Institutional Leadership Quality and Selection: An Uncovered Factor in the Outcomes of Higher Education

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INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP QUALITY AND SELECTION: AN UNCOVERED FACTOR IN THE OUTCOMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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This is a descriptive, empirical and suggestive paper. It rests on three intertwined axioms. First, higher education (HE) plays momentous roles in personal and societal development. Second, the quality of HE cannot rise above the quality of its leadership, especially at the institutional level. Third, the quality of HE leadership implicates the qualities of input, process and outcome of higher education. While the issue of HE leadership quality is primordial to all issues, it has not been given adequate attention. This neglect possibly explains the dysfunctional state of HE, particularly in Nigeria and probably many other nations in Africa and Asia. In addressing its descriptive purpose, this paper reviews literature on the relationship between leadership quality and HE effectiveness; rehearses the roles of vice-chancellors, provosts, or rectors as chief executive officers (CEOs) of HE institutions in providing strategic direction and leadership; and discusses the essential qualities of effective HE leadership. The literature review and discussion of the roles of the CEOs leads to preliminary report of a study on “The characteristics that make an effective HE leader”. The data were collected from participants at the conference organised by the Nigeria’s education apex body. Consequent on the foregoing, the paper concluded with policy implications for HE development.

Introduction

It is incontestable that education, in general, plays significant role in social, cultural, economic, technological and political development of the concerned entity. Lending credence to the position, a high degree of association has been established between educational status of an individual as well as that of a nation, and measures of development. In particular, it is the conviction of international organisations including United Nations that education plays an especially important role in addressing health disparities and in mediating the “income effect” on equalities (Carr, 2004:16). Hence education appears to be a magic wand necessary for peace and security, for the rule of law and justice to prevail, poverty alleviation, disease control and obliteration, energy production and sustainability, political stability and international cooperation (Fajonyomi, 2007). For emphasis, Gills (1999) likened the relationship between education and development to a switch which turns on light that brightens the darkness of poverty and enlightens the lives of the people.

If education in general is recognised as a central element to development, higher education (HE), also known as tertiary education, or post-secondary education, cannot cause less effect. The 1998 World Conference in Higher Education (WCHE) affirmed that HE has unprecedented role in the present day society as a pillar to endogenous capacity building, the consolidation of human rights, sustainable democracy and peace in the context of justice. In the same vein, Gills (1999:4) reiterated that HE has never been as important to the future of the world, as it is right now. If it cannot guarantee rapid economic development, sustained progress is impossible without it.

A close look at the goals of HE, as highlighted in a nation’s policy document like that of Nigeria, provides a pointer to its contributions to development. For instance, the goals of HE as specified in the Nigeria’s National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) include:
• To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training;
• To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of society;
• Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
• Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to be self reliant and useful members of the society;
• Promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
• Forge and cement national unity; and
• Promote national, international understanding and institutions.

In addition, the conceived expectations of HE institutions by this 2008 IMHE General Conference; to provide education and training relevant to the demands of working life, conduct research activities that yield benefits for the development of a knowledge-based economy, as well as to ensure social cohesion, regional development and global well-being, equally buttress the unequivocal relationship between higher education and development and the faith of the OECD in HE to forge personal, national and international development. Thus the development of HE is of great concern and interest to wide constituencies and stakeholders including international communities. Of greater concern is the quality of HE generated, delivered and used up, more so, to say the obvious, the products of HE produced by any HE institution in any country spread beyond that nation and impact every other nation.

Unfortunately, without a need for a soothsayer and as recognised by Dais (1998), Adedipe (2005) and Martin (2007) “there are challenges clogging the wheel of HE institutions in fulfilling their multiple missions of improving the quality of their provision of education, increasing their efficiency and in demonstrating their contribution to society”. These challenges, though inexhaustive, include:

• Fiscal and financial debase resulting from nation’s structural adjustment programme.
• Fiscal policy, especially currency devaluation in many developing countries.
• Substantial increase in the demand for higher education.
• Increased pressure on existing inadequate infrastructures and utilities.
• Poor funding.
• Government instability.
• Uncritical about supervision and control, system including selection of vice-chancellor.
• Inconsistent government policy concerning institutional administration.
• Institutional Crises

