

Managing University Students in Today's World for National Transformation in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between managing university students in today's world for National Transformation in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. One hypothesis was raised to guide the study. The sample of the study was made up of 1,000 students randomly selected from the population of 5,000 graduating students from the two universities. Data collection was carried out with the use of researchers' constructed instrument titled "Managing University Students for National Transformation Questionnaire" (MUSNTQ). Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. Result revealed that managing university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills, creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, ICT skills, internet connectivity and interpersonal skills has a significant relationship with national transformation. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university regulatory bodies should add to their mandate more practical and skill oriented courses that will transform the products into self reliance citizens who can in turn transform the society.

Keywords: Managing, university, students, National transformation.

Introduction:

The university is a citadel of learning established primarily to make optimum contribution to national development by intensifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation; making professional course contents to reflect our national requirements (FRN 2004:38). There is no gainsaying the fact that the products of the universities if properly managed, will contribute optimally to national developments/transformation.

The intriguing questions are: how can university students be managed in today's world to meet the desired national developments/transformation? What does today's world expect from the products of the universities? And what is the true state of university education in Nigeria today in relation to societal needs. Attempts to answer these questions will give this paper a direction.

Managing or management connotes the process of organizing, planning, leading and controlling resources within an organization with the overall aim of achieving its goals. Today's world is full of innovations and competitiveness. It is a world where the job market is highly hijacked by those who prove to be technically and skillfully more relevant than others. It is a world of those who can create job for themselves and for others. It therefore believes the managers of education at the university level to plan, organize, lead and control the students in such a way that the kind of education provided for them will make them future developers of the nation through skills and competences acquired to face today's job challenges. Training should shift from experiences that expose students to white collar jobs alone to variety of entrepreneurial and ICT skills oriented. By so doing the university products will readily graduate from university and become relevant to themselves and their society rather than being threats to the society in form of kidnappers, armed robbers, prostitutes etc.

Sadly however, observation shows that Nigerian university system is still highly titled to the early form of education passed down to us by the colonial masters, hence the preparation of students for white collar jobs. Every university in the world is working towards the world class ranking which Nigerian universities are working hard to be among the top ranking in the world. It is not enough to confess or to be achieved by mere self-declaration. World class universities are research and teaching institutions that provide resources to support leading edge research, employ outstanding scholars and maintain large, diverse and complete libraries. They are characterized by a strong leadership, a bold vision of the mission and goals, a well-articulated strategic plan to translate the vision into concrete programmes and targets. It is also characterized by quality academic staff, reputation for leading edge research, enrolment of only the best undergraduates and programmes of global interest, access to financial resources across a wide spectrum than public purse, effective use of international networks and alliances, multi-disciplinarity, technological sophistication and efficient management (Uduigwomen 2012). The most important issue in managing university education is to work towards international standard that would meet today's world class and lead to national transformation. World Class University in today's world is characterized by having a world view of teaching, research and consultancy services. The characteristics are shown in table 1 according to Babalola (2010).

Table 1:

Characterization of a world class Institution of Higher Education

Code	Ten changing features of today's H/E	Global Trends
W	Having a world view (system wide picture)	Internationalization
O	Openness to cross border opportunities (flexible)	Globalization/Borderless society
R	Research culture	Specialization
L	Learning culture & learning commons	Collaboration
D	Driven by defined standard, continuous monitoring & competition	Marketization
C	Collegiality and consistency	Cohesion/Unification
L	Lead scholars backed by legal & regulatory structure.	Bureaucratization/Expectations
A	Aspiration	Innovation
S	Stratified structure	Diversification
S	Sector-wide linkage	Massification

Source: Babalola 2012

For universities to determine national transformation it has to be transformed in all aspect for better. Transformation is simply a marked change as in appearance or character usually for better (Wikilipedia 2012). The university students graduate from school with high-expectation of getting white collar jobs, oblivious of the realities in the job market. Today, the job market lays emphasis on competences and skills that are entrepreneurial and practical in nature like ICT skills, communication skills, creativity skills, technical skills, internet skills and interpersonal skills. Teaching these skills will help students to be creative by turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. It is against this background that the researchers are interested in studying the relationship between managing university students and national transformation.

Statement of the problem:

Managing students in universities is not taking present day global realities into consideration in actual sense, that is why their training is not tailored towards making them information and communication technology (ICT) compliants and job creators. They are still being trained as gentlemen and ladies that will fit into white collar jobs. The fact remains that the existing white collar jobs have been over stretched to the extent that there is no sufficient room to absorb fresh graduates. This has now resulted to high level of unemployment, causing the university products that should develop the society degenerating to societal threats. However, there are efforts by universities to make students relevant in today's world through the introduction of entrepreneurial education as a compulsory course in the universities improve on communication skills, interpersonal skills, creativity skills and technical skills, in addition, universities are making concerted efforts to provide ICT training for her students. These improvements are yet to make the desired impact in the lives of students. On this basis, the problem of this study is what relationship does managing university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills, creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, ICT skills, internet connectivity skills and interpersonal skills have with national transformation?

Hypothesis:

The management of university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills, creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, ICT skills, internet connectivity, and interpersonal skills does not significantly relate to national transformation.

