



### ROLE OF MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL COHESION AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS IN NIGERIA

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#### **Abstract**

*University education in Nigeria and indeed any other part of the world plays a crucial role in the supply of highly skilled manpower to different sectors of the nation's economy. This paper examined exploring ways in management of university education for*

#### **Keywords**

*Cohesion, Global Competitiveness, Management, Nigeria, University Education,*

*National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness in Nigeria. On the basis of this, issues such as, University Education in Nigeria, National*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

University Education plays a crucial role in integrating individual into the society to contribute his quota towards achieving national cohesion and national development objectives of his country. Universities all over the world are accepted as the citadel of learning and development of human resources. University Education is important to the growth and development of the community and the society; because of its power to fashion an individual to be integrated into his society for his positive contribution, and to become a promoter of his societal culture, and development. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, knowledge and competence for survival in a changing world (Adepoju &

*Integration and Cohesion, The Global Competitiveness Index X-Raying Nigeria's 2015/2016 Ranking/Performance, Role of University Education in Accelerating Nigeria's Global Competitiveness, Internationalization of Nigerian Universities, Globalization and World-Class University, University Management in Nigeria, Challenges Facing University Education and its Products, University Education and Global Economy. The Global Competitiveness of Nigerian Economy has been ranked poor by the World Economic Forum (WEF) since the past ten years. The country has maintained a three digit position for about a decade,*

*averaging 114 out of 139 countries and 3.57 on a 7- point scale since the past nine years. Although poor infrastructure, corruption, and access to finance have been identified as the three most problematic factors to business, productivity and global competitiveness of the country, the inability of Nigeria to fully tap from the potentials of university education which is practical and productive oriented has contributed in worsening the country's competitive ranking globally. The conclusion here is that, government can use university education as a tool for national unity, economic and social development. This therefore that, the culture of the true*

*morality at the implementation level of university education should be emphasized on against the current practice of craze for paper qualification, Citizenship education should form part of the school curriculum at all levels of education. The emphasis should be on promotion of nationality and heightening of empathy, and finally, Universities should be adequately funded by giving top priority in the budget (at least a minimum of 30%). At least 50% of the budgeted 30% should be allocated to universities and also sourcing internal revenue and individual contributions, corporate bodies should be encouraged. .*

Fabiya in Ekpo and Ish'ak, 2014). University Education as a fundamental human right is very important to the wellbeing of humankind. Effective education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous, and

environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance and international co-operation. Education raises income levels and improves standards of living.

The main purpose and relevance of university education in Nigeria is the provision of much needed human resources to accelerate the socio-economic development of the nation. Such specialized education at the higher level is regarded as an instrument of social change and economic development (Ibukun, 1997). It is no longer news that Nigerian economy had remained in recession since the early months of 2016, having experienced two consecutive quarters of declining growth; which usually defines recession. The economy has remained a night mare to many of its citizens. Economic analysts and other research experts had earlier lamented the speedy sliding of the economy into economic recession with its attendant consequences (Emefiele, 2015; Agbakoba, 2016; Omoh, 2015; Nduka, 2015). Possibly, the greatest challenge facing Nigeria today is the threat to national unity, as centrifugal tensions, resource control and self-determination, ethnicity based identity politics and religious cleavages have enveloped national consciousness (Ibaba, 2009). Since independence in 1960, national integration has been a top priority of governments in Nigeria. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, the Unity Schools, the Federal Character Principle, and State Creation are examples of state policies intended to achieve this goal. (Alapiki, 2005). National cohesion and global competitiveness in Nigeria requires the availability of competent and committed human resources. Using education as tool, the Government hopes to produce human resources that serve in different capacities and contribute positively to the nation's socio-economic and political development. Human Resource is basic resource for National development of Nigeria. It is the indispensable means of converting other resources to mankind's use and belief. How well we develop and employ human skills is fundamentals in deciding how much well we will accomplish as a nation. The manner in which we do so will more profoundly determine the kind of nation we become (Okarafor & Soludo, in Ukamaka, 2011).

