

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AND VALUE CREATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

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Abstract

The relevance of the environment in value creation and appropriate education (AE) is yet to gain the recognition it deserves even in Nigeria's education industry. The study examines the role of environmental constraints in limiting value creation in higher education in Nigeria. Guided by extant literature and critical analysis of the educational environment in Nigeria, the study observes that higher propensity of parents' involvement in examination manipulation and malpractice and course selection for their children, grade sorting, poor infrastructure, etc. are all environmental factors hindering value creation in higher education in Nigeria. The implication is that human capital development in general and in specialized technological areas will continue to experience great

difficulties. The paper argues for strategic planning by higher institutions of learning and attitudinal value reorientation by stakeholders as a panacea towards effective and efficient human capital development in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Environmental constraints, Value creation, Appropriate education, Human capital development.*

Introduction

Education is universally recognised as a veritable means of exchanging or igniting positive changes in any society where it is well implemented (Oyewume, 2012]. This implies that in climes where education is not well implemented, the objective of enhancing positive change in such places will not be achieved.

The foregoing appears to be the lot of Nigeria where environmental constraints have impeded the progress of the entire education system. As noted by Arinze (2014: 22), the factors responsible for service failure which he referred to as challenges in the university system include, “sale of handout, sorting, delay in release of result, delay in processing of transcript, illegal admission, illegal placement of students, poor teaching, appointment of unqualified staff, missing results, plagiarism, examination malpractice and absence of general monitoring and evaluation of staff and students”.

While contributing to the debate on poor quality of education in Nigeria, Babalola (2014) noted that factors responsible include, “prevalence of students acts of indiscipline in the form of cultism and examination malpractice, lack of transparency and accountability in management resulting in resource wastes, leakage and captures, lack of monitoring and evaluation, poor enforcement system, poor tracking and feedback mechanism, poor governance, lack of management capacity to institutional problems”.

A cursory examination of the factors mentioned above and their respective consequences, is an indication of how environmental constraints can endanger value creation in the Nigerian educational system. Whereas most of these factors have been studied (Anzene, 2014; Babalola, 2014; Ozumba, 2014; Oyewumi, 2102), the cancerous issue of parents' involvement in examination manipulation and malpractice for their children is yet to receive much attention. This phenomenon defines the thrust of this conceptual paper.

To fill this apparent gap in literature, the paper seeks to achieve the following objectives;

1. Show how parents' involvement in examination manipulation and malpractice is a threat to value creation in higher education in Nigeria.
2. Describe how lack of value creation in our education sector is limiting Nigerian's quest for human capital development.
3. Ascertain the need for universities to be involved in strategic planning as part of their strategic management process.

Review of related literature

Theoretical framework

The underlying theory for this study is the social learning theory. The theory proposed by Albert Bandura is well noted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory. This theory added a social element arguing that people can learn with information and behaviour by watching other people. Known as observational learning (or modeling), this type of learning can be used to explain another variety of behaviour. The core concepts underlying this social learning theory are as follows:

1. The idea that people learn through observation (people learn through observing others).
2. The internal mental state are an essential part of the process
3. Recognize that just because something has been learnt, it does not mean that it will result in a change behavior.

Conceptual review and proposition development
Environmental constraints, strategic planning and value creation in higher education

