



TEACHING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The way universities are operating today have increases concern on what skills and capabilities learners should be equipped or developed with in the higher education such that graduates of the institution will be able to fit into the world of work and also enhance the enterprise culture. In the last decade the concern to incorporate entrepreneur skills and training into the higher education curriculum have been on the agenda of the government as well as the institution. The concern has left gaps unturned in understanding the implications of teaching quality on entrepreneurship. This paper examines teaching quality in the light of entrepreneurship as it applies to the Nigerian higher education system. It brings to the frontline issues that will spur more attention on this sector of the economy for increased competitiveness of the nation. The clarion call is on these institutions to brace up on the quality of their activities, now that the business of education is an increasing global phenomenon; and to imbibe entrepreneurship at dealing with its consumers.*

Keywords: *Higher education, Quality, Entrepreneurship, Universities, Tertiary*

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, in Nigeria, there has been different debates on the decline in teaching quality in Nigerian public university systems (Obasi, Akuchie & Obasi, 2010). They furthermore stressed that the context in which public universities operate had profound changes over the last two decades: increasing demand for higher education, when technological advancement is low, which has put pressure on institutions to respond to the needs and aspirations of students, employers and academics staff (Blackmore, 2009). In Nigeria, Ojeifo (2012) opines that education at the tertiary level seeks to equip students “with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of businesses”. For these reasons, many authorities such as the government had introduced different policies, models and theories in the past two decades in the quest to improve quality of teaching. Government has also used privatization strategy in reforming the universities introducing entrepreneur skills in the business of teaching and learning. Although Ladanu (2011) expressed that entrepreneur skill is an important factor for the development and sustenance of economic development in any nation, therefore it is imperative for the academia and the government to pay close attention in its development. Tanoira and Valencia (2014) also claimed that Entrepreneurship is an important tool for developing and developed economies since its plays a key role in the development of the individuals that collectively contribute to the development of the economy. The developing countries, in particular, that face the problems of poverty and graduate unemployment, low levels of technology and economic development are left with no option than to embrace entrepreneurship, its teaching and particularly at the tertiary level of education. This was assumed a strategy to solve the problems in public universities to some extent but created other quality issues such as the decline in quality of teaching as noted in Adeogun Subair and Osifila (2009) that quality issue is the major problem in the Nigeria university not policy. However, in an earlier publication by Ochuba (2001) and Igbin-Akenzua (2007) they highlight the numbers of problems Nigerian universities are facing such as lecture rooms are overcrowded, lecturer-student interactions are obviously limited, where laboratories are found, they are usually obsolete and starved of modern equipment. The university students in many cases are not exposed to the practical application of relevant skills on what they are taught in the classroom, the relevant books, journals and other educational materials also



are absent. These are few among many problems confronting Nigerian universities. These problems were also identified in the work of Duze (2011) and Adetunji (2016).

Although this paper's attention is to investigate quality of teaching in higher education, but quality of teaching cannot be studied in isolation. The paper considers the quality of teaching in respect to entrepreneurship in the Nigerian tertiary education level. However, the quality of teaching in higher education has been studied extensively among diverse professional groups in developed worlds. Among which are Rowland (2006); Kember and McNaught (2007); and Moon, (2008) in United Kingdom called for more work to examine quality teaching across divergent samples and demographics. As important, as quality teaching is to the realization of universities goals and objectives, the Nigerian university has been untapped by researchers. Whereas the Nigerian educational system is crucial in the development of the nation, little is been done by the government to ensure it achieves this objective successfully. The Nigerian government is managing and financing the operations of more than 80 universities and several polytechnics and colleges of education and other higher learning institutions like mono-technics as sole owners, with more than 70 privately owned universities all spinning out graduates that cannot stand on their own but seek white collar jobs after graduation. Such education and the quality of its delivery consequently, is worthwhile to be carefully considered.

Conversely, research around the world shows that, many quality of teaching research studies have been carried out using Western samples (Gibbs 1992; Biggs, 2003) and in emerging economies such as China and South Korea (Ko, Price and Mueller, 1997; Lee, Allen, Meyer and Rhee, 2001). On the other hand, very few studies have considered quality in the Nigerian context in particular, thus challenging the generalizability of such studies to a non-western context. In addition, most of these studies have tended to use cognitive psychology to debate quality teaching in higher education (e.g. Ross 1991; Laurillard 1997, 2002; Ramsden 1996, 2003, Brown and Race 2002; Nicholls 2002).