According to the National Policy on Education (2004), University Education shall make contribution to national development by:

- a. Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high-level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation;

- b. making professional course contents reflect our national requirements;
- c. making all students part of a general programme or all-round improvement in university education to offer general study contents such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge, nationalism and Information Technology (IT); and
- d. Making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for Nigerian universities.

Odukunle (2001) stressed that, Education is widely accepted as a major instrument for promoting socio-economic, political and cultural development in Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), Higher education is expected to:

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

It is a settled fact bordering on title that unity is the key to national development because there is no nation that can develop in the face of disunity where individual and groups put their interest above the aims and aspirations of the nation. Whatever a nation desires for its people must first be promulgated in the form of a policy statement which it (i.e. the nation) must strive to achieve, For the benefit of this paper, Nigeria desires a nation that is:

- (a) Free and democratic;
- (b) Just and egalitarian;
- (c) United, strong and self-reliant;

- (d) Great and dynamic economy; and
- (e) Bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Education, therefore, is important to the growth and development of the society; because of its power to fashion an individual to be integrated into his society for his positive contribution, and to become a promoter of his societal culture, and development. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, knowledge and competence for survival in a changing world (Adepoju & Fabiyi in Ekpo and Ish'ak, 2014).

### **University Education in Nigeria**

Higher education system in Nigerian is composed of universities, Polytechnics, colleges of Education and professionally specialized institutions (International Association of Universities, 2000). They can be further categorized as state or federal universities and as first, second and third generation universities (Hernett, 2000) Federal universities are owned and financed by the federal government, while state universities are owned and financed by the state governments. According to NUC (2017) there are 160 Universities (40 federal, 46 States, 74 Private). The uneven spread of these institutions over the country is obvious with the southern part of the country having the highest concentration of these institutions. The uneven distribution of the federal universities probably informed the establishment of 9 universities by the Federal Government in 2011 but 13 in all later towards ensuring a federal university in each 36 States in the federation (Bamiro, 2015).

### **National Integration and Cohesion**

The knowledge we possess through education is to promote togetherness and unity. The wisdom to be conscious of our development and progress. This wisdom and unity of purpose is to be reflected in our resolve to develop our national life economically, socially, politically and morally. With these interests in mind the five main objectives in the National Policy are directed at national development. They are aimed at building a Nigeria that is free and democratic i.e. a Nigeria where no individual is oppressed, but everyone has rights to expression, association, religion and freedom to live anywhere at any

time. A nation which is ruled by itself and by its choice, where everyone has rights, benefits and equal opportunities. A nation where everyone has a sense of belonging, a sense of love and is each other's keeper. Such a society will be strong economically, politically and socially. A society of great and dynamic economy is expressed through better standard of living. This of course is achievable under a developed agriculture, improved trade and commerce and the establishment of quality industries. Indeed, national development is a process of change that is structural in nature. The Nigerian philosophy of education as in these five objectives aimed at inculcating the value of honesty, sincerity, kindness, loyalty and self-control in its citizens. This is to culminate in national development, which is a continuous process involving the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire national economy and socio-political system. Wonderful government programmes and some national symbols have always stressed the need for unity.

In the old Nigerian National Anthem, the emphasis is that "though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand". Also in the national pledge, the emphasis is, I pledge to Nigeria my country to be faithful, loyal and honest, all stressing our resolve for unity and progress. The unfortunate thing is that the failure or betrayal is right from our national leaders. For instance, the current practice of democracy such as we are going through is a practice of graft. The oath of office which our executive and representatives take at LGC, State and national levels to abide by the constitution is turned by some into an oath to serve self at the expense of the electorate. In his maiden broadcast to Nigeria in January, 1984 a onetime head of state claimed that the army came to power with the "primary objective of saving our great nation from total collapse". He claimed that it was a challenge and a call for national duty. Gen. Buhari ruled, but was booted for, draconian leadership. Even when his successor took over with other good objectives, he also ended up leaving Nigerian in more terrible economic and social hardship. Even during this third republic things have not change for the better. Nigerians are still in harsh and intolerable condition, as the economy is still badly managed, social services hospitals, schools, roads, etc. are in shambles. Besides, unemployment figures are in the increase and cases of non-payment of workers' salaries at state and local government are awesome experiences. Besides, political conflicts within and outside parties are making life worse. The evil has so risen in a higher proportion, that even

