



## Trans-National Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper discussed strategies to develop transnational education in Nigeria. Secondary data were gathered from print materials and online publications and were used in the paper. The paper identified increment in access to higher education, employment generation reduction in foreign education, revenue generation and increment in international collaboration as benefits of developing trans-national education in Nigeria. The paper identified some strategies that can be used to develop transnational education in Nigeria which includes; marketing of trans-national education in Nigeria, effective supervision of TNE, provision of short or long term loan providers or promoter of TNE and full implementation of trans-national education policies. Based on the following points identified, the paper hereby recommended that the federal National Universities Commission (NUC) should develop a road map or blueprint for the development of trans-national education in Nigeria. National Universities Commission (NUC) should create a department for trans-national education and come up with strategies that will aid the development of trans-national education in Nigeria. National Universities Commission (NUC) should direct researchers and academics to carry out more research on trans-national education and come up with suggestions that can fully develop the concept in Nigeria.

**Key words:** Trans-National Education, Nigeria.

### Introduction

Education is an organized process meant to transfer knowledge. Education is a form of process that involves teaching and learning. Emenike (2004) defined education as the acquisition of knowledge that tends to train and develop the individual. Education embraces not only school experiences but also indirect or incidental influences which help us to learn, such influences and activities affect our character, behaviours and perceptions. Education is the process by which individuals are selected and assigned social roles while the second shows that the level of development in a society is dependent on the type (or quality) of education given to its members. All in all, education is a continuous learning process through which members of a society acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to facilitate the effective performance of assigned social responsibilities (NOUN, 2012).

The educational system therefore is taken to mean not only formal schooling but all those processes, agencies including individuals that play different roles which are mutually inclusive in the provision of opportunities geared towards learning in any society. Thus, the educational system implies formal, informal and non-formal processes of learning. It includes formal school education, in-service training, on-the-job education provided by apprenticeship centres, industries and firms, labour union activities, government agencies for farmers and other rural dwellers; forms of learning provided for migrant nomads and fishermen, legal institutions, the press and mass media (radio, T.V. etc) orientation courses of whatever type, social rights of passage and even educational efforts provided

by churches and political parties. The educational system includes early childhood education, Basic education, junior secondary schools, secondary schools and higher education (NOUN, 2012).

Education can be in the form of national education and trans-national education (TNE). National education is an education within a nation, state or country while trans-national education according to NUC (n.d) is generally taken to mean the importation of education from the "North" to the "South." In other words, it is seen as a one-way flow of education from the developed countries to the developing countries of the world. This notion greatly influenced the perception and approach of Nigerians towards it. However, Trans-National Education is two-dimensional, as it involves both the importation and exportation of educational services. This understanding is reflected in this document (NUC, 2020).

Trans-National Education is not a new concept in the Nigerian educational system is just that official guidelines for its operation have not been formalized for long. Recently the National Universities Commission came up with an official document that will regulate the operation of Trans-National Education in Nigeria. NUC deems it expedient to put in place quality assurance measures for the operation of TNE in Nigeria as a safety measure against sharp practices by providers. Nigeria has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 1st January 1995. All Members of the organization are party/signatories to the 1995 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which was designed to increase trade liberalization. Education was also considered an exportable service. It is important to discuss the strategies to develop trans-national education in Nigeria (NUC, 2020). Based on this, this paper is aimed to discuss the strategies to develop trans-national education in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the twinning/articulation model as put forward by NUC (2020). The NUC model explains that a foreign university (recognized and accredited by competent authorities in its home country) and an approved Nigerian university, collaborate to offer courses, enrich curricula content, and pedagogy, and offer degrees with joint or dual certification and/or have articulation arrangements, which involve study on host and home campuses. This may be acceptable to/recognized by the government provided that under the articulation arrangements, upon successful completion of an approved course of study, students are awarded degrees of the Nigerian university. However, if the arrangement is such that the Nigerian students in the programme will be awarded the degree of the foreign university, then such students will be required to spend a minimum of two semesters or one academic year on the overseas campus of the foreign university and this would form part of the graduation requirements. The universities must inform the National Universities Commission as the regulator from conception, submit the Memorandum of Understanding and ensure that the NUC approval is obtained before the collaboration is finalized. Responsibility for internal QA shall be borne by both institutions and in line with the provisions of the NUC Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS).

