Effects Of Commercialization Of Higher Education In A Dwindling Economy In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This study centered on the effects of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria. Commercialization is the pathway of meeting increasing demands for certain levels or standards of satisfaction. For delivery of public services, the concept of commercialization was introduced in higher education to alter or reduce government involvement in school activities hence transferring the responsibilities to the non-governmental or state sector. This trend was further promoted by the international financial institutions like: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc. which instantly create a congenital link with educational loans and aids for effective commercialization and marketization of the educational system. Consequently, all the countries across the world have adopted the concept of commercialization of education to a certain extent.

Keywords: Higher Education, commercialization, economy

INTRODUCTION
Revolution in advancement of knowledge and technology has lead to commercialization of higher education. The term higher education presupposes an educational level above secondary education with advanced tools of knowledge to generate, distribute, and preserve systematic academic acquaintance at colleges, universities, and institutes of technology. This prevalent situation called for divergent view on how the society can be sustained in dwindling economic challenges. Consequently, realization that development and advancement in academic field will resuscitate the economy therefore informed the application of commercialization strategies to meet up with the contemporary challenges.

Gabriel (2019) conceived commercialization of higher education as a process by which a new product or service is introduced into the market for the utmost satisfaction of the consumers. Commercialization of education is a product of privatization. By implication, nongovernmental organizations, interested and equitable stakeholders can freely participate and contribute to the development of the educational system in Nigeria. It has been universally acknowledged that in the present era where everything revolves around the economy, commercialization is inevitable for enhancing efficiency and to meet the diversified demands of the consumers through resource mobilization (Shafiq, Shahzad, Nasrullah and Jahanvash, 2014)

Statement of the Problem
Commercialization of education is an international or global phenomenon that is evident in many parts of the world. The provision of education is fast moving from being the responsibility of government to that of commercial individuals and organizations. In Nigeria, commercialization of education is attributed to the fact that government has largely abdicated its responsibility of providing education to the private sector. Commercialization of education, of course, has dire consequences by promoting inefficiency due
to extreme focus on the profit motive rather than the ideals of the instituting require knowledge and skills. In the light of the above there are concerns that commercialization of education at all levels have far reaching consequences on management and quality assurance in the education system too. This study, therefore, was designed to unravel the effects of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**
The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria. Specific objectives were to: investigate the effects of commercialization of higher education, merits and demerits of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

**Research Questions**
- What are the causes for commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria?
- What are the consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria?

**Hypotheses**
- There is no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the causes for commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

**Literature Review**

**Concept of Dwindling Economy**
The word dwindling economy is synonymous with declining or deteriorating. It means growing less in intensity, size, quality or quantity; shrinking or diminishing to a zero level. The economy of Nigeria has been in crisis due to tremendous fall of the price of crude oil in the international market, leading to devaluation of the Naira. This happened because the nation depended on only one commodity, crude oil (mono-economy) as against diversifying to other sectors like Agriculture, Mining, etc. Common experiences indicated that there is a reliable and equitable relationship between the educational system and the economy. Thus, any negative returns from economic misinterpretation and management will definitely affect all other sectors including education. This implies that the economy has pyramid control of other resources.

**Concept of Commercialization**
Commercialization of education presupposes sale of services or profit motive behind imparting education for funding that come mainly from the receivers of education. It is a process of private ownership and management of educational institutions whereby investments are made with the motive of earning profit. No matter the umpteenth definitions of commercialization of education one puts forward, one thing remains constant, and that is profit motive as against the social service motive. Apparently, commercialization is necessitated by economic globalization that has dialectical resulted to technological development (Chandwani & Bhome, 2013). Hence, commercialization of higher education is characterized in term of financing of the education sector, changes in the governance of education, emergence of an evidence based policy paradigm and intensification of technology in learning relationship.
Commercialization of education may also means that schools are competing more than ever hence provides quality education at a reasonable price. Like any other market, this healthy competition often benefits the buyers in an open market. As many individuals understand the nature of commercialization, there is always an argument that it has made parents to pay more for education than government could invests into it.
Merits of Commercialization of Higher Education in Nigeria

Borgohain (2016) listed the positive impact of commercialization of education thus:

**Employment opportunity:** Commercialization of education provides employment opportunity. Many private institutions offer various courses, degrees, diplomas, certificate course etc. which help the lecturers and students to engage in various job activities.