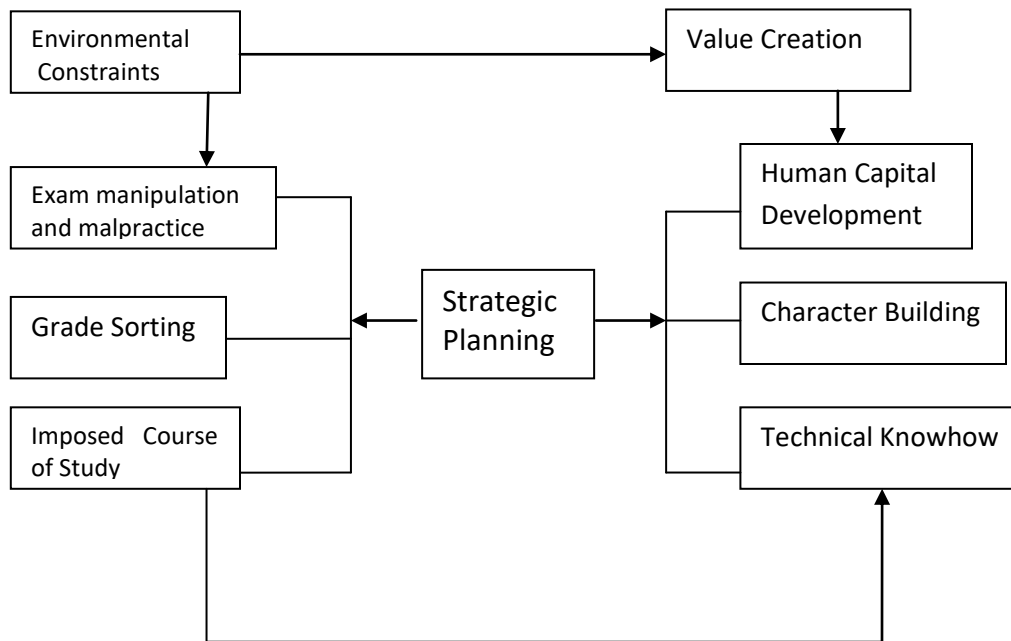


Figure 5.1: Conceptual framework on environmental constraints, strategic planning and value creation in higher education

Environmental Constraints

Grade sorting, exam manipulation and malpractice: When perfected, exam malpractice will give perpetrators very high but false grades in examinations which does not reflect the capability of the student. It is very

worrisome to observe that parents are now involved in helping their wards to manipulate the examination process in Nigeria with cash inducements for examination officers and impersonators. This has resulted in dull students scoring good grades in the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations and thus easily gain admission into the university. And because the entry behavior is faulty for such students certain possibilities are discernable:

1. There will be disconnect between the student and the quest to co-create value with lecturers/professors during lectures/field work/experiments in the laboratory, etc.
2. When such disoriented students do is to look for ways/means to manipulate the exam process based on what they learnt from their parents. And this could happen via sorting in situations where the professor is corrupt. Alternatively, the students could resort to paying impersonators to write examinations for them.

Imposed course of study by parents: Some Nigerian parents are being influenced by societal perception of some courses such as law, medicine and engineering to force their children/wards to study them in the university. This they do without taking cognizance of the innate abilities of such students. Evidences exist where large number of dropouts are recorded in these courses in the university system due to students' inability to co-create value with their lecturers/professors. Those who 'struggle' through the system do graduate with very poor academic performance with its consequences on employability.

Value creation in higher education

Value creation: In higher education the recognition of students as customers in the educational system make the value creation process an active one. Teachers/lecturers co-create value with students during classes via lecture delivery interaction, field work, laboratory experiment, class assignment etc. Active participation of students coupled with their respective entry behavior defines the quality of value co-created with students by the lecturers.

In marketing literature, Vargo and Lusch (2004) outlined two resources which customers combine with their own resources to generate value for themselves. The first one, operand resources are the type which an act is performed on to produce an effect (such as raw materials and production unit). They are primarily used in Goods Dominant (G.D) logic as the main focus of transaction. But in the Service. Dominant (S.D) logic, emphasis is placed on operant resources (such as knowledge and skills) which are utilized to act on operand resources (and other operant resources) to produce effects which results in value creation.

In higher education, resources such as instructional materials, services of Professors and other lecturers. etc are employed to co-create value with students. The value so created could be human capital development, technical knowhow and character building.

Goals of tertiary education

The three basic goals of tertiary education captured by the National Policy on Education (2004) are:

- Contribute to national development through high level manpower training;
- Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of individual and the society;
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skill which will enable the individual to be self-reliant and to be useful members of the society.

Human capital development: human capital is defined by Marimuthu, Arokiasamu and Ismail (as cited in Monday 2015: 76) as “the process that relates to training, education and other professional initiatives in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee’s satisfaction and performance and eventually on business performance”. Appropriate education should therefore be capable of producing men and women with skills and competences required for productivity.