Research method:

This study was carried out in Cross River State of Nigeria. The state constitutes part of the south-south geo-political zone, lying on the Eathern axis of the zone. It is one of the oil-rich states in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study because it studies the opinion, attitude and behavior of people. The population of the study consisted of 5,000 present year one students from two Nigerian Universities namely; University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH). Simple random sampling technique was used to select the study sample from the total population. This sampling technique was adopted in order to ensure that every member of the population had equal and independent chance of being selected. Using this technique 1,000 students were randomly selected from each of the universities. A researchers’ constructed instrument called Managing University Education in Today’s World for Transformation Questionnaire (MUETWTQ) was used for data collection, designed to elicit information. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A sought personal and demographic data. Section B had 30 items with two options ranging from agree to disagree. The respondents were required to indicate their opinion with each item by ticking against it.

The research instrument was face validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and educational administration and planning while the trial test yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. This was high enough for the research instrument to be considered reliable in using it to achieve the research objectives. The researchers handled the administration of the instrument personally and with the help of research assistants. This ensured that the sampled subjects completed the questionnaire and a 100 percent return rate was achieved. Data obtained were subjected to statistical analysis with Pearson’s product moment co-relation coefficient. Summaries of the results were presented in table.

Results:

The management of university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills, creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, ICT skills, internet connectivity, and interpersonal skills does not significantly relate to national transformation. N = 1000

Table 2:

Variables	x	SD	rx _y
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Management of university**Students in terms of:**

Entrepreneurial skills	X ₁	10.02	3.41	0.33
Creative skills	X ₂	11.04	2.92	0.41
Technical Skills	X ₃	10.55	3.33	0.42
Communication skills	X ₄	10.86	2.83	0.38
ICT skills	X ₅	11.01	2.53	0.45
Internet connectivity	X ₆	10.91	3.10	0.49
Interpersonal skills	X ₇	9.82	3.08	0.53
National Transformation	Y	15.71	3.64	

Significant at 0.05, df = 998, critical r-value = .062

The result presented in table 2 indicated that management of university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills (r-0.33) creative skills (r-0.44) technical skills (r-0.42) communication skill (r-0.38), ICT skills (r-0.45) internet connectivity (r-0.49), and interpersonal skills (r-0.53) has a significant relationship with national transformation. The null hypothesis is by these results rejected because the obtained r-values were found to be higher than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significant and 998 degree of freedom. This means that management of university students in terms of the above variables has a significant relationship with national transformation.

Discussion:

The analysis of hypothesis one in table 2 produced a significant result that management of university students in terms of entrepreneurial skills, creative skills, technical skills, communication skills, ICT skills, internet connectivity, and interpersonal skills has a significant relationship with national transformation. This necessitates the rejection of the null hypothesis and retention of the alternative hypothesis. This result implication means that if the university students are given a kind of teaching that will transform them, they will in turn transform nation by creating job for themselves and others and not this old method of teaching-learning theory without practical skills. This is possible by revisiting university curriculum and bringing out programmes that will make the products to be self-reliant. This means that poor acquisition skills cannot make students relevant in today's world. This is so because the emphasis today in the world is skills acquisition and knowledge driven. Where students lack the skills, they cannot contribute effectively towards their personal development and that of the society which is necessary to national transformation. It therefore means that students acquisition of poor entrepreneurial skills can only make them liability and dysfunctional to the society which rather than contributing to national transformation results to societal activities.

A plausible explanation for this finding is that university students need skills that can transform them to transform their society. Adeosun and Maduekwe (2008) in their study stated that higher education students in Nigeria are falling short of standard in writing and communication skills. Furthermore, the result of this work is in consonance with Aniebonam (2008) which confirmed that vast majority of students in Nigeria universities lack basic computer resources, equipment or skills. Most of Nigerian students graduate without having

adequate knowledge of computer let alone internet connectivity because they do computer theoretically without having access to computer because of overpopulation and non-availability of computers in the computer rooms and classrooms. Uchendu (2012) discovered that ICT facilities are not sufficiently available in our universities for research and teaching. These have negative influence in students acquisition of knowledge especially computer skills. Akuegwu and Udida (2008) in their study revealed that students' orientation toward entrepreneurial studies in universities is significantly low, which manifests in their acquisition of poor entrepreneurial skills.

Conclusion:

Arising from the results of this investigation, the conclusion drawn is that management of university students viewed from the above seven variables is significantly related to national development. When the curriculum is developed and reviewed regularly to meet the needs of today's world, it will make the product of the university to be at beayes with the current global trends. Students will develop skills that will make them to be self-reliant and transform their society. University has a great role to play in the making of their students for national transformation according to the findings of this study.

Recommendations:

- i. The university regulatory bodies and university management should review curriculum in accordance with today's world to make their products marketable anywhere in the world.
- ii. Management of universities should ensure communication skill, computer skill, technical skill, entrepreneurial skill are taught practically in their universities and provide the equipment for them. These skills should be given to priority for their transformation.
- iii. Management of universities should work toward world class universities that will move them from teaching-learning theory to practical and transform their products that will transform the nation.

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