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# Analysis of Factors Responsible for Nigerians' Patronizing of Foreign Higher Education

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**Abstract:** This paper examined the factors responsible for Nigerian's students seeking foreign higher education. The paper employed secondary and primary data. The data were sourced from print and online resources. Inadequate funding of higher education, inadequate higher institutions, unstable academic calendar, admission problems, poor quality of higher education, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity problem, un conducive learning environment, scholarships opportunities, and competitive higher education were identified as reasons and factors responsible for patronage of foreign higher education by Nigerians. To address these problems, the paper suggested adequate funding of higher education, establishment of more higher institutions, ensure stable academic calendar, decentralize administration processes, ensure quality higher education by employ adequate and qualified lecturers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, implement lecturers-students ratio policies as formulated and ensure learning environment are conducive by providing all human and materials resources needed in all public higher educations.

**Keywords:** Government, Higher Education, Students, Public, Parents, Universities.

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## Introduction

Nigeria's higher education is the largest in Africa yet every year millions of Nigeria can't secure admission at the various higher institutions at home. Icef Monitor (2021) observed that with its large youth demographics and expanding middle class, Nigeria has become one of the most sought-after markets for student recruiters in major destination countries including Australia, Canada, China, Ireland, the US, and the UK. Along with Ghana, Nigeria's outbound students' mobility greatly exceeds that of other African markets. The Nigerian students are known for international higher education across the globe. Nigerians are international citizens when it comes to pursuing higher education across the world. A report revealed that in 2020 nearly 100,000 Nigerian students were enrolled abroad in 2020. Where they chose to study – and why – is a significant question for recruiters in countries that command significant share of the Nigerian market. In 2020, it was reported that along with popular regional hubs South Africa and Ghana the top destinations were:

- a) The US, with 15,980 students in early 2019
- b) Malaysia, with roughly 13,000 in 2019
- c) Canada, with 11,985 in 2019

d) The UK, with 10,540 in 2017/18. The British Council determined in 2015 that Nigeria's number of outbound postgraduate students will grow the fastest in the world through 2025, followed by India (with a projected annual average growth of 7.5%), Indonesia (7.2%), Pakistan (6.4%), and Saudi Arabia (5.2%) (Icef Monitor 2021).

Daily Trust (2020) indicated that Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, Republic of Ireland, Hungary, Cyprus, Ukraine, Netherlands, Norway and some Arab countries, are highly patronised by Nigerians. It was also gathered that between May and July 2020, the United Kingdom received 2.7million applications from Nigerians. According to Adedayo (2016) every year, there are about 1.5 million students looking for undergraduate placements alone but there are only half a million places available. Given this disparity, Adedayo noted that every year, nearly one million Nigerian students look for admission to foreign higher education institutions. It is important to analysis the motive behave why Nigerian patronizing foreign higher institutions instead of domestics higher institutions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper is anchored on two factors theory of Herzbery. Herzbery (1959) developed motivational theory which involves two factors. Herzberg terms these factors satisfiers or motivators and hygiene factor or dissatisfiers. The theory states that employees motivation is achieved with challenging enjoyable work where achievement, growth, responsibility and advancement are encouraged and recognized. While the environmental or hygiene factors such as poor lighting, ventilation, poor working conditions, low salaries and poor supervisory relations, serve as dissatisfiers. The difference between motivators and hygiene factors is that motivators cause employees to develop internal motivations whereas hygiene factors can make employees unhappy and dissatisfied but cannot motivate them. Motivators factors includes provision of adequate and modern higher institutions across the country with adequate staff and infrastructural facilities while hygiene factor includes inadequate staff, shortage of facilities, inadequate funding of higher institutions etc. Herzberg was essentially concerned with what motivate people to do something. Underpinning his theories and provision of modern higher institutions, he was basically attempting to bring more meeting the goals of provide quality higher education in the country. His research proved that people will strive to achieve hygiene needs because they are unhappy without them but once satisfied the effect soon wears off which shows that satisfaction is temporary. Bad government fails to understand that people are not motivated by addressing hygiene needs. People are truly motivated by enabling them to reach for and satisfy the factors that Herzberg identified as real motivators such as achievement, advancement, development which represent far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment of the citizens.