Character building: One of the goals of tertiary education is to develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of individual and the society. Therefore, a product of higher education in Nigeria is expected to be an epitome of moral excellence through character building. Character building entails developing morals, civic, good manners that are socially acceptable. A person that is considered to have good character exhibits attributes such as integrity, honesty, loyalty, fortitude, and other important virtue that produce good behavior .

Technical knowhow: Technical knowhow is a term which describe “practical knowledge on how to accomplish something” (Wikipedia). When someone know how to perform a particular task, it will help to enhance efficient human resource development, through the closing of specific performance gaps thereby enhancing both individual and organizational performance. Consequently, appropriate education is expected to enhance technical knowhow in Nigeria by teaching students to understand the way or manner that something is done. The beneficiary is thus equipped with the right knowledge, skill and ability for a particular activity.

Technical knowhow when acquired leads to value creation because it gives rise to understanding the most efficient (best amount of effort) and

effective (best result) way of accomplishing any task, which is based on procedure, over time and in economic quantities produced or output.

To enhance the acquisition of technical knowhow, the learning environment will be characterized by work based learning, coaching and mentoring, collaboration and cooperative learning. An instructor who is looking for money from his/her students will not allow them to know the processes involved that will enhance their learning ability, so that they will fail their examinations. It is the failure rate that determines the degree of sorting as regards the amount of money to be realized. It is obvious that a distorted and corrupt academic programme will produce graduates without any technical knowhow even in courses such as medicine and engineering.

The forgoing is suggestive of the following propositions:

P1: Environmental constraints will affect value creation in higher education in Nigeria.

P1a: Grade sorting and examination manipulation and malpractice will affect technical knowhow.

P1b: Imposed course of study will affect technical knowhow.

P1c: Grade sorting and examination malpractice will affect character building in higher education in Nigeria.

P1d: Grade sorting and examination malpractice will affect human capital development in higher education in Nigeria.

P1e: Imposed course of study on students will affect human capital development.

The mediating role of strategic planning

Strategic planning is defined by Holfer and Schedel (as cited in Arasa and K'Obonyo, 2012: 202) as "an evolution of managerial response to environmental change in a focus moving from internal structure and production efficiency to the integration of strategy and structure and production, innovation, multinational expansion and diversification".

Also, Badeiam (as cited in Ovbiagele and Ijeh, 2015: 69) describe strategic planning as an management practice that “focuses on an enterprise’s long term relationship to its organization”. The process of strategic planning is a top management function which includes the following steps; current situation analysis, segmentation analysis, SWOT analysis, core competence analysis, key success factors, business unit strategy/business plan/ balanced score card and evaluation.

Strategic planning helps organizations to facilitate the growth and provide the basis for measuring performance, set goals and find a strategic fit with the business environment where it operates. Several studies (Owolabi & Makinde, 2012; Ovbiagele & Ijeh, 2015; Karel, Adam & Radomir, 2013; Emeka, Ejim & Amaka, 2015) have found a positive and significant relationship between strategic planning and firm performance. By implication therefore, a university could employ the tool of strategic planning to attend to the problems posed by environmental constraints on its ability to achieve one of its obligations of producing high level manpower for national development.

From the foregoing, we can state the following prepositions:

P2: Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between environmental constraints and value creation by Nigerian higher institutions.

P2a : Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between grade sorting, examination manipulation and malpractice and technical knowhow.

P2b: Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between Imposed course of study and technical knowhow.

P2c: Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between grade sorting, examination malpractice and character building in higher education in Nigeria.

P2d: Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between grade sorting and examination malpractice and human capital development in higher education in Nigeria.

P2e: Strategic planning will mediate the relationship between imposed course of study on students and human capital development.

Empirical review

Ozumba (2014) studied hindrances to sustained program of national life in Nigeria. the paper identified, lack of national consciousness and identity, tribalism, inequality through the attitude of birthplace to rulership, wide spread poverty engendered through corruption and self-centredness, bad leadership, precept rather than example and dishonest value system. The study also pointed out what it described as an anti-programme value system – where evil is now called good. The author identified the following as factors representing anti-programme value system in Nigeria; wealth at all cost, end justifies the means, steal and do not be caught, plea bargaining, oppress the poor, utilise your position to steal, immorality, nudity, lying, cheating, killing, violence and craze for power. The study recommended an integrative humanist approach which deals with the process of rebuilding the individual through education, laws and inculcation of noble value system.