religious interest is being muddled up in the struggle. Cases of wanton destruction of life and property are common in state and local governments. In the midst of these conditions, the implementors of the National Policy on Education, which stresses unity, integration and cohesion citizens, seems to be making no impact. For sure the sermon on national cohesion and consciousness cannot serve its purpose in a poorly managed political operation. As the Nigerian populace groaned and moaned for lack of social amenities and security of their lives and property, the question of national integration and cohesion can hardly find a place in the society. For a developed national economy, peace and unity is inevitable. National integration and cohesion can only work best in a tolerant society, where human life is respected and protected. It is now very obvious that unity, peace, economic and social stability cannot function under a ruthless democracy. Suffice is to say that the current democracy as practiced in Nigeria gives much cause for anxiety. Lamenting the issue, Bukeny (2000) states that, "we have evidence of indiscipline in almost all aspects of our national life. There is corruption and nepotism everywhere among men in high places and all sorts of malpractice at the lower levels including examination leakages in schools and universities". Besides, these evils described by Bukeny (2000) the increasing cases of wanton destruction of life and property in recent time leaves a black future for Nigeria. In fact, the attainment of a free and democratic society; and a united strong and self-reliant nation, as in the national objectives appear unachievable. Thus, unless our type of democracy and its operators learn to respect law and order, true national integration and cohesion will remain a dream, and the questions of full and bright opportunities offered by our God-given land will remain elusive.

### **The Global Competitiveness Index**

It was posited that Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) is an annual assessment of drivers of productivity. Report of 2015 – 2016 is the 36th edition in the series. There was study carried out by Agu (2017) The study based its explanation and definition on the updated methodology to GCI calculations since 2007. The GCI combines 114 indicators that capture concepts that are relevant in productivity discuss. However, they were grouped into 12 pillars: institution, infrastructure, macroeconomic

environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods and market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technology readiness, market Size, Business Sophistication, Innovation (WEF, 2014). According the study Table 1 shows the three stages on which economies are expected to pass through; from the least to the highest, desirable stages. Just as countries are generally grouped as third world, second world and first world nations, the GCR sees countries as factor driven, efficiency driven and or innovation driven. The lower table captures the income thresholds for countries at different stages of development in addition to the weights.

#### **X-Raying Nigeria's 2015/2016 GCI Ranking/Performance**

1. Nigeria is yet to achieve a meaningful progression from its ranking over the years as it has remained amongst the poorly ranked countries since 2007 averaging 114 out of 139. Nigeria has maintained a-three-digit position in the last six years, averaging 114 out of 139 countries and an average of 3.57 in the last nine years.

**Table 1: Nigeria's position from 2007 to 2015 is displayed on the table below:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Number of Countries</b>	<b>Score Over 7</b>
2007	95	131	3.69
2008	94	134	3.81
2009	99	133	3.65
2010	127	139	3.38
2011	127	142	3.45
2012	115	144	3.67
2013	120	148	3.57
2014	127	144	3.44
2015	124	140	3.46
<b>Average</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>3.57</b>

Source: Agu, Merenini & Aja (2017)

**Table 2: Comparing Nigeria with Selected African Countries**

<b>Factor/Country</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>Kenya</b>
GCI Ranking	124th	49th	91st	119th	99th
Population	173.9	54.0	22.7	26.2	42.9

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GDP (US \$ in Billion)	573.7	350.1	34.0	38.6	60.8
Per Capita income (US \$)	3,298	6,483	1,495	1,474	1,416
Score	3.46	4.39	3.96	3.58	3.85
Basic Requirements	136	85	102	127	116
Efficiency Enhancers	81	41	96	95	73
Innovation and Sophistication	114	36	73	65	42
Stage of Development	Transition from stage 1 to stage 2	Stage 2: Efficiency Driven	Stage 1: Factor Driven	Stage 1: Factor Driven	Stage 1 Factor Driven

Source: WEF (2015) cited in Agu, Merenini & Aja (2017)