The identified challenges are recurring, particularly for the increasing demand for HE. What is worrisome, is the incapability of the financial and administrative machinery to respond to the growing demand for HE especially in developing countries (Martin, 2007) and its untold effect on the quality of graduate from higher education institutions. Intuitive and empirical reports on the graduates of HE institutions in Nigeria are disturbing. In recent times, Nigerians are worried about the state of HE in the country. For example, there had been complaints by employers across board that Nigerian HE graduates are poorly prepared for the workplace. Industries, commerce and public sector have to retrain the graduates to fit into the work requirements of these various places. There are instances of some private secondary schools that had to retrain graduate teachers before they could be given class to teach. In other words, it is becoming increasingly clear that HE products could no longer fit in unretouched (Okebukola, 2005; Ipaye, 2007). This scenario cuts across many nations in Africa, Asia and Europe. In a corollary the negative impact of the challenges to my mind, would be minimised if leadership at various levels of the HE system is innovative, original
and transformative. This deduction is informed by a modest thirty years of experience within the system and primary and secondary evidences provided by authors. Regrettably, the quality of leadership in HE institutions in most developing countries (not peculiar to India as noted by Chandrasikanan, (2005) is declining sharply over the years.

**Higher education development and desired outcome**

Quality and relevant higher education (HE), serves as energy behind the demand for and reform of HE in Nigeria before and after independence in 1960. The present system of HE in the country comprises four main types of institutions: universities, polytechnics and monotechnics, colleges of education and open-distance institutions. Each of the variants is evolved to produce middle and high-level manpower needed to drive the economy and polity at a referenced time. Generally, the universities are responsible for production of high-level manpower, carrying out researchers of benefits to the society and, for serving their immediate and remote communities. The polytechnics on the other hand, are intended for producing middle and high-level technical and professional manpower, while the monotechnics, single subject technological institutions, run specialised programmes such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, accountancy and the like. In the case of colleges of education, they train high level non-graduate teachers, but some of the colleges now award bachelor’s degree in education. Lastly the open-distance educational institutions, very recently popularised, provide access to quality HE education and equity in educational opportunities for those who could not have such through conventional HEIs (higher education institutions) and their flexibility, they tend to meet diverse and special needs of Nigerians (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Therefore, it is not incongruous to deduce that the extent to which products of any HE-in terms of graduates produced, research outputs, and services rendered to the community – satisfy expectations and needs of the communities (immediate or remote) to that extent is it relevant and qualitative. This explains the agitation of Nigerian political elites in the late 1930s for a university after the like of British universities in the Colony and the subsequent establishment of the University College Ibadan, which was affiliated to the University of London in 1948. It was reported that the elites were dissatisfied with the products of the Yaba Higher College, established by the British Colonial Administration in 1934. Also for the increased pressure by the restive elites for a full-fledged autonomous university, the country’s needs in the field of post-school certificate and higher education, the Colonial Administration in 1959 set up Ashby Commission to investigate over a period of twenty years, 1960 to 1980. Following the recommendations of the Commission and guided by Macpherson constitution of 1954, three regional universities were established and two federal universities created. At the birth of the First Republic, the regional universities were (1) University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960 by the Eastern Regional Government, (2) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Regional Government and (3) University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) Ile-Ife in 1962 by the Western Regional Government. The University College, Ibadan metamorphosed to an autonomous University of Ibadan in 1962 while University of Lagos was created in 1962. These two universities were owned by the federal government. The year 1962, also witnessed the birth of the National Universities Commission, which is responsible for the coordination of university education in place of the Inter-University Council of London (Jibril, 2005; Shehu, 2005; Omolewa, 2007). With the creation of Mid-Western Region, University of Benin was created and located in the region. In 1975, in a bid to rebuild the country and foster national unity after the civil war, 12 states were established by the ruling Military Government with the Government’s faith in education, particularly HE, as an instrumentality of national unity and economic
development, it took over the regional universities and created seven additional ones. Thus, all the 13 universities were owned by the federal military government; courtesy of Decree 46 of 1977. With the coming of the Second Republic, and the inclusion of university education on the concurrent list in the 1979 Constitution, state governments were empowered to establish universities. This led to the establishment of about nine state universities. The Second Republic was terminated in 1983 but Decree No. 16 of 1985 amended by Decree No. 9 of 1993 still supported ownership of universities by the state government. The Decree also gave birth to the National Open University. Further, Longe Commission of 1997 impacted on the developmental role of HE in manpower supply and demand, administration, funding and the nation’s aspirations for the future of HE and its quality (Akinkugbe, 2005). On the whole, the number of universities has increased from one in 1948 to 13 in 1972 and to 92 in 2008 comprising 27 federal universities (including Open University), 31 state universities and 34 private universities (National Universities Commission, 2008). The enrolments also upsurged from 210 in 1948 to 7,564 in 1975 and to about 654,856 in 2005 (Okoroma, 2006 & Fajonyomi, 2008a). However, in spite of the expansion in the number of universities and in enrolment, not up to 15 percent of the applicants could access university education each year (Ipaye, 2007) and the enrolment is tilted to arts and humanities contrary to policy provision of 60:40 ratio of science to arts.