Babatunde and Adebisi (2012) investigated the influence of strategic environmental scanning on organizational in a competitive business environment, by studying Nestle Nigeria Plc and Cadbury Nigeria Plc. The study found the existence of significant relationship between strategic environmental scanning and organisational performance. The analysis also established a significant relationship between external environmental forces and organizational productivity. The study recommended that organizations should strategically, periodically and continuously involve strategic environmental scanning and pay strong attention to the signs emanating from the environment.

Igbuzor (2013) presented the concept of value re-orientation and transformation as a panacea for growth and development in Nigeria. The author is of the view that the high growth level in GDP reported between 1999-2008 was without improved well being for Nigerians. He described the growth in the Nigerian economy without employment as being a consequence of the new-liberal policies of a resource cursed country which does not place emphasis on labour intensive approach to development such as agriculture and value added manufacturing. The author advocated for a transformation process in Nigeria that is capable of bringing real changes to Nigeria in the economic, political and social spheres.

Ribes–Giner, et al (2016) examined through literature review the effects of communicative participation and co-creation and satisfaction of students in a higher education context. The study found that collaborative participation is a good and main co-creation driver in higher education as well as student satisfaction as an important implications. The study recommended value co-creation approach as, a means to achieving customer/student involvement at different phases in service creation/production/delivery in order to achieve satisfaction, trust and loyalty.

Oyewumi (2102) examined the need for a philosophical re-appraisal of teacher education and value- re-orientation as a requirement for a better Nigeria. The study noted the following as the environmental challenges facing education in Nigeria,

- The preference of science education to humanity studies has led to the robotic behaviour of students.
- Adoption of Western philosophy of education.
- Unethical behaviour of teachers continues to impact negatively on the students. For example, situation where teachers are the ones

introducing the students to examination malpractice. sleeping with student for grades (sexual harassment), bribery, etc.

The study recommended the following; moral education for training of teachers or teachers' education; in-depth understanding of the morals and cultural value of the immediate environment should be part of teachers' educational curriculum.

In Australia, Bowden and Alesandro (2017) examined the role of interactive classroom response technologies in the quest to co-create value in higher education. The method involved investigating a subset of students from two streams with one stream assigned to technology condition and the second assigned to the traditional lecture condition.

The result showed that in the interactive technology condition, the relationship between social value and loyalty was not significant. Also the relationship between functional value and satisfaction was negative value. But the result indicated positive and significant relationship among the variables in a normal traditional (educator-student) interactive class. The study recommended that the result will assist administration to develop an educational service program that is capable of delivering high level of value and satisfaction to the student.

Anzene (2014) identified severe anti-social behaviours in our higher institution to include cultism, examination malpractice, drug abuse, sexual promiscuity and indecent/obscene dressing. He attributed the causes of the anti-social behaviour to lack of parental care, school environment, role of lecturers, societal influence and government influence.

The study recommended that the responsibility to solve the problem of anti-social behaviours in the higher school system should rest on parents, school authorities, teachers, religious leaders, the government and school authorities.

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Enu and Esu (2011) examined the decay of the Nigerian educational system and how it affects the standard of values and moral character formation in Nigeria. The author, catalogued anti-social behaviours to include; corruption, dishonesty, greed, violent crimes, lack of accountability, indiscipline developed to constituted authorities, laziness, low moral courage etc. The authors, called for the development and introduction of the national policy on values education capable of engendering behavioural transformation and ethical re-orientation as a way of achieving national development.

Discussion

Educational institutions will continue to act as agents of social reproduction and transformation as it is being expected to assist the society in its attempt to socialize the citizenry. By this the school system is expected to change the orientation of the youth under its care (Enu & Esu 2011). While this appears to be true, partly due to the academic content of the higher educational institutions, this paper argues that the entry behaviour of students prior to being admitted into the university system and the inability of certain students to co-create value through involvement in lectures is a drawback to this expectation.