2. Poor infrastructure, corruption and access to finance are the three most problematic factors to business in the country. This shows that Nigeria is still struggling to achieve the basics as it was ranked 136th out of 140 countries in the basic requirements. Better performance was achieved in the efficiency enhancers stage as the country occupies the 81st position out of 140 countries. This is largely owing to our large market size and rebased GDP. Very poor performance again at the innovation and sophistication stage as the country came 114th out the 140 countries. (table 6). The country's best performance was in technology readiness having been ranked 25th globally with a score of 5.07.
3. The country has managed to wriggle out of the first stage ((factor driven) to the "the transition from stage one to stage two" position. However, this is still less than South Africa's position as an "Efficiency driven" economy (stage two). Table 4 shows that Nigeria settled among the last ten poorly rated African countries in the 2015 ranking, scoring 3.46 as against 4.44 scored by the first and highly rated African country; Mauritius which was ranked 46th in the world and followed by South Africa which was ranked 49th.
4. Though away from the first stage in the ranking, Nigeria still has serious infrastructural set back in terms of all-round transport infrastructure (rail, road, air, sea and pipeline), energy infrastructure (electricity supply and rate). An improvement was noticed in ICT infrastructure in terms of mobile phone subscription and internet usage. . (See figure 10).

5. As the highly ranked African Economies, Mauritius and South Africa drew their strength from “increased uptake of ICTs, especially higher internet bandwidth and improvements in innovation (WEF, 2015).
6. Nigerians fortunate migration from a “factor driven” economy to a “transiting economy to efficiency driven” is largely owing to the rebasing of its GDP computation which does not reflect the reality on ground and hence, not an inclusive growth progression as standard of living of the citizens still remains very low.

### **Role of University Education in Accelerating Nigeria’s Global Competitiveness**

Seeing that our economy is besieged with an array of problems hindering it from being aligned to global competitiveness, what role has the polytechnics got to play? And what institutional and policy frameworks should the nation put in place? These strategies are recommended:

1. As products of a practical-oriented educational institution, university graduates are encouraged to be entrepreneurs, seeking to enlarge the scope of operation beyond the soil of Nigeria by internationalizing their businesses. This is a factor that has kept the first ten highly competitive economies (Switzerland, Singapore, United States, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, Hong Kong SAR, Finland, Sweden and United Kingdom) at the forefront.
2. The Buhari’s Administration is encouraged to continue with the fight against corruption, but in a very transparent manner as corruption has remained a cankerworm to the global competitiveness rating of the nation over the years.
3. Poor infrastructural facilities (road, power, health, etc) and poor access to adequate funds to universities should be tackled. Thanks to the present effort of the Federal Government and some State Governors. However, more is still expected as research has shown that more than 70% of our local roads, where the raw materials needed for industrial productivity are sourced, have remained largely in poor condition (Ogwo & Agu, 2015).
4. The universities as the engine room of economic development and productivity should see Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a base for every area of specialization. While demonstrating the position of technology in the business external environment,

5. Universities, entrepreneurs and the government are encouraged to benefit from the large market size of Nigeria to improve productivity. To do this effectively, link between the universities and (Industrial Clusters, Mechanic Villages and Electronic/Electrical & Automobile Markets, etc) is advocated. Linking town and gown in this respect will ensure the researches, findings and inventions of the universities are harnessed and brought to the public through this innovative partnership (University/Industry Partnership), while practical engineering and electronics assignments can be carried out by students
6. The government is encouraged to implement legislations that will enhance the status, image and reputation of universities and universities graduates in the labour market and other institutions. This will elevate their morale to increase their productivity as they are the majority in the productive sector of the economy which counts most in global competitiveness ranking.
7. To ensure a favourable global competitiveness ranking by the end of 2016, the Nigerian government and indeed all stakeholders in the economy should assist in fighting and saying no to corruption, injustice and hatred as well as other vices that tend to undermine the spirit of unity that will lead to sound global competitiveness. This requires sound institutions such as the judiciary, the parliamentarians (law makers at the state and federal levels), INEC, the Police force, the military, EFCC, ICPC, CBN, NSE, customs, immigration, FRSC, Nigerian Ports Authority, Power Holding Company etc that will uphold global best practices. The soundness of these institutions will affect positively the actualization of best results in the rest of the pillars. Incorporating the principles and standards of polytechnic education in these institutions will help to achieve this.
8. Nigeria must step up its efforts to re-accelerate economic competitiveness through enhanced productivity. And this would be possible when polytechnic and vocational graduates live up to the mandate of their education because the link between global competitiveness and quality of polytechnic graduates in an economy is obvious.

