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FINANCING OF NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Tertiary education is an important factor in the development and competitiveness of countries in the global economy. While the traditional forms of financing tertiary education such as government subsidies and student loans are still used, new sources of financing have emerged in recent years. This paper examined the various forms of financing tertiary education, including public and private sources, and their effects on global competitiveness. The research focuses on the extent to which different types of financing tertiary education in Nigeria affect the quality and cost of education, and the extent to which they influence economic growth in Nigeria. In addition, the paper explores the impact of global changes on the financing of tertiary education and its impact on global competitiveness. It is expected that the results of this research will provide useful insights for policy makers as well as educational institutions in the context of global competition.

Keywords: Financing, Tertiary Education, Global Competitiveness.

Introduction

Education has emerged as a fundamental pillar for numerous nations, consistently fostering growth and development. It plays a crucial role in promoting economic advancement, poverty reduction, and shared prosperity. Its benefits extend beyond individuals and encompass the entire educational system. In an ever-changing world, education serves as a catalyst for transformation. The level of development within a society can be measured by the underlying principles of its founding philosophy and the advancement of its

tertiary education institutions. According to Jubril (2013) and Amoo (2013), the tertiary education sector comprises universities, colleges of education and technology, and other post-secondary educational institutes. Likewise, the World Bank (2022) defined tertiary education as all formal post-secondary education, encompassing public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools.

Tertiary education plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth, reducing poverty, and promoting shared prosperity. It is a vital component for driving innovation and expansion, as a highly skilled workforce with continuous access to quality post-secondary education is essential (Alemu, 2018). Well-educated individuals have better employability, higher productivity, increased earning potential, and enhanced resilience against economic fluctuations. Tertiary education serves as a vital link between secondary education and professional careers, equipping students with specialized knowledge and skills necessary for various fields. The World Bank (2022) highlights the extensive benefits of tertiary education for both individuals and society to include: higher earning potential; enhanced job prospects; economic growth and development; reduced poverty and inequality; improved health and well-being; social and cultural benefits; and research and innovation. Graduates demonstrate positive attributes such as environmental consciousness, healthier lifestyles, and active participation in civic affairs. Furthermore, these advantages extend to society as a whole, generating higher tax revenues through increased incomes, improving the well-being of children, and promoting smaller family sizes, all contributing to stronger nations. In essence, tertiary education institutions not only provide individuals with job-specific skills but also cultivate their engagement as responsible and active contributors to their communities and societies. Unfortunately, the Nigerian tertiary institutions seem to lack behind in many of these situations.

The State of Nigerian Tertiary Education

Despite the significance of tertiary education in human and national development, the state of Nigerian tertiary education has failed to garner significant recognition. Nigerian universities' global ranking and competitiveness have been negatively impacted, with the country falling outside the top 1000 universities worldwide. This situation highlights the existence of deficiencies and challenges within the system, hindering its ability to compete effectively on a global scale. According to Times Higher Education (2023) report, out of the nearly 130 institutions in Nigeria, only 12 Nigerian universities are included in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Regrettably, the highest-ranking Nigerian university in this list is the University of Ibadan, which is positioned at 1,207. Nigerian tertiary institutions face stiff competition on the global stage, where universities from other countries have made significant strides in terms of quality, research output, and global reputation. This has resulted in Nigerian universities struggling to secure prominent positions in global rankings.According to the Nigerian Education Sector Diagnosis - A Platform for Re-engineering the Education Sector (2007), an overwhelming 94% of

professors in the Nigerian University System lack professional qualifications in teaching. Additionally, 32% of lecturers in Nigerian universities do not possess teaching qualifications. In 2023, President Muhammadu Buhari, the former president of Nigeria, increased the budgetary allocation for education from 7.9% in 2022 to 8.8%. However, this proposed allocation remains less than half of the recommended percentage of 26% by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the global education agency responsible for advocating expenditure on the sector (Ogwo, 2023).

Challenges Affecting Nigerian Tertiary Education in Global Competitiveness

Tertiary education global competitiveness simply means the ability of a country's tertiary education system to effectively compete and excel on the global stage. It involves the recognition, reputation, and performance of a country's universities and other post-secondary institutions in comparison to their counterparts around the world. According to Ogwo (2023), tertiary education global competitiveness refers to the ability of a country's higher education system to compete on a global scale in terms of quality, innovation, research output, and the ability to attract international students and faculty. It is a measure of how well a country's universities and colleges compare to those in other countries in terms of educational opportunities and outcomes. Amoo (2013) viewed tertiary education global competitiveness refers to the ability of a country's higher education institutions to attract and educate students from around the world, as well as produce graduates who are competitive in the global job market. Amoo emphasized that it is a measure of how well a country's tertiary education system performs in comparison to other countries on various indicators.