The development of polytechnics and colleges of education followed a similar pattern as that of the university education. The Yaba Higher College, following Ashby Commission’s recommendations, gave birth to Colleges of Technology and Polytechnics as well as to Colleges of Education. For instance, Ibadan Polytechnic, Ibadan, in the West, was established in 1960; Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna in the North was established in 1962; Yaba College of Technology, Lagos in 1963 by the Central Administration and Auchi Polytechnic in 1964 to serve the Midwestern area. Also four Advanced Teachers’ Colleges were recommended and established in the existing Regions. The enrolment of 141,694 in 46 polytechnics rose to 143,335 in 49 polytechnics and for Colleges of Education, the enrolment was 100,897 in 1997/98 and this rose to 197,041 in 2002/03 session in about 54 colleges. While polytechnics and colleges of education have been contributing to meeting social demands for HE in the past years, the outcome of Education Sector Analysis done by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2005 questioned the appropriateness of the two programmes in the contemporary scheme of things in the country, as there has been disenchantment among young people with the cul-de-sac nature of the programmes.

Unfortunately, the indiscriminate expansion of HEIs over the years has reverberated effect on the quality of the HE achieved. This is reflected in expressed dissatisfaction with the output from the HEIs and the call for reform in this sector. The desire is for the products of our HEIs to be well grounded in their discipline of specialisation as well as to be flexible and entrepreneurial enough to be job creators and not job seekers, and to be well-equipped for future challenges. The irony is that every Commission ever set up and reform so far carried out recurrently emphasised quality and relevant HE objectives and made sufficient recommendations in the direction concerning (1) admission requirements, (2) examination process, (3) instructional and infrastructural facilities needed, (4) use of information and communication technologies (ICT), (5) quality of teaching and support staff, (6) institutional management capacity and tenure, (7) research quality and relevance, (8) students support system, (9) financing and (10) moral standard. It is mind-boggling that the Government or authority which set up such Commission or body seldom ensures the implementation of the recommendations to the letter. Akinkugbe (2005:74) for instance, lamented that “the government White Paper resulting from the Longe Report fell short of expectations in so far
as noting certain important recommendations and being negative on many others that would have altered in a seminal and dramatic way, the quality and course of HE in the country”. Is this another pseudo-democracy or inadequate political commitment?

**Higher education quality control**

In the light of the expansion of HEIs in Nigeria coupled with diverse ownership of the HE variants and the reported worries about the quality of graduates, quality control mechanisms (external and internal) have been beefed up. The external mechanisms include programmes accreditation visit conducted by relevant statutory regulatory agencies; the National Universities Commission (NUC) which lays down minimum standards for academic programmes taught in the Nigerian Universities and accredits them; the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) are charged with quality assurance responsibilities regarding polytechnics and colleges of education respectively. In Nigerian context, the term accreditation connotes *a system for recognising higher educational institutions and their programmes for a level of performance, integrity and quality which entitles them to the confidence of the education community, the public they serve and the employers of labour* (emphasis added) (NUC in Federal Ministry of Education, 2005:16). The exercise has been regular since its commencements, for the first time in the history of HE, in 1999. Besides accreditation exercise, the NUC and other similar bodies enforce adherence to established carrying capacity of an institution. Carrying capacity is the maximum number of students that the human and material resources available in an institution can support for effective HE delivery. This is believing that if student numbers in an HEI are maintained at a level that matches available human and material resources, the plethora of quality related problems will significantly reduce.