### **Concept of Trans-National Education (TNE)**

Trans-National Education (TNE) refers to the movement of people, programmes, providers, knowledge, ideas, projects and services across national boundaries. The term is often used interchangeably with "offshore education" and "borderless education". Trans-National Education involves educational partnerships, developmental cooperation projects, academic exchange programmes and commercial initiatives. It is the type of higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution, provider or course materials move across national jurisdictional borders (National Universities Commission guideline 2020). From the above, this paper views Transnational education (TNE) as an exported or imported form of education from other countries to increase access to higher education and increase international collaboration on the delivery of education.

Transnational education (TNE) is an organized education delivered in a country other than the country in which the awarding institution is based, eg students based in country A studying for a degree from a university in country B. Transnational education (TNE) is higher education

programmes delivered in other countries by other educational institutions. Trans-national education (TNE) is a form of international education across two or more countries that is licensed by the two host countries that is the exporting and the importing countries. Transnational education (TNE) is a global education that allows higher education providers from other countries to move to other countries to establish its branch in the country to provide quality higher education services that meet up with international and national standards.

Transnational education (TNE) is an organized *study program or educational service in which the students are located in a country different from the one where institution providers are located*. Transnational education (TNE) is a form of education where provider institutions are located in other countries from the learners' learning centres or branches. Transnational education (TNE) is an *education in which learners are located in a different country from the awarding institutions*. Transnational education involves transnational platforms and programmes, including *distance learning, MOOCs, teaching partnerships and articulation deployed to other countries to provide education services while the providing institutions stay in their own countries*. Transnational education (TNE) *helps nations and individuals around the world to achieve their ambitions and aspirations, creating strong mutual benefits*.

National Universities Commission guideline (2020) observed that many universities in industrialized countries for example maintain branch campuses overseas and have students who are learning through face-to-face, blended or e-learning in other countries. This approach of internationalization in the provision of post-secondary education transactions overseas is referred to as Trans-National Education. In simple etymology, the word "transnational" implies actions, practices, or contacts that extend or go beyond national boundaries. When used in combination with other concepts such as Education, the term "transnational" still implies the idea of transactions across national borders, but with specific contextual meaning.

This meaning holds for all types and modes of delivery of higher education, study programmes, sets of courses of study, or educational services including distance education, where learners are located in a country different from where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates or may operate independently of any national education system in line with UNESCO and the Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and recognized by the United States as good practice in that area (National Universities Commission guideline 2020).

Trans-National Education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms, from students travelling to campuses abroad) to distance learning using a range of technologies including e-learning. It presents a wide range of opportunities such as increasing access to higher education and promoting strategic alliances between countries and regions. Trans-National Education has other benefits which include: International Security arising from bilateral relationships, maintenance of economic competitiveness and understanding across nations, the spread of technologies, promotion of knowledge economy and creation of regional networks, as well as attaining an international level in research and teaching (National Universities Commission guideline 2020).