In this regard, Haggis (2006) and Moon (2008) stated that "the models of quality teaching assessment have been developed and tested in western countries. There is a need for further research to determine whether these models apply elsewhere". Furthermore, from cultural point of view United Kingdom and other Western countries are individualistic based societies as compared to relative collective behaviour of African countries. Therefore,



generalizing the outcomes of these studies in African context may be problematic. This is supported by Yin (2005) who states that “no findings can be accepted universally unless they have been tested and proven in another culture or environment”.

Similarly, Ghebregiorgis and Karsten (2006) have noted that Africa contributes less to the existing body of knowledge because there is a common prejudice about quality teaching in Africa, which paints a negative picture of the continent. Thus, impeding constructive research into the nature of quality teaching in African higher education and the implementation of Western management practices where appropriate will be needful.

DEFINITION OF QUALITY

The debate about quality teaching in higher education has been around for quite a long time. While sociologists take into consideration the social context of teaching and learning in the classroom, cognitive psychologists ignore it by making teaching and learning a technical process, in which a teacher teaches in a particular way, and a student learns in the same way. Since the early 1990s, cognitive psychology has dominated the debate about quality teaching in higher education, such as Chalmers (1992), Ramsden (1996, 2003), Biggs (2003), Biggs and Tang (2007), Kember and McNaught (2007) and Moon (2008).

Many others, have been concerned with teaching and learning quality not only in relation to the cognitive aspect of teaching and learning, but also in relation to the issues that affect the cognitive development of students in higher education, such as issues of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, social class, religion and nationality. Nevertheless, since the late 1970s, studies which focus only on the cognitive aspects of teaching and learning in higher education, such as Ramsden (1987), Trigwell and Prosser (1996), Kember and Wong (2000) and many others, have been developed without taking into consideration the opinion of others.

Likewise, many studies have been piloted in the developed countries and some developing countries on quality teaching in higher education, rarely have any of this studies on quality teaching been carried out in Nigeria. There is very little research around quality issues in Nigerian higher education. The absence of any rigorous study on quality teaching in Nigerian universities has been revealed by lack of literature, while others have considered quality as a concept.



Quality as a Concept in Higher Education

The concept of quality as it applied to teaching and learning in higher education around the world means different things to different people, in different times and circumstances, and this difference in meaning reflects a difference in perceptions or measurement of quality. According to Ball (1985: 97), quality is the 'Achilles' Heel' of higher education because it is a sensitive issue, and nothing will take away that sensitivity. Quality is a contested concept because it is a metaphor for rival views over the aims of higher education, the various voices contributing to the debate either defending or trying to impose alternative views of quality in higher education with new means of assessing it (Barnett, 1994).

Adetunji (2014) claims that quality is an elusive concept when applied to teaching and learning in higher education because the criteria used to judge it are influenced by when, where, for whom and by whom judgement is made. Baird (1988) earlier suggested that because of the complexity of teaching and learning in higher education the criteria for judgement is important. Quality has also been defined taking different meanings in different situations as an 'ambiguous term' (Harvey and Green, 1993, Ellis, 1995, D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). According to Morley (2002a, 2002b) quality assurance is a discourse of power. Quality, as an ideology, is power because it 'involves the constitution and patterning of how human beings live their lives as conscious, reflecting initiators of acts in a structured, meaningful world' (Therborn, 1982: 15).

According to Therborn (1982), ideology operates as a discourse addressing human beings as subjects. Barnett (2003) argues that, on the one hand, quality has the capacity to be a virtuous ideology because it can be a force for improvement. On the other hand, quality becomes pernicious when it becomes a project in its own right. Five well-documented concepts of quality are applied to higher education, which have been influenced by the political and socio-economic contexts mentioned earlier. Firstly, quality is defined as being exceptional or distinctive (excellence). Secondly, it has been defined as method of achieving consistency particularly in process. Thirdly, is being addressed as fit for purpose (conformity to specified objectives or standards). Fourth, as being accountable, effective and efficient (providing value for money) and lastly, as being transformative, wherein educationists considered an on-going process of transformation including the empowerment and enhancement of all involved. (Campel land Rozsnayi, 2002; Watty, 2005).



We introduced quality concept to help focus on their meaning in relation to teaching and learning in higher education with emphasis on entrepreneurship. This makes the study more demanding and competitive in nature. However, there is a need to know how this fits into the teaching aspect in higher education, which this research will venture into in detail in the future.

