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# Unlocking Potentials: Transforming Cultures and Improving Results in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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### Abstract
The modern day higher education leader needs to be part of the solution to secure a sustainable future for tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Ongoing reform in Nigerian tertiary institutions has seen the way these institutions are funded change dramatically, alongside an increasing expectation for them to add to the growth of the nation, has demanded that anyone considered or wanting to be considered an effective higher education leader requires an all-encompassing skills and required cultural transformation. The paper represents an opportunity to receive additional training in line with the demands of tertiary institution's job. It is imperative in: harness the leadership potential and talent you have across the tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, build shared responsibility within a citadel of learning, demonstrate appropriate behaviour across all levels of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, develop and empower the leadership capacity of colleagues, seek to contribute to the leadership process, and draw upon their values, strengths and abilities to deliver high standards of service. In short, higher education leaders in Nigeria need to be able to unlock potential transform culture and improve results across both their workforce and students alike.

## 1. Introduction

Through focus on People and Culture, tertiary Institutions in Nigeria must be committed to undertaking actions that will attract and retain the best talent to our tertiary Institutions and foster a culture of excellence (Marmolejo, 2010; OECD, 2004). This is imperative in order to improve employee engagement in order to fully capitalize on the talents in today's higher institutions workforce at all levels, and recruit and develop the talent needed to continue moving the tertiary Institutions in Nigeria forward in the 21st Century (Marmolejo, 2010; World Bank, 2007).

The main objective of this paper is to provideopportunity to receive additional training on improving internationalization of tertiary institutions derivatives, through cultural transformations in line with the demands of job in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is imperative in:

- Harness the leadership potential and talent you have across the tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

- Build shared responsibility within a citadel of learning
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviour across all levels of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
- Develop and empower the leadership capacity of colleagues
- Seek to contribute to the leadership process
- Draw upon their values, strengths and abilities to deliver high standards of service

# 2. Internationalisation of Higher Education

The subject of internationalisation of higher education has been one of the most discussed issues in academia around the world (European Commission, 2013; Ghasempoor, Liaghatdar, and Jafari, 2011). Experts in the higher education believe that this subject is a new paradigm and inevitable approach in the universities and curriculum (Ghasempoor et al., 2011). Internationalisation has a multiplicity of definitions. According to Ghasempoor et al. (2011), internationalization refers to the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution; it is also a term that is being used progressively to discuss the international dimension of higher education. The number of students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship has sharply increased over the last decades, reflecting the expansion of tertiary education systems worldwide and the globalisation of economies and societies (Pradeepkumar and Behr, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2011). Among the benefits of studying abroad perceived by an increasing number of students are the cultural enrichment and improved language skills, high-status qualifications, and a competitive edge to access better jobs (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2004). Studying abroad helps students to expand their knowledge of other societies, languages, cultures and business methods, and to leverage their labour market prospects (OECD, 2004). Moreover, declines in the costs of international travel and communications also make it easier for students to study abroad (Some and Khaemba, 2004; UNESCO, 2009).

## 2.1. Recent Development in Higher Institutions World-Wide

### 2.1.1. Massive Open Online Course

A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions between students, lecturers and other stakeholders in tertiary education (OECD, 2004). Developed in 2008, Early MOOCs often emphasized open-access features, such as open licensing of content, structure and learning goals, to promote the reuse and remixing of resources (OECD, 2004; OECD,

2009; OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2007). The MOOC Guide suggests five possible challenges for cMOOCs:
1. Relying on user-generated content can create a chaotic learning environment
2. Digital literacy is necessary to make use of the online materials
3. The time and effort required from participants may exceed what students are willing to commit to a free online course
4. Once the course is released, content will be reshaped and reinterpreted by the massive student body, making the course trajectory difficult for instructors to control
5. Participants must self-regulate and set their own goals

These general challenges in effective MOOC development are accompanied by criticism by journalists and academics (European Commission, 2013; Ghasempoor, Liaghatdar, and Jafari, 2011).

### 2.1.2. Large Educational System

The phenomenal growth of further and higher education has created "super large systems" that share similar advantages and challenges. Large systems such as those in India and China do better in global rankings and have greater opportunities for international collaboration, but they struggle with similar problems - such as providing greater access for non-traditional students and maintaining quality during a period of fast growth.Nearly a quarter of young people across the world now enroll in further or higher education courses and two thirds of them study in the nine countries with large systems -Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, UK and the USA (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2009; World Bank, 2007).The study of the big nine found expansion had typically come through private sector investment, raising tuition fees paid by "consumer"students, and the involvement of more vocationally-oriented institutions (Pradeepkumar and Behr, 2009).