### **STEPS/PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF BRANCH CAMPUS MODEL**

According to National Universities Commission TNS (2020), a foreign university intending to establish a campus in Nigeria is required to follow the steps/procedures highlighted below:

- i. Letter of intent to the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC);
- ii. Interactive session between the Senior Officials of the foreign university and NUC Management;
- iii. Payment of a specified non-refundable Application fee;
- iv. Completion and submission of the Application Form to NUC with the following key documents:

- a) Letter of introduction from the Embassy/Diplomatic Mission of the home country of the parent university intending to establish a branch campus in Nigeria;
- b) Evidence that the foreign university intending to establish a Branch Campus in Nigeria is recognized and accredited by competent authorities in its home country to offer degree programmes;
- c) Evidence that the programme(s) of the foreign university to be run at the proposed Branch Campus are recognized by the appropriate quality assurance agency in its home country;
- d) An academic portfolio which covers inter alia:
  - i. Historical, Philosophical and Visioning perspectives;
  - ii. Administrative Structure;
  - iii. Academic Structure and trajectory;
  - iv. Students and staff projections across faculties/college(s)/ departments;
  - v. Financial Projections including Funding Sources. NB: The staff projections should take cognizance of the local content requirements in terms of the ratio of 50% local content across the board (50% indigenous staff to 50% international staff at all levels of staffing).
- e) Physical development strategy which should encompass, among others, the following elements bearing in mind a minimum land area of 1 hectare:
  - i. Historical, Philosophical and Visioning perspectives
  - ii. Site Appraisal
  - iii. Development of Academic Brief
  - iv. Preparation of Strategic Alternatives
  - v. Draft Master Plan
  - vi. Final Master Plan and Publication. NB: The scope of work for each item listed above is as detailed in the current NUC's Procedures, Guide and Physical Development Manual. Take-off facilities layout plan/details showing the administrative and academic facilities available for the take-off of the proposed branch campus is an integral part of the portfolio.
- f) The University Law should contain the laws and Statutes that will govern the operation of the proposed branch campus in its entirety. Accordingly, its laws and Statutes should not conflict with the avowed traditional institutional autonomy.

## **PROCESSING**

- a. At the appropriate time in the processing of the application, a study/inspection visit shall be undertaken by a team of NUC officials to the parent university in its home country to ascertain the capacity of the institution to establish a campus in Nigeria;
- b. Following the first review of the institution's strategic documents, a team of NUC officials will conduct the first assessment visit to the site acquired in Nigeria by the foreign university for the proposed branch campus to review the strategic documents with the university team on a one-on-one basis to determine the level of preparedness in terms of documentation. During the visit, the NUC team will also conduct a facility tour to ascertain their adequacy for the smooth take-off of the proposed College/Faculty/Departments/Programmes in the first phase of academic development of the Branch Campus;
- c. Revision of strategic documents by the proprietor (foreign provider) based on the report by a Team of NUC officials;
- d. There shall be a second and final site assessment visit to ensure that the recommendations of the first visit are implemented and also ensure that the facilities provided meet the approved NUC standards.

## **APPROVAL**

Positive recommendations of a team of NUC officials will be subjected to three levels of the approval process:

- a. Approval by NUC Management;
- b. Approval by NUC Board, and
- c. Approval by Federal Executive Council (National Universities Commission TNS undated).

## **PROCEDURE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STUDY CENTERS IN NIGERIA BY FOREIGN OPEN/DUAL MODE UNIVERSITIES**

1. Letter of intent from the University to the Executive Secretary, indicating the rationale for the establishment of a study centre.
2. The Commission will organize an interactive session with the proprietor and other principal officials of the foreign Open University.
3. After due consideration, the University collects application forms for the establishment of the study centre
4. Submission of completed application forms should be accompanied by the following documents;
  - a) Approved Institutional ODL Policy Document covering all ramifications of the establishment and operations of the study centre to include inter alia, clear policy statements on:
    - i. Course material development and acquisition.
    - ii. Open Educational Resources (OER).
    - iii. Course delivery modalities (not solely reliant on face-to-face mode).
    - iv. Staff recruitment, retention and progression of the study centre.
    - v. Learner Support.
    - vi. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).
  - b) Evidence of approval for the establishment of the study centre by Governing Council
  - c) Senate of the foreign Open University.
  - d) Strategic Plan for the study centre
  - e) Academic Portfolio which should include:
    - i. Projected academic pattern/programme development.
    - ii. Projected student enrolment
    - iii. Projected staffing structure (all cadres and categories) including the proportion of staff with validated ODL qualifications that are also core staff of the Centre. The staffing structure should take cognizance of the requirement for academic and non-academic staff that are primarily staff of the study centre with a well-defined pathway for Professional development and career progression up to the Professorial cadre in the case of academics.
  - f) Physical and infrastructural development plan. This should include:
    - i. ICT infrastructure: adequate provision for a physical library/e-library, a hall with at least 500 internet-ready work-stations for Computer Based Testing(CBT), video conferencing facilities, audiovisual systems and smart boards dedicated exclusively to the DLC's use and other relevant ICT facilities.
    - ii. Logistics/warehousing: detailed strategies for storage/ware-housing of course materials and other learning resources including logistic arrangement for distribution of electronic and printed learning resources