There are several explanations that could be offered from the foregoing. An undergraduate whose parents were involved in two principal examinations' malpractice (JAMB & WAEC) and he/she was able to score good grades upon which admission was offered into the university may have been taught the wrong principle of the end justifies the means. In line with social learning theory such category of students are expected to have learnt how to manipulate the examination process from their parents. More so, such students will see the act as a norm rather than the exception.

And when such class of students come in contact with some lecturers whose stock in trade is to offer grades for sale, maturity in examination malpractice develops naturally. When such a student graduates with such level of grades acquisition, education cannot be said to have taken place. Two things are therefore lost in the process; character and academic attainment.

In such a situation schooling without education occurs and such graduate will neither be employable nor add value to the society. In climes like Nigeria, they may manipulate themselves into policies and occupy senior political positions, such as being members of parliament. And when a honourable member/law maker in a product of schooling without education their input to national development will be catastrophic in nature.

Another dimension is a situation where parents now make choice of courses for their children based on societal perception of the courses. For example, several parents, force their children to go for professional courses as law, engineering and medicine, due to the societal rating for such courses.

In situation where these candidates are not qualified to be admitted to study such courses, the parents usually manipulate the system to get their wards admitted. In the long run such students may not be able to co-create value with their lecturers with an option to either manipulate the system (where possible) or drop out of the school system.

Implications of the study

The unbridled quest for certificates in the Nigeria society in corrupt academic institutions of higher learning will never guarantee appropriate education. The implication being that the products of such academic programmes can not add value to the society. The reason being that they could not co-create value while in school and as such the value in use component expected of such graduates becomes zero when required to put

to practice what he/she learnt in the university. In summary therefore, the nation is being deprived of the desired human capital development which is required to boast national productivity.

For Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, capacity building must be achieved in several areas of our national life. As noted by Nwazor (2012: 51) sustainable development implies, “constant and steady economic growth as a result of acquisition of knowledge and skills used for solving national problem that add value to life and property”. A situation where the process of knowledge acquisition has been balkanised through examination manipulation and malpractice, will lead to a period when medical doctors can no longer cure malaria, a civil engineer cannot build a simple bungalow, etc.

Another dimension to the challenges posed by the apparent value creation crisis in our higher institutions is in the area of Nigeria’s position in the Global Competitive Index (GCI). Nigeria is still grappling with the challenges inherent in stage one (factor driven economy) which signifies its state of economic development as a factor driven economy (World Economic Forum 2013). The country at present does not have what it takes to be in stage 2 which describes the characteristics of an efficiency-driven economy. And unfortunately, the educational sector that suppose to develop its human resources to drive her into an efficient-driven stage is apparently being balkanised (Anzene 2014, Babalola 2014, Enu & Esu 2011).

As noted by Monday (2015:75) “human capital is widely acknowledged as an agent of national development. Providing education or training to people is one of the major ways of improving the quality of human resources as no nation can survive with unseasoned workforce”. It therefore becomes imperative that a national policy of values rebirth be instituted in Nigeria with a view to re-orienting the citizenry. Also, a strategic planning process by managers of higher educational institutions

in Nigeria will be able to determine the environmental constraints hindering the institutions from accomplishing its mandate.

Conclusion and recommendations

With a cursory look at the educational system in Nigeria and how the prevailing societal order is limiting its ability to create value in the society, this paper attempted to establish the role of environmental constraints in limiting value creation in higher education in Nigeria. The consequences of a corrupt society which constitute the environment of educational institutions constrain its inability to produce an effective and efficient human capital needed for sustainable economic development.

The study therefore recommends a value re-orientation to be adopted by stakeholders in the educational sector as a means to re-inventing sanity in the social fabric of the nation. Also, there is need for managers of higher education institutions in Nigeria to adopt a strategic planning process to enable them conduct environmental scanning and SWOT Analysis to assist them take proactive measures against environmental threats.

Area for further Study

Since this study is conceptual, there is need for an integrated and empirical study to unravel the level of destruction a distorted education has caused Nigeria as a nation.

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