Global competitiveness in tertiary education encompasses various factors including: academic reputation; quality of education; research output and innovation; internationalization; employability of graduates; accessibility and affordability; faculty expertise; infrastructure and resources; industry relevance; international collaborations; and the overall reputation and ranking of institutions. A highly globally competitive tertiary education system is characterized by institutions that excel in teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination. These institutions attract top-quality faculty and students, produce cutting-edge research and innovations, offer programs that align with industry needs, and maintain strong partnerships and collaborations with international counterparts. Global competitiveness in tertiary education is crucial for a country's economic development, as it contributes to producing a skilled and adaptable workforce, attracting foreign investment and talent, driving innovation and research advancements, and enhancing the country's overall intellectual capital and reputation in the global knowledge economy. However, numerous challenges contribute to the diminished global competitiveness of Nigerian tertiary education. These challenges include:

Quality of Education: The quality of education provided by Nigerian tertiary institutions often falls short of international standards. Outdated curricula, inadequate

teaching methodologies, and limited practical skills development hinder the preparation of graduates for the global job market. According to Noorbehbahani et al. (2022), the curriculum of the Nigerian education system has faced criticism for its outdated nature and lack of relevance to the country's needs. Consequently, there is a disparity between the skills graduates acquire and the skills demanded by the job market, resulting in elevated rates of unemployment among Nigerian graduates.

Infrastructure Deficits: Many Nigerian tertiary institutions suffer from infrastructure deficiencies, including outdated facilities, insufficient classrooms, and limited access to modern technology. Inadequate infrastructure affects the learning environment and hampers the delivery of quality education. According to Nwikpo and Ojukwu (2022), the Nigerian education system is grappling with a severe deficiency in infrastructure, which has had detrimental effects on the quality of education provided. A significant number of schools across the country lack basic facilities necessary for effective teaching and learning. The shortage of classrooms, desks, and chairs has resulted in overcrowding, with classrooms being forced to accommodate far more students than they were designed for. The consequences of overcrowding are profound. With limited space and resources, teachers find it challenging to provide individual attention and personalized instruction to each student. This hampers the learning experience and diminishes the quality of education delivered. Students may struggle to concentrate, engage actively in classroom activities, or receive timely feedback on their academic progress.

Funding Constraints: Insufficient funding poses a significant challenge to Nigerian tertiary education. Limited financial resources hinder infrastructure development, research capabilities, faculty recruitment and training, and the overall quality of education provided. According to the reports of UNESCO (2021), inadequate funding emerges as one of the most significant challenges confronting the education landscape in Nigeria. Despite the government's promises and commitments to allocate 26% of the annual budget to education, the actual realization of this goal has fallen short. Instead, the education sector has been allocated less than 10% of the budget in recent years, exacerbating the existing funding deficit. Ogunode et al. (2023) added that insufficient funding, financial misappropriation, and mismanagement have detrimental effects on the administration of tertiary institutions. However, among these challenges, the misappropriation of funds stands out as the most significant factor negatively impacting the management of tertiary education in Nigeria. This pronounced shortfall in financial resources has led to a multitude of adverse consequences, creating a ripple effect across the entire educational ecosystem. One of the primary ramifications of inadequate funding is the glaring lack of resources within educational institutions. Insufficient funds restrict the procurement of essential materials, including textbooks, laboratory equipment, and teaching aids; thereby impeding effective teaching and learning experiences. Furthermore, the

scarcity of resources restricts schools from investing in innovative technologies and modern educational tools that could enhance students' educational outcomes and foster critical thinking skills.

Brain Drain: Nigeria experiences a brain drain phenomenon, with qualified academics and professionals seeking better opportunities abroad. The loss of skilled personnel diminishes the quality of education and research within the country's tertiary institutions, impacting their global competitiveness. As a result, Nigeria faces shortage of teachers that ensures there is knowledge transfer which is one of the criteria in ranking tertiary institutions in the world. Chinedu (2023) asserted that Nigeria encounters a significant hurdle in the form of inadequate teacher quality, as a considerable number of educators lack the requisite qualifications and training.