- g) Learning Resources Provision: This should take cognizance of the requirement that a minimum of 75% of the course materials for each course/programme is required in mix-media format, for any degree programme to be considered for approval by NUC.
- h) Access to the University library online
5. Following the first review of the Institution's documents, there would be a familiarization visit to the foreign Open University to ascertain the operational modalities of the University.
6. After the familiarization visit, there will be a pre-validation visit to the study centre. During the visit, an inspection of facilities and an audit of the various categories of staff will be undertaken. The over-arching objective of the pre-validation visit shall be to gather evidence of an established ODL system capable of fostering a sustainable environment for learner-centred supported blended learning in line with the NUC's Guidelines for Open and Distance Learning in Nigerian Universities.
7. After the pre-validation site visit, the DODeL will write a report of the findings to the NUC Management and a technical advisory report will be submitted to the University.
8. There shall be a second pre-validation site visit to ensure that the recommendation of the first visit is implemented and also to ensure compliance with the approved NUC requirements. The DODeL will write a report of the pre-validation visit with appropriate recommendations to the NUC management for its consideration and necessary action.
9. Approval by NUC Board

The NUC Management, upon receipt of the DODeL report on the proposed study centre, considers and makes appropriate recommendations to the University Development Committee (UDC) of the NUC Board for its consideration after which the latter submits it to the Board for ratification. The Board, thereafter, forwards its recommendation to the Federal Government through the Honourable Minister of Education for its consideration and approval.

### **Approval Steps**

1. Approval by NUC Management.
2. Approval by the Governing Board of NUC.
3. Approval by the Federal Executive Council

If approved, a three-year Provisional License is granted to the foreign Open/Dual Mode University. Only satisfactory performance during the probationary period will earn the University a substantive License. The NUC Management will communicate its decision on the Study Centre to the University (National Universities Commission TNS 2020).

### **Benefits of Trans-National Education in Nigeria**

There are many benefits of Trans-National Education in Nigeria some of them include an increment in access to higher education, employment generation reduction in foreign education, revenue generation and an increase in international collaboration.

### **Increase in access to Higher Education**

The problem of poor access to higher education in Nigeria can be possibly solved and improved by the development of transnational education in Nigeria. Recently, National Universities Commission (2023) noted that the Gross Total Enrollment Rate (TER) for the universities stand at 12%, which is far from the global Gross Global TER of 38%, thereby creating a significant access gap. So, the development of trans-national education can likely improve access to higher education in Nigeria. More trans-national education across the country and at the reach of the people will help to bridge the gap of barriers to education in Nigeria. According to National Universities Commission (NUC), trans-national education in Nigeria would afford to foster collaborations between stakeholders in the Nigerian University System and their counterparts in foreign countries.