In relation to the present study, motivation is the key to enhancing employees (citizens) to patronize public goods like the public higher institutions. Provision of adequate modern higher education serves as motivator to Nigerian youths to patronize the domestic higher institutions because it makes studies fast and easy. This theory is relevant to the study because it equips the government with knowledge of what motivates Nigerian youths and parents to patronize the domestic higher institutions. With this the government can establish and develop higher institutions with conducive environment that will enable the youths and parents achieve the goals of higher education (increased productivity and manpower production) thereby inspiring the government to satisfy their youths and parents (hygiene needs).

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Concept of Higher Education**

Higher education is an organized educational system designed for global community of people with the aims of carrying out teaching, research and community service activities. Ogunode, (a2020) defined Higher education as the post-secondary school education designed for the production of manpower. Higher education is an education that awards certificates after the completion of the programme. Higher education is the education that deals with teaching programme, research programme and community service programme. Higher education is the peak of educational institutions and it is an organized educational system that is meant to support the social, economic and political development of the country (Ogunode, a2020). Obanya (1999) in Ogunode, observed that higher education includes post-secondary institutions such as the polytechnics and colleges of education. "Higher Education" includes all forms of professional institutions drawing from the available pool of persons who have completed a various forms of secondary school education: Institution of the military, the police, nurses, agriculture, forestry, veterinary workers, catering services, tourism, secretarial services and other possible combinations of programme. Higher education deals teaching, researching and providing community services. Higher education in Nigeria include Colleges of education, polytechnics, mono-technics, advance professional institutions and the universities.

The goals and objectives of higher education include the following: production of manpower for the country, to stimulate the development sound value orientation for the individual and the societies; to ensure critical thinking that stimulate the development of the capacities of individuals and skills to able him/her contribute to the development of the country, and to provide higher education for secondary school graduates.

### **Reasons Why Nigerians are Patronizing Foreign Higher Education**

The following would be considered as reasons or factors responsible for Nigerians patronizing foreign higher education: inadequate funding of higher education, inadequate higher institutions, unstable academic calendar, admission problems, and poor quality of higher education, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment, scholarships opportunities, and competitive higher education.

### **Inadequate Funding of Higher Education**

Many Nigerians are sending their children to acquire foreign higher education because the higher institutions in Nigeria are not properly funded leading to poor administration (Ogunode, 2020) and poor performance (Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, 2009). Higher education drives her budgetary allocation from the national education budget every year. The annual education budget for the Nigerian educational institutions is very poor. The poor budgetary allocation to the education was analyzed by Ogunode & Onyekachi, (2021) who outlined the budgetary allocation for education for ten years as follows: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 had N293 bn (7.19%), N393 bn (9.31%), N453 (9.15%), N499 (10.15%), N494 (10.54%), N434 (10.71%) and 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 with N4.31 (7.52%), N551 (7.41%), N605.8 bn (7.04%), N620.5 bn (7.02%) and N671.07bn (6.7%)(CBN, 2021) the budgetary allocation for education for ten years is below the UNESCO 26% recommendation for education. In the area of higher education specifically, Alagbe (2022) noted that the present budgetary allocation for the public educational institutions is not encouraging especially in the university education in Nigeria. Alagbe, also observed that the 2022 entire Nigerian national budget is NGN17.1 trillion (US\$41.5 billion), which is 25.7% higher than the previous year's budget of NGN13.6 trillion. The allocation to the higher-

education sub-sector; comprising 44 federal universities, 33 federal polytechnics, 27 colleges of education, and their corresponding agencies has again been considered a drop in the ocean by education analysts. The whole education sector in 2022 is NGN753.14 billion, which is about 4.4% of the entire budget. From this 4.4%, the higher education got about NGN545.55 billion, according to a breakdown by BudgIT, a local civic organisation that uses data to hold the government accountable. Thus, higher education will get 3.2% of the whole budget. The education sector which includes (early child education, Basic education, Secondary school education and tertiary education) has been deteriorating over the past 20 years due to inadequate funding. Various factors have been identified for inadequate funding in Nigerian educational institutions, some include the factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning Ogunode, Abubakar, & Ajape (2021); Ogunode & Onyekachi, (2021) and Ifeanyi,, Ogunode & Ajape 2021). The implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action according to Ogunode (2020).