Quality Teaching in Higher Education

Quality teaching in higher education, together with access, funding, tuition fees, research excellence and productivity, has been one of the central focuses of government policies. In many policies on education, the government stated that effective teaching and learning were essential for the promotion of excellence and opportunity in higher education. The policy maintained that all students were entitled to high quality teaching. They were entitled to be taught well. That means no student had to tolerate poor teaching (Adetunji, 2014). It also asserted that students' choice would increasingly work to drive up quality, because students would become intelligent customers/consumers of an increasingly diverse provision. To meet their own diverse needs, students require accessible information on the quality teaching based upon up-to-date and robust assessments. It stated that as well as making sure that students made well-informed choices, good quality teaching must be guaranteed for all. In a government policy on education in the United Kingdom, the UK government seems to be giving students a "voice" in the debate about quality teaching in higher education (DES, 2003). However, the student's voice is not included in the establishment of what quality teaching and learning in higher education are in many countries like Nigeria. This is because students are not recognised as customers who know what they want (Adetunji, 2015).

According to the UK government, institutions should meet the diverse needs and expectations of students: because students are contributing more to the costs of their tuition, their expectations of teaching quality will rise (DES, 2003) and will therefore need to be met. In this policy document, quality is entangled with widening participation and with the individuality (the learning needs) of students in higher education, where all students should reject poor teaching and be guaranteed good quality teaching. Quality, then, is open to interpretation from each individual student in the classroom in higher education. This assertion raises the need to debate more about quality teaching in higher education.



The Debate about Quality Teaching in Higher Education

In the previous section, we explored the political, socio-economic and ideological environment in which the debate about quality teaching and learning in higher education is taking place. In this section, we will examine the tensions within the debate about quality teaching and learning in higher education. We will also investigate students' and teachers' perceptions and conceptions of teaching and learning and their relationship to the debate about quality teaching and entrepreneurship in higher education.

Tensions exist in the debate about quality teaching and learning in higher education. On the one hand, Ellis (1995: 4) argues that 'there are no laws and precious few theories linking teaching and learning'. In other words, there is no direct link between teaching and learning. This claim separates teaching from learning, by establishing the individuality of teaching, and the individuality of learning. Biggs (1999: 2) supports this claim by asserting that teaching is individual and that 'there is no multipurpose, single or best method of teaching'. Teachers have to adjust their teaching to the subject matter and resources, to the weaknesses and strengths of their own teaching, and to students. Andrews et al. (1996 cited in Haggis, 2006) highlighted the complexity of teaching and its often idiosyncratic process. On the other hand, Ramsden (1996: 6, 2003: 8) argued that teaching and learning in higher education are 'inextricably and elaborately linked'. That is, teaching and learning relate to each other and are entwined. This means that teaching affects learning and learning affects teaching in the classroom.

According to Smith (1999) teaching and learning in the classroom are seen as sequenced activities, in which learning is a result of teaching. If that is true, then the following questions need to be addressed. What are students' preferences of teaching styles? What reasons (perceptions and beliefs) lie behind students' choice or preference for some teaching styles?

The preceding paragraph gives us two contradictory, opposed and competing views of teaching and learning in higher education. If those views are expressed by writers and researchers in higher education, they probably reflect the views of teachers as well. Taking into consideration both positions, one starts to wonder whether teaching and learning are individual and unconnected, or teaching and learning are intertwined.



There exists a vast amount of research into teaching and learning in higher education aimed at the improvement of the quality of teaching as noted by Trigwell and Prosser (1996) and quality teaching and learning in higher education, such as has been discussed by Kember and Wong (2000). These studies focus on the cognitive aspect of teaching and learning. There studies aimed at identifying conceptions, orientations and approaches to teaching and learning and their implications for quality improvement and assurance, from the perspectives of teachers, students, and/or both.

To start with, *Students' and teachers' perceptions and conceptions of learning and their relationship to the debate about quality for teaching and learning in higher education*. Chambers (1992) suggested that a belief lies behind all the work in relation to students' approach to learning, that the 'quality of learning is profoundly affected by the *approach* to learning that students take' (ibid., 1992: 142, author's emphasis), and that the approach of students to learning can be affected by the quality of teaching and by the methods of assessment. Chambers' assertions mirror those of Birenbaum (1997), Gibbs (1992) and Biggs (1999, 2003), in relation to assessment methods and student approaches to learning/studying. These studies all claim that there is no association between the surface learning approach and good performance in assessments. Marton and Saljo (1997) drew a similar conclusion from the work that observed and described, in as much detail as possible, what characterizes deep and surface approaches to learning. Therefore, it is important that students take ownership of the learning process, an approach which makes teaching and learning more enterprising.

