the United States. Recently, the University of Manchester, UK donated law books worth more than five million naira to the Faculty of Law of Benson Idahosa University. Finally, in the last two academic sessions BIU has organized Summer Study Abroad Programme for students of Law, International Studies and Diplomacy, Political Science and Public Administration, Business Administration, among others.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Universities are not islands unto themselves. They are in symbiotic relationships with the community and society, especially through their students. Universities must recognize that their students are their *raison d'être*.

A cordial relationship with the parents of students could be a very potent instrument for empowering universities, especially the private ones that are not funded and supported by governments and government agencies. Public universities have not felt the need to engage the parents of their students in running their institutions because they receive regular and steady financial support from governments. A state university like the Osun State University, for instance receives monthly grants from the state government, while each local government council also remits 5 per cent of its monthly allocation to it. The situation in private universities is different. It is imperative for private universities to partner with the parents and guardians of their students.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

There must be assurances of transparency and accountability, if the public is to be persuaded to commit their resources to the comparatively higher cost of training their children and wards in private universities. They must be convinced that they will get value for their money. The greatest guarantee for this is good governance.

Good governance is essential to the success of all efforts geared toward the growth and development of private universities; whether in community engagement, linkages and partnering, alumni relations, capital campaign or whatsoever.

AGGRESSIVE AND ACCELERATED STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

It has been stated emphatically that the staffing challenges of the Nigerian university system cannot be expected to persist, but in fact get more serious as more universities are licensed. At the receiving end would be the private universities. The present practice of “poaching” will be unsustainable in the final analysis. The number of Ph.Ds being produced by the older universities like the Universities of Ibadan and Lagos, and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ahmadu Bello University and University of Nigeria will never be enough to meet private universities’ need for senior academic staff. Private universities must devise strategies and programmes for developing and retaining their own stock of academic staff.

One of the ways to do this is the massive sponsorship of junior academics for post-graduate (masters and doctoral) studies, both within and outside the country (outside,

especially where the relevant programmes are not locally available). In order to guarantee that they stay and serve the university, beneficiaries should be bonded, say, two years of service for every year of sponsorship. Universities that have post-graduate programmes could enroll all their junior academics as the first crop of their post-graduate students. Covenant University adopted this strategy, and in a few years all their graduate assistants had become assistant lecturers, and all their masters' degree holders acquired their doctorate degrees. In this way, a succession plan has been established, because younger academics are now available to replace the older one, mostly retired professors, with which they started.

Reviewing the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)

In apparent realization that individual universities may never be able to meet the challenges of funding their physical infrastructure needs, the Federal Government set up the Education Trust Fund (ETF) with the enactment of Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 and amended by Act No.40 of 1998, that change to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (2011) "with the objective of using the fund for project management to improve the quality of education in Nigeria".

Furthermore, the Fund is "to deliver competent and forward-looking intervention programmes through funding to all levels of the Nigerian education system". Since many of the private universities are confronted with the problem of shortage of quality Faculty members, this could be addressed by strengthening local staff and enhance their international staff ratio by recruiting top-class foreign teachers/researchers in programmes it desires to excel. Enticing outstanding academic-prize winners in the words of Okebukola (2008) will add significant value to the standing of many private universities. Also, the proprietor of private universities must not be motivated by profit but by service. Private universities are not something that one can invest in and get money the next day, if that is the mindset of people going into it, then they do not have any business coming into the establishment of private universities if they cannot make the sacrifice required. National University Commission (NUC) must also ensure that minimum academic standard is enforced in many of the private universities which are bottom heavy with its academic staff mix. The quality should be such that will consist a good proportion of seasoned and experience academic staff.

Conclusion

Having examined the history and activities of the Private Universities in Nigeria, the study therefore concluded that Nigerian government should give financial support to these Universities so as to be more effective and efficient.

Recommendations

The paper recommends as follows:

1. The Government should raise the minimum standards for licensing private universities and to ensure that the set quality players are admitted into the field;
2. tighten the process of quality assurance of programme and delivery system of private universities;
3. taking the successful private universities to the least mentors to serve as relevant role models;
4. lower the cost of tuition and encourage many candidate to select private universities as choice;
5. give TETFUND intervention grant-in-aid to private universities;

6. institute ranking of private universities with the goal of boosting healthy competition which will translate to survival of the fittest;
7. expand the latitude of private universities to be creative and innovative; and
8. process all laws of private universities through the national absence for the purpose of establishment their proper legal standing.

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