**Economic Development:** It helps in the process of economic development as there is increased rate of literacy, gross domestic product, gross national income, per capital income; provide the job opportunity etc. which is the major indicator of economic development of a country. This indicator also helps in the human resource development.

**To Face the Global Challenges:** The global challenges such as: modernization, industrialization, privatization, globalization, information and communication technology, and emergence of international knowledge network has certain impact on higher education sector etc. Educational stakeholders and students are exposed to appropriate knowledge about the advantages and dynamic challenges.

**Quality of Education:** The concept of quality education is a broader term which indicates quality of the learners, learning environment, content, process and outcomes. Commercialization of education makes effort to provide quality education to the students and also offer more demanding courses in the modern society. Therefore, commercialization institutions adequately provide for good learning environment, commendable infrastructural facilities as well as mobility of knowledge production (Koko and Edo, 2014).

**Increased Private Institutions:** Due to the inclusion of commercialization of education, a number of private institutions were increased in various regions. The various private institutions provide technical, medical, professional courses for the benefit of the students, along with the institution also provide proper infrastructure facilities.

**Social Development:** For the development of the nation, social development is very necessary. In the private institution the lecturers and students are inculcated with the capacity to adjust and be acquainted with the knowledge of social progression, preservation of cultural behavior and identity, understanding of social dynamic and integration of the society (Christiana, 2018). With education, students are developed to have innate social qualities that sometimes infiltrated into their life pattern.

**Fulfillment of Expectation of Parents:** commercialization of education helps in fulfillment of parents’ expectation by diversifying opportunities for choice of institutions. Every parent tries their best to provide quality education to students and to fulfill their dreams by investment. In this case, there is always sophisticated learning environment being created to make teaching and learning more attractive and reasonable enough.

**Development of Professional Efficiency of Lecturers:** commercialization of education inevitable contributes to the realization of professional efficacy of the lecturers. In this case, highly qualified lecturers are employed and trained for the acquisition of the expected global skills and capacities in their respective area of specialization. Professional exactitude is generated through the products of seminars, workshop, sabbatical mentoring, tutorials, conferences etc. Lecturers constitute major component unit of the school hence undertakes the bulk of the entire processes of instruction. There is need to equip them with the required skills and potentialities to measure up with the educational challenges globally (Edo, 2008).

**Vocational development of learners:** commercialization of education gives much emphasis on vocational development of the lecturers and students. The advertisement made by the schools and colleges such as: coaching, diploma degree, vocational training, various professional skills development courses etc assists in professionalization of teaching and learning have much influence to the realization of optimum goals of educational values.
Demerits of Commercialization of Education

Borgohain (2016) and Swapnali (2016) noted demerits of Commercialization of education as follows:

More emphasis on marks: Commercialization of education gives more emphasis on marks. It tries to fulfill all round development of students. The students were forced to get more and more marks in each subject and only give importance on intellectual activities. Continuous education is too much in this type of institution. The notion is that the extent of performance often affects the rate of admission. When the students got high marks and make good result admission increased. In other words, shammed marks and results are sometimes created to impress the parents.

Unable to maintain the principle of quality: The strategy of commercialization is unable to maintain the principle of equality. In the society there are three types of people - upper class people, middle class people and lower people. The impact of commercialization of education has made acquisition of education more divergent and non proportional. For instance, the poor people as well as the weaker section of the society are not able to get certain type of education due to high rate of fees in admitting the students. In such a school, only the rich people will be able to take education because they have the capacity to spend high amount of money. This has continuously polarized the nature of the society as well as providing for health discrimination in social stratification.

Profit oriented: Commercialization of education always laid emphasis on profit. It makes education as a business venture. Classical categorization or definition of education interpreted the objectives as nonprofit oriented unlike other economic services. This assertion can no longer be sustained by the encroachment of commercialization with a clear intention of profit motive.

Mechanical Process: With the adventure of commercialization, the process has become more mechanical. It does not follow the psychological principle of teaching and learning. The children have been over burden with the curriculum content. The lecturers were engaged at all levels, they take all classes, including remedial classes, tutorial classes, group discussions, seminars. At home, the lecturers and students work all nights to prepare several teaching materials while the students battle with their various assignments, term papers, projects etc in order to meet up the demands of the curriculum content.