Research and Innovation Gap: Nigerian universities face challenges in fostering a culture of research and innovation. Inadequate funding for research initiatives, limited access to research infrastructure, and a lack of collaboration between academia and industry contribute to lower research output and innovation levels. Obiokafor et al. (2023) averred that research and innovation play a pivotal role in driving sustainable economic development in any nation's tertiary education sector. The global perspective on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emphasizes the significance of promoting research and innovation in education as a means to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to address challenges related to sustainable development. However, despite these global reflections, Nigeria continues to be categorized among third world or underdeveloped countries. Nigerian tertiary education encounters additional constraints and these as a result of insufficient financial support, outdated Intellectual Property (IP) policies, and a lack of sustainable ICT innovations, despite the country's abundant human resources and other natural endowments.

Industry Relevance: The gap between the skills acquired through tertiary education and the needs of the job market poses a challenge. The curriculum may not align with current industry demands, leading to a mismatch between graduates' skills and the requirements of employers. World Bank (2022) added that challenges remain – even with the larger pool of graduates of tertiary education; many do not have locally relevant skills needed for a successful integration into the labor market.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

The concept of Human Capital Theory was first introduced by economist Theodore Schultz in his seminal work "Investment in Human Capital" published in 1961. Schultz, a Nobel laureate in economics, developed the theory to highlight the economic significance of investing in education and training as a means to enhance human capital and promote economic development. Schultz asserted that the value of labor was linked to its productivity, a concept already known in economics. However, he introduced a distinguishing factor by highlighting that labour productivity was

influenced by personal investments, referred to as the "rate of return." According to this theory, individuals who acquire more skills and education can expect a higher return on their investments, resulting in higher incomes. This theory continues to be relevant and is valuable for understanding the complexities of pay differentials. Human Capital Theory is a concept that originated in economics and emphasizes the role of education and skills in enhancing individuals' productivity and economic outcomes. It views education and training as investments in human capital, which refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes possessed by individuals that contribute to their productive capacity and potential for economic success. According to Human Capital Theory, individuals acquire human capital through formal education, training programs, work experience, and on-the-job learning. This acquired human capital increases their productivity, earning potential, and prospects for career advancement. The theory suggests that investing in education and skill development leads to higher wages, improved employment opportunities, and overall economic growth. The theory recognizes that education and training involve costs, such as tuition fees, time, and effort. However, it argues that these investments yield returns in the form of increased earning potential and improved job prospects. Individuals who possess higher levels of human capital are seen as more valuable to employers and have a competitive advantage in the labor market.

From a societal perspective, Human Capital Theory suggests that a well-educated and skilled workforce contributes to economic development, innovation, and technological advancement. It emphasizes the importance of public and private investment in education and training to foster human capital development, as it benefits both individuals and society as a whole. In the context of tertiary education financing, Human Capital Theory advocates for allocating resources to support access to quality higher education. It recognizes that investments in tertiary education contribute to the accumulation of human capital and ultimately enhance individuals' and nations' global competitiveness. By providing funding for tertiary education, governments and other stakeholders can ensure that individuals have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and qualifications needed to succeed in the labour market and contribute to economic growth. The theory posits that investing in education, including tertiary education, leads to the accumulation of skills, knowledge, and abilities in individuals, making them more productive and valuable in the labour market. From the financing perspective, this theory emphasizes the importance of allocating resources to tertiary education as an investment in human capital development. By providing adequate funding, Nigeria can enhance the quality of tertiary education, produce highly skilled graduates, and increase their global competitiveness in various fields.

Traditional Forms of Financing Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Traditional forms of financing tertiary education refer to the conventional methods and sources through which individuals and

institutions fund higher education. These forms have been widely utilized in the past and continue to play a significant role in supporting students and educational institutions. Let's explore some of these traditional financing methods in more detail:

Government Funding: Governments in most developing countries provide strong funding capacities to their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). On this note, Farley (2013) posited that Government has launched a strategic plan of government objectives for public universities in order for them to become more dynamic, competitive and productive. Governments allocate public funds to support tertiary education. This can take the form of direct subsidies to universities and colleges or financial aid programs for students. Public funding aims to make education more accessible and affordable, reduce financial barriers for students, and ensure the availability of quality education. Governments often prioritize investment in higher education as a means to foster human capital development, drive economic growth, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the nation.