## Employment Generation

The establishment of more trans-national education branches in Nigeria will help to employ young scholars across the country. The policy guideline stipulated 50-50 foreign and local content for employment in any of the institutions. This will help to reduce unemployment in Nigeria. Presently, the unemployment rate in Nigeria has risen to about 37%. The multinational consulting firm as reported by *Punch*, 2023 stated that the Nigerian unemployment rate had increased to 37.7per cent in 2022 and will further rise to 40.6per cent, due to the continuing inflow of job seekers into the job market. The multinational consulting firm, in a report released report tagged 'KPMG Global Economy Outlook report, H1 2023,' disclosed unemployment will continue to be a challenge due to the slower-than-required economic growth and the inability of the economy to absorb the 4-5 million new entrants into the Nigerian job market every year. "Unemployment is expected to continue to be a major challenge in 2023 due to the limited investment by the private sector, low industrialisation and slower than required economic growth and consequently the inability of the economy to absorb the 4-5 million new entrants into the Nigerian job market every year. Although the National Bureau of Statistics recorded an increase in the national unemployment rate from 23.1per cent in 2018 to 33.3per cent in 2020. We estimate that this rate has increased to 37.7per cent in 2022 and will rise further to 40.6 per cent in 2023." (Punch, 11, April, 2023).

## Reduction in Foreign Education

The development of transnational education in Nigeria can also help in the reduction of international education or foreign education. Since some of the higher institutions that many Nigerians are patronizing will be opening their branches and centres here in Nigeria. Foreign education by Nigerians has affected the Naira's stability in the international market. Nigerians are spending huge amounts of money yearly on foreign education. Recently, an Analysis of data by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) showed that Nigerians spent about US\$221 million on foreign education between December 2021 and February 2022. The CBN data, according to *Punch*, showed that, in December 2021, Nigerians spent US\$90.67 million on foreign education. In January 2022, a total of US\$60,202,730.84 was spent on foreign education, while US\$69.9 million was spent in February 2022. Also, a report by SBM Intelligence showed that out of the total £1.93billion, Nigerian students spent £680.6 million on school fees followed by £408.4 million for rent, £151.3 million for national insurance, £54.4 million for tax on working spouses, £41.8 million for National Health Service and £41.7 million for visa fees. (Please note that these values may not give the total of £ 1.93 billion as they are conservative estimates). "Apart from school fees paid by Nigerian immigrants to British schools, the UK gains from Visa Fees, NHS Payments, Rent, Economic productivity, Income taxes (in the instances where the students work), etc.," the report stated. The development of trans-national education can help fix and reduce the rate of foreign education. Nigerian students are investing heavily in international institutions yearly (Jesuseun, 2022; *Businessday* 2022; Ogunode, Akinjobi, & Olatunde-Aiyedun,2022; Ogunode, Akinjobi, & Musa 2022).

## Revenue Generation

The development of trans-nation education in Nigeria can also help to increase the government revenue since those educational institutions operating here will be paying taxes and other educational levies. With more trans-nation education institutions in Nigeria, more revenue may likely accrue to the federal and state accounts.

## Increase International Collaboration

The development of transnational education in Nigeria will help to solidify international cooperation and collaboration between Nigeria and other countries. The National Universities Commission (NUC) hopes to widen access and fully exploit the provisions of GATS for the benefit of Nigerians. An additional advantage of opening up the space for TNE is the opportunity it would afford to foster collaborations between stakeholders in the Nigerian University System and their counterparts in foreign countries. UniversitiesUK. (2022) noted that UK universities are growing their TNE partnerships around the world, and increasingly governments and overseas universities seek UK

partners. Working together offers benefits to universities, staff and students in both the host country and the UK. It also increases universities' global outlook and capabilities.

According to the National Universities Commission (2022) the benefits accruable from TNE:

- i. Increased access to quality education;
- ii. Strengthening academic capacity in research for National Development;
- iii. Providing internationally recognised education in one's space and time;
- iv. Improving international partnerships for the commercialization of educational commodities;
- v. Development of indigenous academic potentials;
- vi. Reduction of brain drain and pressure in local educational systems;
- vii. Promoting regional cooperation for the harmonization of educational qualifications;
- viii. Providing international cross-cultural identity;
- ix. Providing a source of revenue for the Government;
- x. Providing international innovative experience through the deployment of modern technologies in teaching and learning and in particular;
- xi. Reducing Nigerian's exodus to neighbouring countries for degree programs that may not necessarily be of comparable quality to that in the NUS and
- xii. Limiting wastage of foreign exchange.