Over burden curriculum: - Due to the impact of commercialization of education of educational institutions become a business enterprise. The curriculum of the institution is very much spread. It includes various additional subjects in general curriculum. The students are suffering from it hence making students function like an industrial machine.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of 65 lecturers and 81 students from Rivers State University and University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Faculty of Education. The sampling technique was purposive. The instrument was title: Commercialization of Higher Education in a Dwindling Economy Questionnaire (CHEDEQ). Ten items were drawn for the study. The respondents were requested to response to research questions rated on 4-points scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA) and strongly Disagree (SD). Thus, 146 copies of questionnaires were distributed and retrieved 132 (90%) copies for the analysis of research questions using frequency tables mean scores and Z-test for the hypotheses.
RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the causes of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria?

Table 1: weighted responses on the causes of commercialization of higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/no</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Lecturers (N=57)</th>
<th>Students (N=72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \bar{X} )</td>
<td>STD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Profits making venture.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enhances availability of funds</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Competition among stakeholders in education.</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Innovation and creativity in the education sector.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reduces government monopoly of education.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings on table 4.1 revealed the responses of lecturers with a mean score of 3.25, 3.07, 3.05 and 3.21 while students response indicated the mean score of 3.06, 3.03, 3.43 and 3.13 respectively. The table also affirmed average grand mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.78 which showed that the respondents subscribed to majority of the items as the causes of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria?

Table 2: Weighted responses on consequences of commercialization of higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>s/no</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Lecturers (N=57)</th>
<th>Students (N=72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \bar{X} )</td>
<td>STD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>More emphasis on marks</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inability to maintain the principle of quality</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Increased private Institutions</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Employment opportunity increases</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Making learning and teaching more Mechanical and demanding</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings on table 4.2 showed the responses of lecturers with a mean score of 3.23, 3.05, 3.25, 3.16 and 3.21, while students response suggested the mean score of 3.19, 3.06, 3.36, 3.19 and 3.28 respectively. Empirically, the table revealed average grand mean of 3.00 and standard deviation of 0.74 which indicated that the respondents agreed to majority of the items as consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.
**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the causes of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Test of hypotheses using z-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Z-cal</th>
<th>Z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of table 2 indicated that the calculated z-calculated (-0.07) was less than the z-critical (1.96) at the degree of freedom (126) and 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the causes of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria.

**Table 3: Test of hypotheses using z-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Z-cal</th>
<th>Z-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of table 3 indicated that the calculated z-calculated (-0.30) was less than the z-critical (1.96) at the degree of freedom (126) and 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the opinions of lecturers and students on the consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria was accepted.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result of research question one indicated that profits making venture, enhancing availability of funds to manage higher education, innovation and creativity in the education sector as well as to reduce government monopoly of education as the causes of commercialization of the higher education in Nigeria. This view agreed with the perception of Borgohain (2016). In support of the above, Chandwani, et al. (2013) asserted that commercialization of higher education is characterized in term of financing of the education sector, changes in the governance of education, emergence of an evidence based policy paradigm and intensification of technology in learning relationship.

The result of research question two revealed that more emphasis on marks, inability to maintain the principle of quality, increased private institutions, employment opportunity increases and making learning and teaching more mechanical and demanding are consequences of commercialization of higher education in a dwindling economy in Nigeria. This therefore was conceptualized by Borgohain (2016) and Swapnali (2016) who identify that the students were forced to get more and more marks in each subject and only give credence to intellectual activities. In other words, commercialization of education makes the education process more mechanical. It does not follow psychological principle of teaching and learning. The students are engaged in over burden curriculum. The lecturers too are engaged at all levels, remedial classes, tutorial classes, group discussions, seminars etc. which put more stress on the performance of the lecturers and students in the long run.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, it was therefore concluded that commercialization is based on profits making venture, enhancing availability of funds to manage higher education, innovation and creativity in the education sector as well as reducing government monopoly of education. However, it dire consequences reflects on: more emphasis on marks, inability to maintain the principle of quality, increased private institutions, and making learning and teaching more mechanical and demanding.
RECOMMENDATIONS
- Educational sectors should be made more innovative and creative to meet the deteriorating consequences of the dwindling economy.
- Infrastructural facilities should be available for the students since the process of commercialization has made teaching and learning more mechanic and studious.

REFERENCES