Tuition Fees: One of the primary sources of revenue for tertiary education institutions is tuition fees paid by students. Students are typically required to pay tuition fees to cover the costs of instruction, infrastructure, administrative expenses, and support services provided by the institution. Tuition fee structures vary across countries and institutions, with factors such as program type, level of study, and student residency influencing the fee amounts. Tuition fees are important sources of revenue for universities and colleges, enabling them to maintain academic standards and invest in educational resources. Kholmuminov et al. (2019) asserted that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the share of revenue from tuition fees and share of expenditure spent on teaching, even after other factors are held constant.

Scholarships and Grants: Scholarships and grants are forms of financial assistance provided to students based on merit, need, or a combination of both. These funds can be awarded by various entities, including governments, private organizations, foundations, and educational institutions themselves. Scholarships and grants help reduce the financial burden on students and make tertiary education more accessible to individuals who may not have the means to finance their studies independently. They can cover tuition fees, living expenses, and other educational costs. Many countries offer government scholarships for international higher education and expect the recipients to contribute to national development (Jonbekova, et al., 2022).

Student Loans: Student loans are another traditional method of financing tertiary education. These loans are typically offered by government agencies or private financial institutions, allowing students to borrow money to cover their educational expenses. Student loans are repaid with interest after graduation or a specified grace period. While student loans provide financial support, they also entail the responsibility of repayment, which can place a long-term financial burden on graduates. Government-sponsored student loan programs often offer

more favorable terms and repayment options compared to private loans. For instance, the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), the main source of government funding for universities (Thatcher, et al., 2020).

Financing of Tertiary Education and Economic Growth of Countries

Financing tertiary education has some ways of impacting on economic growth in countries. It facilitates human capital development, drives innovation, supports entrepreneurship, fosters industry collaboration, attracts foreign investment and talent, and promotes inclusive growth. By investing in tertiary education, countries cultivate a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, foster technological advancements, generate employment opportunities, enhance industry competitiveness, and create a favourable environment for economic prosperity and sustainability.

Human Capital Development: Tertiary education financing contributes to the development of human capital, which is a key driver of economic growth. By investing in tertiary education, countries nurture a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can drive productivity and innovation across various sectors. Tertiary education equips individuals with specialized knowledge, critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, and practical expertise, all of which are essential for economic development. A well-educated workforce enhances productivity, efficiency, and the overall competitiveness of industries, leading to higher economic output and growth.

Innovation and Technological Advancement: Adequate financing of tertiary education institutions fosters research and innovation; which are crucial for economic growth in the modern knowledge-based economy. Tertiary education institutions are centers of research and development; where groundbreaking discoveries, technological advancements, and innovative ideas emerge. Through funding, institutions can invest in state-of-the-art laboratories, research facilities, and equipment, attract and retain top-notch researchers and faculty, and support research initiatives. These efforts result in the creation of new knowledge, patents, inventions, and technologies that can drive economic growth by fueling entrepreneurship, spurring the development of new industries, and enhancing the competitiveness of existing ones.

Entrepreneurship and Job Creation: Financing tertiary education supports entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses; which are vital for job creation and economic growth. Tertiary education institutions often provide entrepreneurship programs, incubators, and accelerators that equip students and graduates with the knowledge, skills, and resources to start their own ventures. Adequate financing enables the establishment of entrepreneurship support systems, access to mentorship, business development services, and funding opportunities. Entrepreneurial activities not only generate employment opportunities but also stimulate innovation, diversify the economy, attract investments, and contribute to economic resilience and sustainability.

Industry Collaboration and Economic Partnerships: Financing tertiary education facilitates collaboration between academic

institutions and industries, fostering economic partnerships that drive growth. Through funding, universities and colleges can establish research collaborations, technology transfer programs, and industry partnerships. These collaborations enable the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources, leading to joint research and development initiatives, the commercialization of research findings, and the application of academic knowledge in real-world contexts. Such partnerships enhance industry competitiveness, promote innovation, and stimulate economic growth by leveraging the synergies between academia and industry.

Attracting Foreign Investment and Talent: A well-financed tertiary education system enhances a country's attractiveness to foreign investors and talented individuals. Countries that invest in high-quality tertiary education institutions and provide scholarships, research grants, and favorable policies attract international students and researchers. This influx of talent enriches the local academic environment, fosters cultural exchange, and brings diverse perspectives and knowledge. Additionally, a well-educated domestic workforce and access to skilled talent increase a country's competitiveness in the global market, attracting foreign direct investment and stimulating economic growth.