In addition, the Visitor to an HEI (President of the nation for federal HEIs, state governors for state HEIs, or proprietors for private HEIs) often institute visitation panel to designate HEI for the purpose of assessing management of the institution. Recommendations are made to the Visitor, if followed through, usually ensure severe improvement of the concerned HEI so visited. Of recent, visitation of the National Assembly’s Committee on Education to some HEIs, in the course of performing their oversight function, has added impetus to the demand for more financial allocation to HEIs for the improvement of the quality of facilities in HE. Note of mentioning is the increased contributions of Education Trust Fund, and private organisations in the provision of infrastructural facilities. The concern here is that the efforts and the various contributions should be coordinated to avoid multiplication of efforts and to insure greater accountability. For instance, it is high time the three regulatory bodies – NUC, NBTE and NCCE – are streamlined into one, possibly renamed Formal Higher Education Commission for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

External mechanisms add extrinsic value to HE quality control but of high premium and intrinsic value are the contributions of internal mechanisms which would not erode the tenets of HE institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The initiation of internal mechanisms rests principally on the Council/Governing Board, the Senate/Academic Board and the Operational (administrative or academic units). The Council or Governing Board, in a general term, is charged with the general, control and superintendence of the policy, finances of the HEI, including its public relations (Briggs and Tamuno, 2005 with additional emphasis). The Council is constituted by the Visitor and its tenure is at his/her pleasure. The composition of the Council of a federal university in Nigeria, with University of Maiduguri as a reference, includes five external members appointed by the Visitor, with a member appointed as the
Chairman/Pro-Chancellor; the Vice-Chancellor (appointed by the Visitor on the recommendation of the Council) and his deputies as ex-officio members; four representatives of Senate; a representative of the Federal Ministry of Education/ NUC; two representatives of the Congregation; and a member nominated by the Convocation. Besides the deliberations on the floor of a Council meeting, it uses committees or boards to carry out its mandate. The Committees include: Finance and General Purposes Committee; Tender’s Board; Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee; Appointment and Promotion Committee (one each for Senior Technical and Administrative Staff, Junior Staff and Academic Staff); Development Committee; Minor Works Committee and other adhoc committees deemed exigent to address specific issues related to the university management. Most of the committees, other three or four chaired by the Pro-Chancellor (Chairman of Council himself), are chaired by the Vice-Chancellor or his representative, who is expected to report to the plenary session of the Council which meets periodically.

The Senate (for universities) or the Academic Board (polytechnics and colleges of education) is the highest decision-making body on academic matters. Membership includes: the Vice-Chancellor, who is the Chairman; the Deputy Vice-Chancellors; University Bursar; University Librarian; every professor in the faculties; Deans of Faculty; Provost of College; Directors of Academic or Research Unit; and other persons, who in the opinion of the Senate are capable of making useful contributions to its deliberations; and the Registrar, who serves as the Secretary. The Senate has the power to determine (a) the contents of curricula; (b) options for academic expansion or contraction; (c) procedure for examination; (d) process of admission; (e) students support, services and discipline; (f) award of fellowship and honorary degrees, to mention these: In a broad sense, the Senate’s functions are to organise and control teaching and research, admit and discipline the students and ensure close relationship between the ‘town and gown’. These functions of the Senate closely relate to quality assurance criteria. Hence, it is a principal player in quality and relevant HE delivery.