#### **Internationalization of Nigerian Universities**

There is no doubt that series of reform efforts have been made by the Federal Government of Nigeria to reposition Nigerian Universities, but a stronger

positive political will and financial support are seriously and urgently needed for our Universities to strive and meet up with their global expectation and challenges. Also, varied pressing problems besetting our Universities today need to be addressed with utmost urgency by the government and other stakeholders in the country (Chineze & Stella, 2013). In their efforts to outline strategies for the internationalization of Universities in Nigeria, Chineze and Stella (2013) posited that Universities must take into cognizance of and get into the emerging international competitive world of learning, and to achieve this the following suggestions are made:

- a. admissions and Certification have to be made on merit and not on politics or anything else;
- b. universities must have autonomy to be dynamic and face the challenges of the emerging world.
- c. entrepreneurial leadership has to go with the institutional autonomy (Clark, In William Harnett, 2000). Furthermore, Clark, an internationally recognized Higher Education Expert from the United States enjoined Universities to be more flexible and responsive if they must be in this race of emerging international competitive world of learning. He therefore outlined the characteristics of rigid responsive higher institutions which every University must adopt. These include:
  1. A rigid institutions of Higher resists making changes in institutional beliefs but a responsive institution of higher learning is adaptive in its orientation and internationally considers changing circumstances.
  2. The rigid institution of higher education often rejects possible changes without openly considering their feasibility or desirability while the responsive and flexible one identifies appropriate ways to adopt and responsive actions.

Furthermore, he identifies four variables for assessing Universities' responsiveness, to be, Access, Teaching and Learning, Financing and Management/Governance. According to him, these qualities of, and the variables for flexible and responsive higher institution of learning must appreciate to guide Nigerian Universities to meet up with the international standard of higher learning. Chineze and Stella (2013) suggested that, it has

to be noted that successful development goes beyond investing in physical, it entails acquiring and using knowledge as well as closing the gaps in knowledge. This explains why Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) stressed that, for a successful confrontation of the challenges of development, a developing country must undertake three management tasks, namely:

- a. Acquiring and adapting global knowledge and creating knowledge locally.
- b. Investing in human capital to increase its ability to absorb and use knowledge
- c. Investing on technologies to facilitate both acquisition and the absorptions of knowledge.

### **What is a World-Class University?**

For a university to be call a world-class university there should some certain attributes. Bamiro (2012) suggested that, if a university is aspiring to become a world-class institution, it is to be expected that it surely knows what it means against the background of its core mandate of teaching, research and community service. Unfortunately, despite the widespread usage of the term 'world-class university', it has defied any objective definition to the extent that Altbach in Ayambele (2004) succinctly observed: every wants one or more knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one'. According to his statement it reminds him of a debate some years ago in the United States of America on answering the question – what is pornography? After several agonizing weeks by the committee set up to provide operational definitions for the judiciary, the committee concluded thus 'pornography is pornography when you see it'. In like manner, a world-class university is a world-class university when you see it. But what are its attributes?.

### **Attributes of a world-class university**

Attributes of a world-class university as noted by Jamil (2009) cited in Bamiro (2012, the few scholars who have attempted to define what world-class university have that regular universities do not possess have identified a number of basic features, such as:

- a. high qualified faculty
- b. excellence in Research

- c. quality Teaching
- d. high levels of government and non-government sources of funding
- e. international and highly talented students
- f. academic freedom
- g. well-defined autonomous governance structures
- h. well-equipped facilities for teaching, research, administration and student life
- i. international reputation of the university
- j. university's contributions to society

### **Globalization and World-Class University**

Globalization has to do with a world-class university. In line with this Buseri, Nateinyim and Ayibaene (2015) submitted that, Globalization has been identified as the most important game changing trend in higher education today for it has the potential to reshape our world. The most prominent way to measure globalized universities is by global college rankings. Current ratings of universities have shown that many African Universities especially Nigerian Universities ranked very low. For instance, Asuka (2014) cited in Buseri, Nateinyim and Ayibaene (2015) reported that, the 2012 Academic Ranking of the world universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong Universities revealed that no Nigerian University could make the first 500 – 100 best universities in the world. Equally, according to him, the ranking in 2013 and 2014 by the same body revealed the same. Even in 2015 he lamented that it is indeed a travesty of monumental proportions that not a single African University made into the list of the world's top two hundred universities released by the Times Higher Education Supplement.