Socio-Economic Mobility and Inclusive Growth: Financing tertiary education promotes socio-economic mobility and inclusive growth by providing opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to access higher education. Adequate funding allows for the provision of scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs that reduce financial barriers and ensure that talented individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, have the opportunity to pursue tertiary education. By empowering individuals with education, countries can bridge socio-economic gaps, reduce income inequality, and promote inclusive economic growth. Access to tertiary education enables individuals to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in the workforce and contribute to the country's economic development.

Work-Study Programmes: Work-study programs provide students with opportunities to earn money while studying. These programs enable students to work part-time on campus or in affiliated organizations, allowing them to contribute to their educational expenses. Work-study programs not only provide financial support but also offer valuable work experience, skill development, and networking opportunities. Institutions may provide job placement services and establish partnerships with employers to facilitate work-study opportunities for students.

Financing of Nigerian Tertiary Education for Global Competitiveness

Tertiary education is an important factor in the development and competitiveness of countries in the global economy. Tertiary education is a key driver of economic growth, social development, and global competitiveness. Countries that invest in quality tertiary education systems tend to reap the benefits in terms of improved human capital, innovation, and overall socio-economic progress. Consequently, the financing of Nigerian tertiary education plays a crucial role in

enhancing her global competitiveness. Adequate funding is necessary to support various aspects of the tertiary education system, including infrastructure development, faculty recruitment and training, research and innovation, curriculum development, student support services, and the overall quality of education (Jonbekova et al., 2022). To ensure global competitiveness, it is essential to allocate sufficient financial resources to Nigerian tertiary institutions. This includes both public and private funding sources. Public funding is primarily derived from government budgets, and it is important for the government to prioritize education and allocate a significant portion of the national budget to the sector. This funding should be used to address infrastructure deficits, upgrade facilities, and provide modern equipment and technology to enhance teaching and learning environments. In addition to public funding, private sector participation in financing Nigerian tertiary education is crucial. Encouraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) can help attract investments, sponsorships, and collaborations with industry stakeholders. This can provide financial support for research initiatives, technology transfer, and industry-relevant curriculum development, fostering a more competitive and job-oriented educational system.

Another aspect of financing Nigerian tertiary education is the availability of student financial aid and scholarship programs. Accessible and comprehensive financial aid programs can help bridge the affordability gap for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring that talented individuals have equal opportunities for higher education. Scholarships and grants based on merit and need can also encourage excellence and motivate students to strive for academic success. Efforts should also be made to explore alternative sources of funding, such as endowments, research grants, and partnerships with international organizations. Leveraging these opportunities can provide additional financial support for research activities, faculty development, and international collaborations, enhancing the global reputation and competitiveness of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Furthermore, effective financial management and accountability mechanisms are crucial to ensure that allocated funds are utilized efficiently and transparently. Proper monitoring and evaluation systems should be in place to track the utilization of funds and assess the impact of investments in Nigerian tertiary education. The innovative approaches to tertiary education financing as identified by Ogunode et al. (2023) include:

Tuition-Free or Low-Cost Education Models: Several countries of the world have adopted or are considering tuition-free or low-cost education models at the tertiary level. Under these models, the government subsidizes a significant portion or the entire cost of education, making it more affordable for students. This approach aims to remove financial barriers and increase access to higher education, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds. Countries like Germany, Finland, Norway, and Sweden have implemented tuition-free or heavily subsidized education systems.

Income-Sharing Agreements (ISAs): Income-sharing agreements are gaining popularity as an alternative financing option

for tertiary education. With ISAs, students receive funds for their education in exchange for a certain percentage of their future income for a specified period. Instead of taking out traditional loans, students share the financial burden by paying a portion of their earnings after graduation. ISAs aim to align the cost of education with students' future income potential and provide more flexibility in repayment, particularly for graduates entering lower-paying fields or facing economic uncertainties.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Public-private partnerships involve collaborations between government entities and private organizations to support and finance tertiary education. These partnerships can take various forms, such as joint investment in infrastructure, research initiatives, or scholarship programs. By leveraging the expertise and resources of both sectors, PPPs aim to enhance the quality of education, expand access, and promote innovation. Governments often partner with private corporations, foundations, or non-profit organizations to fund scholarships, research grants, or infrastructure development.

Crowdfunding Platforms: Crowdfunding has emerged as a novel way to finance tertiary education, allowing individuals to raise funds through online platforms. Students, parents, or educational institutions can create crowdfunding campaigns to seek financial support from a broader community. This approach enables students to tap into social networks, alumni associations, and other interested individuals who are willing to contribute towards their educational expenses. Crowdfunding platforms provide an avenue for individuals to access financial assistance beyond traditional sources.