### 2.1.3. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through the experience of solving an open-ended problem. Students learn both thinking strategies and domain knowledge. The PBL format originated from the medical school of thought, and is now used in other schools of thought too. It was developed at the McMaster University Medical School in Canada in the 1960s and has since spread around the world (OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2007). The goals of PBL are to help students develop flexible knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation. Problem-based learning is a style of active learning.Working in groups, students identify what they already know, what they need to know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to the resolution of the problem. The role of the instructor (known as the tutor in PBL) is to facilitate learning by supporting, guiding, and monitoring the learning process. The tutor must build students' confidence to take on the problem, and

encourage the students, while also stretching their understanding. PBL represents a paradigm shift from traditional teaching and learning philosophy, which is more often lecture-based (UNESCO, 2009). The constructs for teaching PBL are very different from traditional classroom/lecture teaching.Several medical schools have incorporated problem-based learning into their curricula, using real patient cases to teach students how to think like a clinician (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2004).

## 2.2. Globalisation and Nigeria Educational System

Every year about 1.5 million Nigerian school leavers sit for compulsory entrance exam into 150 public and private universities in the country. But higher institutions can only accept about 600,000 students. Add that to the poor perception about Nigerian education system, then it's no surprise that abroad is the destination for many Nigerian students seeking quality higher education (Akeke. Akeke, and Awolusi, 2015). In a recent study (2012), UNESCO revealed statistics of countries around the world that attract the most Nigerian students. It referred to Nigerian students that are enrolled in a part-time, full-time and distance learning undergraduate and postgraduate programme abroad.After Morocco, Nigeria sends the most students overseas of any country on the African continent, according to data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). The UIS pegged the total number of Nigerian students abroad in 2010 at just under 39,000, although anecdotal evidence from education watchers in Nigeria would suggest that the number is considerably higher, with many students taking up places at private institutions in neighboring countries, with Ghana reportedly being particularly attractive (Aina., Awolusi, and Odunlami, 2015).Recent reports suggest Nigerian students may well be contributing about $1billion to study in Ghana if the accuracy of the report can be verified (UNESCO, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2011). This figure precludes Nigerians studying in all corners of the world, from Australia to Ukraine, to Canada, Ireland, Sweden etc. Despite these statistics, education is still underfunded and mismanagement is the order of the day in most Nigerian tertiary institution (Marmolejo, 2010; OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2007).

# 3. Unlocking Employees' Potentials Through Cultural Transformation

## 3.1. Organisational Culture

Culture is to organisations what personality is to people. An organisation must focus on the need for a constructive organisational culture and what factors or behaviours hinder this development (Pradeepkumar and Behr, 2009). Not necessarily visible in the organisation or individual, culture nevertheless has a tremendous impact, both on those concerned and on the results they produce (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley, 2009; Benell, and Pearce, 2003).

Increasing responsibilities alongside growing expectations means that the 21st Higher Education leader now needs to be business like, influential in the community, whilst simultaneously ensuring that both the student experience and attainment levels are maintained within acceptable parameters (Some and Khaemba, 2004; UNESCO, 2009). One of the main aims of any tertiary Institutions is to develop and maintain an excellent learning environment for students by setting high standards across both its professional and teaching workforce (Sanda and Awolusi, 2014). However, this can only be achieved and delivered more effectively and efficiently if our institution of higher education is successfully led at all layers of its organisation and has buy in at all levels, from management, to teaching and non-teaching staff, and all the way through to the students and wider community (Brandenburg and De-Wit, 2010).

Understanding your institutions, including its workforce and how it operates, is key if you are going to break down silos and barriers and learn how to work cooperatively and collaboratively both across our institutions and all the other organisations that you regularly engage with (Winfrey, 2011; World Economic Forum, 2011). unlocking your potentials through cultural transformation will help you do just that, and will provide you with the necessary tools that you can take back to your institution and implement to the benefit of your workforce, students and wider community (Marmolejo, 2010; OECD, 2004; OECD, 2004).

## 3.2. Change in Approach is Key to Unlocking Potential of Higher Institution

So what are these changes and how can they be achieved?

### 3.2.1. Ensure Talent Management is Joined Up

In order for learning in our tertiary institutions to be more efficient and effective, there is need to be a shift towards making the learning machinery more efficient and this can be achieved by having one centralised approach. This involves having one dedicated leadership and development team, one set of best practice learning models and one catalogue of recommended frequently-used learning content.

### 3.2.2. Focus on Improving Performance, Not Just Learning Content

Once a centralised approach to learning and development has been agreed on, the next step is to consider the performance improvement that should result from the content that is being used (Onigbinde and Awolusi, 2013). Taking this approach and setting up clear benchmarks will enable leadership and development teams to become more commercially aware and demonstrate to business leaders how certain training is having an impact on business performance.

### 3.2.3. Think About Business Benefits of Learning, Not Just Costs

There is need to think more actively about the clear business outcomes of effective learning, not just the costs (Knight, 2008).