### **University Management in Nigeria**

According to Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) Management of university education can be looked into from two dimensions: the external and internal levels. At the external, this is the control by the federal government through the National Universities commission (NUC) a body charged with the coordination of university management in the country. According to Ibukun (1997) the main objectives of the NUC are to ensure the orderly development of university education in Nigeria, to maintain its high standard and to ensure

its adequate funding. On the other hand, the internal management of each university is represented by a simple organogram. The first is the visitor who is usually the Head of state or the Head of government that established it (The president in case of federal universities and governors in case of state universities). He usually comes to convocation ceremonies where he uses the occasion to address the academic communities on matters of the moment (Adegbite, 2007). The second is the chancellor who is the titular head of the university, who by law, in relation to the university takes precedence before all other members of the university and when he is present, presides at all the meetings of the convocation held for conferring degrees (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009).

Besides at the apex of the management structure within each university is the governing council headed by the chairman (pro-chancellor) which is charged with the administrative functions in the area of goal setting, policy formulation, staff development, general discipline, budget approved and liaison activities with the government. In adding to this, there is the senate, headed by the vice chancellor and the Registrar as the secretary. The senate regulates the academic activities of the university following the general guidelines by the NUC. According to Mgbekem (2004). The universities in Nigeria are run through committee systems which are either responsible to the council or the senate, among these committees are:

- a. Finance and general purpose committee
- b. Development committee
- c. Appointment and promotion committee
- d. Admissions committee
- e. Committee of deans
- f. Research grants committee
- g. Academic planning committee
- h. Ceremonies committee, among others.

### **Challenges Facing University Education and its Products**

There are many problems facing university education in Nigeria. Adamu (2015) lamented that, Nigeria today is passing through a lot of changes in virtually every field of her citizens' endeavor. These changes are no doubt, more on economic development. We are in a period of business and industrial

changes using new methods and techniques. There is an increased search for skilled workers and specialists in various fields. University education has a role to play with regards to long range unemployment of university products. There is a declining job market for university products that lack skills or ability to utilize the knowledge acquired from the university. Many Nigerians cannot ascertain where the problems of university products lie, is it that the lecturers transmit impracticable education from the colonial masters or is it that lecturers themselves are not capable of imparting functional skills. It is common for a holder of B.Sc. Degree, (Mechanical Engineering) to tow his broken-down vehicle to an illiterate road side mechanic for repairs. B.Sc Agriculture graduates are known not to be able to operate a tractor or any other agricultural equipment and holders of B.Sc computer science who cannot type and print their application letters abound. There is also the tendency of well to do Nigerians to travel overseas for mere medical checkups in spite of our numerous medical personnel in the country. These occurrences are real and mind boggling.

The curriculum aims at the total educational development of the individual through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes while the syllabus is purely examination focused and hence, contains only the content that will enable students to achieve academic excellence. The aspect that needs to be looked at closely is the content of the curriculum studies and the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. If we compare the curriculum in engineering in a Nigerian University with what obtains in a University in Ghana, the content will most likely be the same. The curricula of universally accepted courses or programmes in Nigeria are not in any way inferior to any that may be obtained in countries with similar courses. There may be environmental and cultural differences here and there but the basics are essentially the same. The point is that if standards are to be measured by the curriculum content of academic programmes of Nigerian universities, the quality measured will be similar to those found elsewhere in similar programmes. The problem may be lack of delivering and clear translation of the content to the understanding of the students. Lecturers need to meet the standards clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2004). The policy prescribes that all teachers in educational institutions, including universities, should be professionally trained. According to Ivowi (1999) in