### **Strategies to Develop Trans-National Education in Nigeria**

Some of the strategies to develop trans-national education in Nigeria include; marketing of trans-National Education in Nigeria, effective supervision, provision of loan term or short-term loans and full implementation of trans-national education policies.

### **Marketing of Trans-National Education in Nigeria**

Strategic marketing is one of the major strategies to adopt for the development of trans-national education in Nigeria. Both the national universities commission and the institutions providing transnational education in Nigeria should carry out strategic marketing. Strategic marketing involves defining the institution's general product and service processes and direction through a marketing plan. To achieve product and service objectives, it takes into account diverse aspects such as the demographic behaviour of the customers and the institution's achievement over time. Strategic marketing makes it possible for institutions to differentiate themselves from other institutions' products and services by focusing on their strengths to provide customers with superior service and value. To put it simply, strategic marketing aims to use an institution's positive differentiation over its competitors to its advantage. Strategic marketing presents institutions with the opportunity to outperform their competitors. Under Strategic marketing, institutions evaluate their positives (both present and potential) over their competition through the lens of their targeted consumers' perception of them. Building on this allows institutions to provide better service and value to their consumers while creating an image that differs from their competitors. Strategic marketing will help to project the image of trans-national education uniquely. It will help to create awareness among the people about its' uniqueness. All media institutions in Nigeria can be engaged to help in the marketing of the concept for better development.

### **Effective Supervision**

The National Universities Commission which is saddled with the responsibilities of registration and licensing universities in Nigeria should ensure effective supervision. Effective supervision can be defined as supervision that is achieving its objectives. It is a supervision that is goal inclined. Effective supervision is a holistic supervision that captured all human and material resources and ensures that are in the right state for usage. NUC should ensure institutions licensed to practice in Nigeria are fully supervised. The supervision should involve professional bodies in charge of some



courses being offered in the various centres across the country. Effective supervision of trans-national education centres in Nigeria will ensure the quality and development of the programme in Nigeria.

### **Provision of Loan Term or Short Term Loans**

Another strategy that can help to fully develop the trans-national institutions in Nigeria is that the federal government should direct soft loans with bearable interest for the various educational institutions proposing and have already started. The provision of short and long term loans with minimum interest rates will help to develop trans-national education in Nigeria.

### **Full Implementation of Trans-National Education Policies**

National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure all policies and guidelines designed for the implementation of trans-national education in Nigeria are fully implemented as formulated and contained in the policy framework. The full implementation of the guideline and policies of trans-national education will help to develop the programme in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

This paper examined strategies that can be adopted to develop trans-national education and the benefits of trans-national education in Nigeria. The paper concluded increment in access to higher education, employment generation reduction in foreign education, revenue generation and increase in international collaboration are the likely benefits of the development of trans-national education in Nigeria. The paper also pointed out some of the strategies to be adopted to develop trans-national education in Nigeria which included the marketing of trans-National Education in Nigeria, effective supervision, provision of short or long term loans and full implementation of trans-national education policies.

Based on the following points identified, the paper hereby recommended that

1. Federal through National Universities Commission (NUC) should develop a road map or blueprint for the development of trans-national education in Nigeria;
2. National Universities Commission (NUC) should create a department for trans-national education and come up with strategies and implement the suggested strategies to aid the development of the trans-national education in Nigeria.
3. National Universities Commission (NUC) should direct researchers and academics to carry out more research on trans-national education and come up with recommendations that can fully develop the concept in Nigeria.

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