Teaching and Entrepreneurship at the Higher Education

Entrepreneurship is generating increased interest from researchers, academics, private individuals and the government. As a field, and a dynamic one too, it is viewed from many perspectives (Audretsch, 2012; O'Neil and Viljoen, 2001). It is the belief that it has economic and social implications; on employment and poverty (Ikeije and Onuba, 2015; Ladanu, 2009, 2011).

What is entrepreneurship?

According to Salih et al. (2015) "entrepreneurship is the process of exploring and developing opportunities to create value for pre-established or new organizations". To Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004), entrepreneurship is "dynamic process of vision, change and creation". This



definition is perfectly inline with the reason for higher education development. Similarly Shane and Venkataraman (2000) associated entrepreneurship with discovery and exploitation of opportunities for the creation of goods and services. Consequently, one can understand the increasing attention of many institutions on developing entrepreneurship programs as the graduate spilling out of the institutions need jobs. Likewise, the government needs more people who can work independently to produce results, employ other graduates as well as increase the country's economy. Every society is endowed with resources which it intends to exploit through the inept understanding of its use and the development of the requisite skills to create value (Ladanu, 2009). Therefore, entrepreneurship becomes important in higher education of any country, by impacting its graduates with the right skills and capabilities in preparing them to add value to the society, create new products and services and to increase the standards of living. Typically, too, such graduates will move out of the bandwagon of unemployment and become net employers of labour. Consequently, Luthje and Franke (2002) opine that higher education needs to use entrepreneurship education to prepare its graduates to start and run their own companies. The higher education, according to Igun (2004), strived to equip its students (the customers) with the right knowledge and skills to enable them move the economy forward. In the light of the above, Ladanu (2009) considers entrepreneurship as a critical element for the sustenance of industrialization of nations.

Many higher education entities in Nigeria, now centre attention on having Entrepreneurship Development Centres, teach entrepreneurship as a general course while some have entrepreneurship departments for students. The primary objectives are to inculcate in the students/consumers of its product the skills and knowledge necessary to exploit opportunities and creativity in the starting and management of new or existing enterprises; as well as to contribute theoretically to the field of entrepreneurship in particular. However, the state of these programs is still below standard. Odetunde (2004) and Arogundade (2011) attest to the low level of infrastructure in many Nigerian universities. Furthermore, the pedagogy of the teaching does not encourage creativity in the students. But in a dynamic and knowledge-driven economy, entrepreneurship is sine qua non for increased competitiveness of industries and socio-economic development of the citizenry.



Practical Implication on entrepreneurship and *Original contribution*

Entrepreneurship is the actualization of one's desire, personal ambition, and expression to add value to the society. This implies one is an entrepreneur. That is, one is innovative and undertakes some form of risk to finance a business to transform such innovations to goods and services. This can be carried out through new enterprises or through existing, matured enterprises as response to an opportunity. Teaching is one of the oldest form of professions in the world. It has also been referred to as the mother of all professions because teachers teach all professions. Ogundare, (2009) pointed that "teaching quality is the ability of a teacher to effectively demonstrate exemplary knowledge and skill to learners". However, it needs to be regulated properly to foster greater development as students convert class room knowledge to physical entity called enterprise. The universities need to be entrepreneurial at the delivery of its products to its consumers, the students and users. It is assumed that good quality teaching will in the long-run improve the society and the countries economic growth. It is obvious that there has being drastic decline in teaching quality in Nigerian public universities for over a decade. The introduction of private universities was to bring improvement to the teaching quality in Nigerian higher education. The challenges are clear, however, to have a good work force that will bring an improvement to the economy developing knowledge through better-trained people is essential. The good news here is that higher education business is becoming a global business. Competitors around the world are looking to sell their higher education overseas, into the markets that are traditionally considered non existing or isolated.

In addition, if the need arises to close the productivity gaps, we must close the skill gap and this means boosting higher education. Therefore, this study is significant in the sense that it will help Nigerian universities to identify where they need to improve and possibly establish a foundation upon which they can base their future. The over-all effects of quality teaching will be to improve the economy which will in turn develop all sectors such as education, health, agriculture, policymaking and implementation.

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