**Inadequate Higher Institutions**

Inadequate higher institutions are a major reason why many young Nigerians are seeking foreign higher education. Every year millions of Nigerians that applied for domestic higher institutions are not given admission due to inadequate space in the available higher institutions in the country. The inability of these young Nigerian to secure admission in the domestic higher institutions is a factor pushing them out to neighboring countries like other Africa countries, Asia and Europe to seek higher education. Adedayo (2016) explained that the key reason Nigerians are so eager to leave the country to study is a lack of domestic capacity at Nigerian universities, despite the government’s efforts to expand the number of university places open to Nigerian students. Ogunode (2020); Musa (2018) and Obi (2017) supported this submission when they all agreed that the higher institutions available in Nigeria are inadequate for the teeming Nigerian youths and this is a major factor responsible for why most Nigerian are seeking higher education opportunities in other part of the world where they can access it. The table below showed the breakdown of all higher institutions in Nigeria.

| Type of institution                   | Number of institutions |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Universities                          | 202                    |
| Polytechnics                          | 152                    |
| Colleges of education                 | 186                    |
| Other higher educational institutions | 291                    |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>931</b>             |

**NBTE 2021, NUC, 2021, NCCE 2021**

It has been also observed that many Nigerians were denied admission yearly because of limited space in the various higher institutions in Nigeria. This out of school children and youths is causing crisis in the educational system in Nigeria.

**Unstable Academic Calendar**

Unstable academic calendar is another strong reason why most young Nigerian are seeking foreign higher education. Nigerian higher institutions are known for continuous strike actions. Lawal & Ogunode (2021) opined that strike actions in the Nigerian higher institutions by different union groups are also responsible for many young Nigerian travelling to other countries for foreign education. A research by Bola (2013) revealed that 74%

Nigerian international student indicated strike actions/ unstable academic programme as the reasons they opt for foreign education. The continuous strike actions in the Nigerian higher institutions are also responsible for foreign education demand. Many Nigerian students schooling in different part of the world identified the continuous strike actions by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) is responsible for their oversea education. The problem of strikes action by different unions in the various higher institutions disrupts the academic calendar and makes students to spend longer period of time in school than the expected study years. Ogunode (2020) observed that strike actions disrupt the academic programme and academic programme of the higher institutions. Okoli, Ogbondah & Ewor, (2016) submitted that it has become a known fact that students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-Academic Staff Unions of various institutions. The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and unions arising from non-implementation of agreement reached, often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar. As academic activities are suspended for a long period, the students reading abilities fell. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers. Romina (2013) observed that a big challenge to quality higher education in Nigeria is the incessant staff union disputes and subsequent closures of the institutions. Closure of the institutions affects staff productivity and the realization of educational aim and objectives. Adeboye, (2003) in his study noted that the higher the level of crisis, disruptions and hostility, the lower the level of productivity, standard and quality of the products of the system. Ogunode (2020) posited that the causes of strike actions by different union groups include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of agreement reached with union groups and poor working condition. Ogunode (2020) also observed that the implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria.

### Admission problem

Many Nigerians are faced with admission problems in Nigeria. Every year millions of Nigerians are not admitted into the higher institutions because of limited space. The Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) is a Nigerian entrance examination board for tertiary institutions. The board conducts an examination that determines if a student will be admitted into a university, the result from the examination is valid for only a year. The grade range is between 0-400. The general pass mark for most universities is 200/400. Students have to meet the pass mark to continue the admission process. Students with scores less than the pass mark are automatically disqualified from the admission process for most universities (Stearsbusiness, 2021). The table below showed an ugly situation of how many Nigerians that were yearly denied admission based on limited space.

| Year | Number of Registered Students | Number of student not admitted | Number of student admitted | Percentage of student not admitted |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2015 | 1,475,600                     | 952,744                        | 522,856                    | 65%                                |
| 2016 | 1,592,462                     | 1,031,537                      | 560,925                    | 65%                                |
| 2017 | 1,722,269                     | 1,155,628                      | 566,641                    | 67%                                |
| 2018 | 1,653,127                     | 1,069,877                      | 583,250                    | 65%                                |
| 2019 | 1,886,509                     | 1,273,952                      | 612,557                    | 68%                                |

(Stearsbusiness, 2021)

The table above clearly showed that in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 only 65%, 65%, 67%, 65% and 68% out of 100% were not admitted into the Nigerian universities. The inability of the higher institutions to accommodate the teeming Nigerian youths is the major reason responsible for the large out of school youths in Nigeria. Musa (2018) submitted that Nigerians were travelling abroad for studies because it is very easy to secure admission outside Nigeria.