These innovative approaches to tertiary education financing reflect a growing recognition of the need to find sustainable and inclusive solutions. They aim to reduce financial burdens on students, expand access to education, and ensure that quality education remains accessible to individuals from all socio-economic, religious and political backgrounds. Additionally, these approaches encourage collaboration between public and private entities, foster community engagement, and promote a sense of shared responsibility in supporting higher education. It is important to note that the adoption and success of these approaches vary across countries and contexts. Each model has its own strengths, challenges, and implications, and their effectiveness depends on factors such as government policies, economic conditions, institutional capacity, and societal values. The evolving landscape of tertiary education financing continues to explore and experiment with new ideas, striving to create a more equitable and sustainable framework that supports the educational aspirations of individuals and contributes to societal development.

To meet international standards, countries should prioritize the quality and relevance of tertiary education. This includes aligning curricula with industry demands, investing in faculty development, providing state-of-the-art facilities and resources, promoting research and innovation, and continuously assessing and adapting educational programs to meet evolving global needs. More so, financing Nigerian tertiary education for global

competitiveness requires a multi-faceted approach involving adequate public funding, private sector partnerships, student financial aid programs, and effective financial management practices. By prioritizing and adequately funding tertiary education, Nigeria can enhance the quality of its educational institutions, promote research and innovation, and produce graduates who are globally competitive and contribute to the country's economic and social development. More so, tertiary education is crucial for national development and meeting international standards. It creates a skilled workforce, drives innovation and research, facilitates global collaboration, attracts talent and investment, and contributes to social and human development. By prioritizing tertiary education, countries can position themselves competitively on the global stage and drive sustainable growth and prosperity.

Conclusion

Tertiary education is crucial for global competitiveness as it equips individuals with advanced knowledge and skills. However, there are challenges in achieving global competitiveness, including the relevance of the curriculum and limited resources. Adequate financing is essential to address these challenges, requiring government commitment, public-private partnerships, and financial aid programs. By addressing these challenges and investing in quality education, Nigeria can enhance its tertiary education sector and contribute to its global competitiveness. This is because the global competitiveness of tertiary education in Nigeria is of utmost importance for the country's overall development and success.

Suggestions

Based on the challenges and the goal of enhancing the global competitiveness of Nigerian tertiary education, the following suggestions are made:

Increase Funding: The government should prioritize education by allocating a significant portion of the national budget to tertiary education. This will ensure adequate resources for infrastructure development, faculty recruitment and training, research activities, and student support services.

Public-Private Partnerships: Government should foster collaborations between tertiary institutions and private entities to secure additional funding, promote industry-academia partnerships, and enhance the relevance of educational programs. This can include sponsorship of research projects, internships, and apprenticeship programs.

Curriculum Review and Innovation: Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should regularly update and align the curriculum with industry demands and global trends. Integrate practical training, experiential learning, and entrepreneurship education to equip students with the skills and knowledge required for the modern job market.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation: NUC should strengthen quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that tertiary education institutions meet international standards. Accreditation processes should be rigorous and transparent, promoting continuous improvement and accountability.

Research and Innovation Culture: Government and her agencies should encourage a culture of research and innovation within tertiary institutions. They

should provide support for faculty and student research initiatives, establish research centers, and foster collaborations with national and international research institutions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid: University managements should expand scholarship programs and financial aid options to make tertiary education more accessible to students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Target support towards students with exceptional academic potential and those from disadvantaged communities.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: Ministries of Education and relevant authorities should enhance the quality of teaching by providing continuous professional development opportunities for faculty members. They should encourage research-based teaching methodologies and the use of modern educational technologies.

Embrace Technology and E-Learning: Government and philanthropists should invest in digital infrastructure and e-learning platforms to enhance access to quality education, particularly in remote and underserved areas. This will facilitate flexible learning options and lifelong learning opportunities.

Collaboration with International Partners: Government and university managements should foster collaborations and partnerships with reputable international institutions to exchange knowledge, expertise, and best practices. This can include faculty and student exchange programs, joint research projects, and participation in global academic networks.

Policy and Regulatory Reforms: Policy makers and NUC should regularly review and update policies and regulations governing tertiary education to create an enabling environment for innovation, collaboration, and internationalization. They should ensure that regulatory frameworks promote quality, inclusivity, and accountability.

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