Baikie (2006), the import of this provision is to give lecturers competence in their respective subject matter, pedagogy-exposure, and experience in principle and practice of education, skill processes, resourcefulness, behaviour motivation and finally evaluation of self. With regards to the above policy requirements, lecturers are not trained. Majority of lecturers argue that they have been in the university for many years lecturing so they do not need to obtain teacher training certificate to lecture. Nigerian universities present problems which are summarized as follows:

- Universities admit students with diverse educational background and this leads to students studying courses for which they have no aptitude and are therefore exposed to learning material for which they are ill-prepared to assimilate.
- Universities are faced with the problems of facilities and under funding. A large number of students have to use limited classrooms, hostels, and technologies.
- Universities produce large numbers of graduates, and all of whom expect to join the labour force.

According to JAMB figures for 2012, Nigeria has onehundred and eight Universities. The existence of these implies that there is a large production of young men and women who are willing and ready to work. However, some employers in the country now insist on the acquisition of second – class upper degree as a prerequisite for employment, while others require years of working experience (Sun New, 2004).

### **University Education and Global Economy**

The shifts in the global economy, the emergence of new sectors and the digital revolution have changed the skills required of the work force. Nigeria has to reposition its education sector particularly university education to prepare its young people to cope with the changing technological and economic environment. As things stand, limited access to university education and science and technology courses coupled with insufficient capacity and sub-standard infrastructure at the tertiary level mean that the work force lacks the critical skills needed to develop the economy. Indeed, a large number of employers cite lack of skills as a major obstacle to hiring personnel. Some of

the most pressing challenges include limited access to and quality of university education, limited provision of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education; inadequate facilities at all levels of education especially at tertiary level; and lack of structured and quality programmes for technical and vocational education and training. Other constraints are inadequate financing, insufficient number of skilled lecturers, and outdated and obsolete educational policies and practices (FRN, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

This paper has reviewed exploring ways in management of university education for National Cohesion and Global Competitiveness in Nigeria. The conclusion here is that, government can use university education as a tool for national unity, economic and social development. And believing too that university education will integrate for a sound and effective citizenship, better human relationship, national consciousness, national unity and social economic, political, or cultural progression. Furthermore, the basic premises of the National Policy on Education are aimed at inculcating national consciousness and unity in the citizenry who will in turn imbibe the right values, skills abilities, and competencies that will enhance national development. This paper identified Nigeria as one blessed entity full of excellent potentials both material and human but with a weak values system, the leadership has not been able to harness the resources to stimulate sustainable national development which will lead national cohesion and global competitiveness.

### **Recommendations**

The paper acknowledged that the policy statements on the need for Nigeria to be united are very clear in the National Policy on Education, what is lacking is the actualization of the principles. With this at the back of our minds, the paper wishes to proffer the following recommendations as the way forward for enhancing national cohesion for global competitiveness using university Education as a tool.:

- 1) The language policy where every student/pupil is expected to learn one of the three major Nigerian languages (i.e. Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) other than his own should be enforced. Language is a unifying factor

because the peoples see themselves as one group, while people who are handicapped linguistically are regarded as foreigners.

- 2) The culture of the true morality at the implementation level of university education should be emphasized on against the current practice of craze for paper qualification. The people so certified shall truly be found worthy both in character and learning. Emphasis should be shifted from testing the cognitive domain to the effective domains of the people so certificated.
- 3) As enshrined in the National Policy on Education, this policy will need to be constantly reviewed to ensure its adequacy and continued relevance to national need and objectives. This document is long overdue for review, twenty one years since it was implemented. The vices enumerated above will continue to find their abode with us unless the National Policy on Education is re - x rayed and fine-tuned to reflect contemporary needs such as national integration and cohesion.
- 4) Citizenship education should form part of the school curriculum at all levels of education. The emphasis should be on promotion of nationality and heightening of empathy. The relevant agencies should drum hard on the issue of morality. This country needs citizens that are morally sound above all other needs. The vices we have in this country increase daily because of increase in moral deficiency amongst the citizenry.
- 5) Universities should be adequately funded by giving top priority in the budget (at least a minimum of 30%). At least 50% of the budgeted 30% should be allocated to universities and also sourcing internal revenue and individual contributions, corporate bodies should be encouraged.

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