### **Poor Quality of Higher Education**

The poor quality of higher education in Nigeria is another strong reason most Nigerian parents send their wards to seek foreign higher education. Recently, the quality of higher education of Nigeria is going down. Many products of the various higher institutions are faced with the problem of securing employment due to internal crises facing the higher institutions. Isa Pantami, minister of communications and digital economy, says in 2022 observed that If you employ Nigerian graduate, you will discover that they will not be able to do the work you have employed them to do. He went further and lamented that Nigerian graduates are unemployable and are too dependent on “government jobs.” (Gazetten 2019). Guardian (2018) submitted that “Ninety five percent of *Nigerian graduates* cannot get jobs, those you see working are those supported by connections, not with what Afe Babalola (SAN), the founder of Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti, said “that, the quality of education in Nigeria had degenerated to the extent that, many graduates cannot defend their certificates”. Babalola, who expressed displeasure at the growing declining standards of education, particularly university education (Punch, 2021). Stearsbusine (2020) stated that 40% of Nigerians with Bachelor's Degrees don't have jobs. If you are a graduate in Nigeria, the odds of being unemployed or underemployed. In order to prevent this problem, many Nigerians decided to send their wards outside the country to access quality higher education that can guarantee them employment in any part of the world.

### **Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

Inadequate infrastructural facilities in many public higher institutions are encouraging many Nigerians to seek foreign higher education where there are modern facilities. Okebukola (2005), reported the need assessment survey of national universities commission identified that (a) only about 30% of Nigerian students' population has adequate access to classrooms, workshop, lecture halls, laboratories and libraries.(b) Deficient libraries in terms of up to date and number of books, journals, and electronic support facilities.(c) Inadequate academic calendar resulting from staff unions' industrial action premised on low salary, wages/welfare and students strikes often time related to inadequate facilities.(d) Lack of practical experience, often times resulting from deficient facilities. The above listed factors are all challenges to full implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria. Punch (2020) observed that entire system is putrefying: libraries, laboratories, hostel accommodation and lecture halls are in the worst form of degradation. Electricity and water facilities are epileptic in most universities, in some others, non-existent, forcing students to occasionally spill into the streets in violent demonstrations. The factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities according Ogunode (2020); Ogunode, Jegede (2021) and Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) include; underfunding, increased in students population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation. The implication of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities include; poor quality of education, poor teaching and learning, low productivities, brain-drain and overcrowdings of lecture halls (Ogunode, 2020).

### **Insecurity Problem**

Insecurity problems in Nigeria especially in the Northern part of Nigeria are responsible for many Nigerians patronizing foreign higher institutions. Godwin & Ogunode (2021) stated that Nigeria is faced with numerous securities challenges since the return to democracy in 1999. These security challenges are directly or indirectly affecting the administration of higher education in the country. For instance, many students and academic staff of higher institutions have been attacked at different times resulting into their death within the campus. The higher institutions environment is not safe for students and lecturers. The entire Nigerian university community is engulfed by fear and panic following an email allegedly sent by Islamic extremist group the “Boko Haram” to the 15 universities in southern Nigeria. Public relation officer at the University of Benin, Harrison Osarenren, explained that the message was sent through an email address, bokoharamewe@yahoo.com, to the registrar. "They said that their aim was to eradicate Western education in Nigeria. Ogunode, et al (2021) posits that the attacks on tertiary institutions, especially on the academic staff, non-academic staff and students cannot guarantee sustainable development of tertiary education in Nigeria.

