

Managing Tertiary Education for National Transformation in Cameroon: A Case Study of University of Maroua

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Abstract: *The thrust of this study is to examine managing tertiary education for national transformation in Cameroon with reference to the University of Maroua. Managing connotes guiding, leading and controlling of the efforts of people toward some common objectives acceptable for national transformation. Thus, managing is a social or interactional and economic process involving a sequence of coordinated events such as planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling or leading which are its pre-requisites needed to use available scarce human and material resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way in our tertiary institutions in Cameroon. Having the University of Maroua in particular as reference, the study recommends that managing education should be a priority in terms of providing enough funds in budgetary allocation to tertiary education, providing infrastructures, equipping libraries and laboratories, and also promoting and paying academic staff when due.*

Keywords: *managing, tertiary education, and national transformation.*

Resumé: L'objectif de cette étude c'est d'examiner la gestion de l'enseignement tertiaire pour la transformation nationale au Cameroun. Elle a pour cadre de référence l'Université de Maroua. Par gestion on sous – entend le fait de guider, de mener et de contrôler les efforts de la population en vue d'atteindre des objectifs communs capables d'assurer une transformation nationale. Ainsi, nous pouvons maintenir que la gestion est un processus social ou interactionnel et économique comprenant comme suite d'événements coordonnés tels que le planning, l'organisation, la coordination et le contrôle qui constituent ses prérequis, nécessaire pour le déploiement des ressources humaines et matérielles disponibles mais limitées pour atteindre un but escompté de la manière la plus rapide et efficace dans nos institutions tertiaires au Cameroun. En prenant l'Université de Maroua en particulier comme le cadre de référence, l'étude établit une recommandation qui est la suivante : la gestion de l'enseignement doit être une priorité qui se décline en l'approvisionnement en fonds suffisants dans la dotation budgétaire alloués à l'enseignement tertiaire, la mise sur pied des infrastructures, l'équipement des bibliothèques et des laboratoires, ainsi que l'avancement et le paiement, à temps, des personnels administratifs.

Mots – clés: gestion, enseignement tertiaire, transformation nationale.

1. INTRODUCTION

Managing simply means planning, organizing, controlling and being in charge of goods and services to achieve a desired goal. Managing tertiary education is therefore the ability of being able in handling carefully and not wastefully what goes on in the process of educating people so that nothing goes out of hand. It is a concept that goes along with the quest to put the formal education system under control, regulations, or supervision in an attempt to use carefully or economize available scarce resources through cooperative efforts (Babalola, Ayeni, Adedeji, Suleiman and Arikewuyo, 2006). It means that managing tertiary education includes the ability of establishing tertiary institutions, attracting best staffs, conducting teaching - learning processes and research as well as graduating learners at all levels of educations in an effective and efficient manner.

Effectiveness and efficiency connotes the national philosophy or objective of managing tertiary education in Cameroon hence these objectives are fundamental or golden rules in transforming the ailing economy interms of efficient planning, organizing, staffing directing, controlling, coordinating and budgeting. Tertiary institutions are the major factories or faculties of molding or building human capacities needed to transform the existing raw materials for human utilization for healthy living standards and for youth employment in a competitive global economy (Babalola, 2007).

Tertiary in Cameroon includes Universities, polytechnics and Ecole Normale Superieure and also many others. Professional institutions are established by Presidential Decrees. For instance, the University of Maroua was established by decree No 2008/280 of 9th of August 2008 and ENS was established by No 2008/282 of 9th of August 2008 respectively. Ecole Normale Superieure (ENS) is higher teachers training college which is concerned in teaching profession in the country. The university education does not prepare or educate teachers into teaching profession in Cameroon but is a preparatory ground for those who want to become professional teachers whose employments are automatic on completion of ENS, contrary to university education in Cameroon which is supposed to be institution for national transformation.

National transformation is the process of adhering to political norms or goals of a nation. For instance, tertiary education is education for sustainable development (Babalola 2009). A case study in question is the Maroua University and Ecole Normale Superieure operating on the same campus but with different goals to be attained. Their common philosophy is educating the students for national development or transformation. In other words tertiary education is for national reconstruction of the aged or antiquated plans, organizations and management. Further more; it implies changing by ways of innovation and setting new structures, new policies and new curriculum for national transformation. This process takes different approaches. They include managing approach to tertiary education, educational approach to national transformation and national transformation approach.

2. WHAT IS MANAGING APPROACH TO TERTIARY EDUCATION?

Managing indices includes planning, organizing, staffing, leading, controlling, budgeting and coordinating under an effective leadership, the scarce (human and material) resources carefully and not wastefully in the process of educating people. It means economizing available scarce resources through cooperation of others in education enterprise. This approach connotes investing in education to achieve the goals of educating people. It implies man power development for national transformation.

Cameroon is an under developed or developing nation, therefore her management approach to education is aimed at national orientation of the citizens for man power to fill the gaps without skilled manpower for economic, political and social transformations (that is development of the country). This means that management in Cameroon entails involving people who are skillful in different areas so as to enhanced national transformation or development. In this view, tertiary institutions in Cameroon should be well staffed with competent teachers or academic staff who can deliver the goods and change their behavior for the society's improvement. This means that the production from the educational enterprise will automatically transform the society in which they live and onto the entire nation through associations.