### 3.3. Ways to Unlock Your Employees' Performance Potential

Unlocking employees' potentials in our tertiary institutions require the management and other stakeholders to embrace 'strategic human resources' to drive higher performance, productivity and profits. This transformation is possible by engaging in the following cultural transformation (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, and Walker, 2001; Knight, 2008) of our human resources management:

- Human resources must be viewed as a key businesses driver, like "vital" functions such as sales, marketing, or operations.
- Human resources must be radically redefined and more emphasis has to beplaced on effectively managing every aspect of the employee lifecycle, from talent acquisition, to performance measurement to employee compensation. In other words, strategic human resources is ensuring that companies aren't leaving huge amounts of money on the table in the form of missed profits due to unrealized performance and productivity.
- Make sure employees' daily efforts contribute to the company's business objectives. To unlock the true potentials in our tertiary institutions employees must understand how their specific job or role contributes to achieving the overall business objectives.
- There is need to keep employees energized and engaged. Building a culture in which employees are energized and engaged to perform at maximum levels requires both strong management skills, and a consistent process for providing accurate, quality feedback.
- Writing and goal management tools also help employees deliver meaningful, accurate reviews so employees understand their performance against goals.
- There is need forbuilt-in writing tools to ensure consistency between employees, and deliver a deeper level of feedback.
- There is need for stronger, more relevant coaching - managers receive specific, actionable suggestions for coaching employees through a range of issues.Ultimately, quality feedback is what keeps your employee's head in the game and can be used to inspire and fire them up. It also increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover - two critical factors that most small- to mid-sized businesses say they are concerned with on a daily basis.

## 4. Improving Results: Setting Goals and Tracking Performance

To improve results in our tertiary institutions, the following must be given top priorities:
- Improving Performance and Accountability: Performance of each tertiary institution goal must be regularly tracked throughout the year and goal teams must be held accountable for results and standards.

- Using Evidence and Evaluation to Drive Innovation and Outcomes: there is growing momentum for evidence-based approaches at all levels in our tertiary institutions. Evidence-based approaches will resultin important gains in areas ranging from improving job satisfaction, to improving educational outcomes, to improving the effectiveness of our educational internationalisation efforts.
- Improving Access to Administrative Data. There is need for increasing availability of data that the Government already collects through administering programsto answer important questions about the effectiveness of Federal programs and policies.
- Coupling Flexibility with Accountability to Learn What Works. Regulators in our various ministries of education must expand the use of innovative, outcome-focused process designs that focus on effective practices while also encouraging innovation in service delivery to students and the general communities.
- Resources must be focused on educational practices with strong evidence, promote innovation by providing smaller grants to test new, promising ideas, and build evidence on both existing and new practices. Governments must provide significant funding for programs and other efforts that seek to expand our evidence base in important areas.
- Increasing Government Evaluation Capacity. Governments must propose significant increases in evaluation capacity to support key educational priorities (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley, 2009; Benell, and Pearce, 2003; Brandenburg and De-Wit, 2010).

## 5. Conclusion and Policy Implications

This research concluded that perceptions of staff and students in Nigerian are very individual. Specifically, internationalization was based on perceptions which are tied to a myriad of complex factors such as online and study abroad opportunities, leadership and communication styles, government policy, and funding. However, some of the disadvantages that could use strengthening are the seemingly systemic corruption, social injustices and disparities, ineffective leadership, ongoing language barriers and various challenges regarding illiteracy. A final thought to help you raise employee and overall higher institution's performance is for staff, both academic and non academic, of all sizes consistently report that providing their management with visibility into human resource achievements is essential. In unlocking employees' potentials, stakeholders need quantitative and qualitative information to support strategic decisions about human capital. And just as students must justify technology investments in light of the internationalisation of educational deliverables, administrative and academic staff must also learn to do the same.

There is much advancement needed for Nigeria tertiary institutions to regain its educational footing. A country rich in

resources and supplies that are vastly imported across the global could definitely use further collaborations and partnerships for more established institutional bases and governments. There must be a greater collaboration in order to produce greater opportunities. This could be done with further use of e-learning and online course offerings. The rationale for internationalization is higher education should be the desire to promote mutual understanding on the parts of each country involved. This is essential in there exists no hierarchical structure within the relationships and engagements of the various institutions.

While it is not the sole responsibility of other nations to supply the necessary tools adequate for other nations, it is critical that citizens of one's own nation become global citizens. Global citizenship not in the sense of dual citizenship, but that the individual in respective countries obtain and maintain an awareness of the advantages, disadvantages, histories, cultural practices, languages, religions and ways of living of other individuals different from themselves.

Lastly, Public and private institutions must increasingly see international students as a source of additional revenues from exports of higher education services. The revenues generated by international students during their period of study can be substantial especially in terms of living expenses (European Commission, 2013).

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