### **Unconducive Learning Environment**

Unconducive learning environment is another factor students, parents and educational stakeholders are pointing at why many Nigerians are traveling out for foreign education. The learning environment of many higher institutions in Nigeria is not conducive to promote healthy learning. The learning environment are characterized with unstable educational policies (Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu, 2019), shortage of lecturers (NEEDS, 2014), unfriendly lecturers, (Ojo, 2018), sex for mark, poor students' academic services, cult activities and poor participation of students on issue affecting them. The learning environment is also beset with the problem of absent of modern learning materials such ICT facilities, unstable internet services and unstable power supply. In the area of students' academic services, Ogunode, Audu, Ahaotu, (2020) noted that many higher institutions students receives poor academic services. Carol (2015) did a study that investigated the assessment of teaching quality through the perceptions of University undergraduate students. The findings of the study revealed that, though teachers maintained good communication link with the students, their academic support to the students and effective handling of the studying process was low. Ajo Bardk and Lev (2006) who noted that teachers do not pay good attention to students' academic problems. Carol (2015) also observed in her study that the inability of teachers to pay maximum attention to students, affects students' learning in and outside the classroom; students' classroom behavior, interactions and participation and teachers' positive relationship with students. In term of students participation on the administration of students programme within the higher institutions in Nigeria, Ogunode, Audu, Ahaotu, submitted that poor participation of students in the decision that affect them is another challenge faced by students in public universities. Many school administrators do not invite the students' unions to discuss issues affecting the students rather, they impose policies on the students. Olayem, (2011) did a study that investigated students' participation in university management and organizational effectiveness. The findings show that, the level of students' participation in university management and organizational effectiveness in the two Universities sampled was low.

### **Scholarships Opportunities**

Another reason why many Nigerians are schooling in foreign higher institutions is because of many of them were offered scholarships by foreign higher institutions. Segun (2018) observed that scholarships to foreign universities are one way Nigerian students are able to receive the quality education they need outside the country. Adedayo (2016) estimated that

there are about 50,000 scholarships a year for Nigerian students wanting to study abroad, some at the federal level and some at the regional/state level especially in oil-rich Nigerian states. Many of these scholarships are targeted to key labour market areas for which Nigeria needs talented graduates – engineering, for example, especially as it relates to chemical and petroleum technologies. Adedayo submitted that these same fields, as well as medicine and IT, are in general the most popular among Nigerian students looking for foreign degrees.

### **Competitive Higher Education**

The main reason students choose to study abroad is to boost their opportunities for career development. When students finish their study abroad program and return back, they return with a new perspective on culture, language skills, a great education, and a willingness to learn. Needless to say, all of these are very attractive to future employers. Studying abroad also gives you the added benefit of working globally as companies around the world continue to invest in the global market, and prefer to hire employees who have international experience. Having a global degree increases your chances of being selected and also makes your resume stand out.

### **Way Forward**

- 1) Government should fund education by allocating higher percentage of her revenue to education for at least 10 years. This will aid in the development of higher education in Nigeria.
- 2) The government should establish more higher educations and the private sector should be encouraged to participate in the provision of higher education in Nigeria. This will help to provide more higher education opportunities for Nigerian seeking higher education.
- 3) Maintaining stable academic calendar is very important for the attainment of educational institutions objectives. It promotes the image of the educational institutions and help to reduce educational wastage in the system. The government and school administrators should always ensure that, an agreement is reached with different unions within the educational institutions and agreement are well implemented as to avoid strike actions in the educational institutions. This will help to attract both international students and Nigerians to study at various higher institutions in the country.
- 4) The government should decentralize higher institutions admission processes. Policies like quota system and catchment areas should be abolished. There should be simple and easy admission process for candidate seeking admission into various higher institutions.
- 5) The government should address all issues causing poor quality of higher education. Adequate supervision, employment of qualified lecturers, implement higher education teachers-student ratio as formulated and fighting academic corruption.
- 6) To reduce the teaching of large classes in the Nigerian higher institutions, the government should employ more academic staff. Teachers are strong member of the educational institutions. The roles of teachers cannot be replaced.
- 7) The government should provide modern adequate infrastructural facilities in all the higher institutions across the country. This will attract both Nigerians and other foreigners to patronize the Nigerian higher institutions
- 8) The school administrators and the government should ensure that, adequate security is provided for the students, lecturers and non-teaching staff within the school environment.
- 9) The government should ensure conducive learning environment are created in all the higher institutions. Student academic service is provided and students' participation are



improved upon on issue that concerns the students. The school administrators should establish a unit to handle the marking and re-marking of students scripts. Academic staff should be disallowed from marking the script of his/her students to prevent sex for marks syndrome in tertiary institutions. Staff involved in the act of sex for marks should be punished and sacked from the school.

### Conclusion

Many Nigerians are seeking admission abroad due to the numerous challenges facing the management of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Such factors include limited admission space, instable academic calendar among others. Government should endeavor to as a matter of urgency address these challenges to avoid social and economic implications of patronizing foreign universities such as increase in demand for foreign currency, etc.

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