In this view, it is worthy to know that managing education connotes sustainable development which is the ability of keep going and keep up the progress made in various segments of the society. In the words of Brundtland commissions (World Bank 2003 and 2007) development is sustainable management if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. To Soubbptona (2004) cited by Babalola (2009), for development to continue indefinitely, management ability should be the focus in balancing the interest of the different groups of people in its carders within the same generation among generations and also doing so simultaneously in the economy, social and environmental dimensions of life. The social, economy and environmental (SEE) dimensions should be the focus of education. When human beings are educated in specific areas, development or transformation is assured and equitable distribution of the national wealth because a wealthy nation is a healthy nation.

Managing education is not only concerned with economic growth but it also involves provision of an enabling environment that is conducive for productive life, rational use of renewable resources, conservation of non-renewable ones, fair and free participation in science and technology as well as recognition that prosperity of individual persons is the wealth of the nation. It means that no nation aspires above the level of her education because it is the pivot of development in the global economy.

3. WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION?

Education has been identified as instrument par excellence for effective national development (Mbipom, 2000). It implies that education is a relative permanent change in human behaviour. It means changing man's old self to a new and inspired self. It implies transformation of the individual. Transformation is concerned with the development of the individual, society and the institution through human beings who inturn insures that available resources are properly managed and directed towards societal improvement or transformation for good.

According to Stiglitz(1998) in Babalola andAtinmo(2009):

Development represents a transformation of society, a movement from tradition relation, traditional ways of dealing with health and education, traditional methods of production to more modern ways. The changes those are associated with development provides individual and societies with more control over their destiny... enriches the lives of individuals.

Education is the parameter by which man is changed from the old being to a new being. It means transforming man from the shackles of ignorance or from tradition influence to modern or scientific ways of doing things. In the past manual was employed in production but with education, automation has replaced manual practices of production and has increased production capacity and also provided chance or leisure for inventions and discoveries.

In other words, education is transforming in the sense that it has changed the old philosophy to new ideas. For instance the world has become a global village which was not so in the 17th century and downward. The philosophy of Cameroon educationists is to improve her citizens in both mental and vocational spheres. This is attested by the Presidential Decree establishing University of Maroua and Ecole Normale Superieure respectively on the same campus performing different functions based on a common goal of education. Apart from teaching being professionalized in Cameroon through university of Maroua, other crops of professional courses are being taught e.g. architecture; computer engineering, information communication technology (ICT) and agricultural courses such as soil scientist (agronomy). There are other relevant courses to professionalism in the school curriculum pursued by students.

4. WHAT IS NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION APPROACH?

The essences of establishing a University and Ecole Normale Superieure are numerous. Firstly, for the people in the region to have a feeling of belonging to Cameroon, Further more, the citizens should be educated to occupy a place in the government and in different sectors of the economy. The people can not be given those places when they are not educated. The government huge investment in education is evidence for national transformation and for global integration. This format of managing education in Maroua (i.e. University and ENS) is a system of re-engineering and institutional rebranding of higher institutions (Obanya, 2010). It implies that tertiary institutions should be managed relatively in terms of national transformation hence some tertiary education in the country seemed more conventional and without re-designing their curriculum to meet the needs of the society. The national policy or decree on higher education which established Maroua tertiary institutions among others seemed a vision of good leadership based on strategic planning. However, observers outside education sector see it as a non-profit

making venture of government's economy, but some acknowledge it as a long-term profit agency. On the contrary, education is the pivot on which other sectors of the economy revolve.

Transformation is re-creating the crude resources to efficient utilization. Evidently, education is the only mean or way of transforming the existing elements on the earth. For instance, the world today is described "a global village" because of improvement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Furthermore, people travel or move by land or sail by sea or fly by air because there has been improvement on the different means of transports. Again, people live longer than before hence medical services has improved tremendously. Sustainability is possible when there is development or transformation. Apart from medical care which is fundamental in education, food-stuff are produced with the help of scientific innovation (i.e. when chemicals are used).

Tertiary education in Cameroon in general and in Maroua in particularly is timely and is necessary. Maroua is the capital of Far North Region of Cameroon. The Desert is fast encroaching and devastating the area. Education as instrument par excellence is pivotal in transforming the inhabitants' life style, the economy and improves their standard of living.

However, the huge financial investment in these tertiary institutions seems to deprive other Region in the country similar opportunities. There is mass exodus of students from other institutions in view of employment opportunities on completion of the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS). Employment opportunities are as a result of education which has enhanced the new development thus, students' population is in the increase yearly without increase of infrastructures, with increase in academic staff job load without incentive in terms of financial rewards, and with poor or ill-equipped libraries and laboratories.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ That the government should as a matter of urgency makes adequate infrastructures available in these institutions to ease effective teaching and learning.
- ❖ That government should establish Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in other universities in the country to decongest the University of Maroua.
- ❖ That government should send academic staff for in-service training so as to equip them for effective management of educational institutions.
- ❖ That government should review academic staff conditions of service, promote when due and pay them promptly too. This will induce them to put in their best in transforming the students who will in turn change the society and the nation at large.

6. CONCLUSION

From the recommendations made, it is worth while concluding,

- That there is need for a developing country like Cameroon to pursue this format in managing tertiary education.
- That is a vision of good leadership investing in education hence the economy, political, industrial development and healthy nation pivot on education.
- That infrastructures, libraries and laboratories should be well equipped to meet the transformation.
- That academic staff be promoted when due and be paid regularly because they are important elements in teaching – learning process for national transformation.
- That this gigantic effort of government should not be politicized, rather it should be fair and free by spreading this gesture to other regions.

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