In essence, the pertinent role of HE institutional management and leadership (represented by the respective Chairman, particularly the Vice-Chancellor, Provost or Rector) in quality control is indubitable. Noting also the vice-chancellor’s roles or influence in the appointment of heads of operational, academic and administrative units. Therefore, greater attention should be given to the selection, quality and capacity building of every HE institutional leadership. More so, the five conceptions of leadership by Middlehurst of (a) being in charge; (b) setting directions; (c) influencing outcomes; (d) commanding a following; and (e) being set apart from others (Gordon, 2001); bear out the Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Provost as ‘arrowhead’ of HE institutional quality control. The degree of influence of leadership at varying levels in controlling the HE quality is represented in figure 1.
Figure 1: Leadership influential roles in quality control

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Control Strategies</th>
<th>Degree of Influence</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proprietor/Ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy direction</td>
<td>MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financing</td>
<td>MI</td>
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<td>Facilities</td>
<td>MI</td>
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<td>Admission</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>Enrolment expansion</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum content/renewal</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student flow</td>
<td>JI</td>
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<td>Conducive environment</td>
<td>JI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffing ICT</td>
<td>VI</td>
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</tbody>
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MI: Most Influential, VI: Very Influential, JI: Just Influential, I: Influential

From figure 1 one can derive that the strength of the proprietor is in the area of provision, regulatory body has its, in the quality assessment, the Council in its superintendent role, and institutional leadership in resource management and accountability.

Frameworks on institutional outcomes, leadership and leadership quality

Mission, expectations, reactions, functions, goals, challenges could translate into outcome(s) – personal, institutional, organisational or systems. Traditionally, in the case of HE, the functions are triumvirate-teaching, research and community servicing. To this, Dias (1998) added ethical function which implies social criticism. The functions reflect in the outcomes or output which HE institution is expected to generate. The outcome with its measurement is a function of the participating individual(s), sponsors, institution, and the society; hence, the variation and divergence in the description and measurement of outcomes. For instance, a student is more concerned about passing examination, completing a programme and the conversion of the knowledge into job or meal ticket. To sponsors, including parents, their interest is on whether the HE acquired will guarantee employment, enhance the earning power and facilitate job mobility of their wards. In the case of government representing the society, it thinks of outcome in terms of production of economic manpower and productive labour as well as the moral, social, cultural and political needs of the society. On the part of employers of labour, consideration centres on the graduates’ effectiveness or performance on the job (Akinpelu, 1983). Should the HE institution or system not address the peculiarity of a group, it is declared a failure by the membership of the referenced group. This explains why outcome assessment plan and guides prepared by many HE institutions particularly in the United States of America, are broad based including: general knowledge outcome, discipline based outcomes, student satisfaction and involvement, occupational outcomes drawing on the perception of alumni, non-academic units outcome and campus culture (Pittsburg State University, 2003). Similar problem crops up in the definition and assessment of “Development Outcomes” (Jutting, 2003). The suggestion is that a common and acceptable definition of HE institutional outcome should be evolved. The diversity in the description or definition of outcome explicates the difficulty in its measurement. Perhaps, this is why Olsen (2005:38) remarked that there are many and inconsistent purposes, expectations and success criteria, and it is unclear who has the legitimacy to talk on behalf of society and define what social needs are.
In outcome equation, it is an aberration if a mention is not made of the resources, as inputs, that are used up to yield the outcome. Besides, defining the resources in pecuniary sense, authors recognise inputs as conditions of learning. The inputs are transformed in activity described as a process. The essence is not in doubt. The prime motive is to inform leadership of the decision to take concerning on-going activities. Needless to say, that every activity is virtually on-going. Obanya (1981) identified four major groups which are valuable at this stage – family, vice-chancellor or institutional head, students with the programme milieu and the fourth group is made of supervisory agencies, researchers and evaluators who could come from outside the system.

The input, the process and the outcome interact among themselves and relate individually with the environment. While leadership quality implicates all of the input, process and outcome, its nature and style mirror the nature and quality of the environment. Every leader is a product of the environment and he or she is affected or effected by the environment which may be immediate or distant. The environmental effect on the input, process, outcome or leadership is rippling with the closest having the strongest impact. Notable among the environmental thrusts are: information and communication technology (ICT); globalisation; knowledge-based economy; millennium development goals (MDGs); and education for all (EFA) at the world level; at the regional level, as in the case of Africa, African Peer Review Mechanism is a good reference; and at the national level, the country’s policies which directly or indirectly affect HE development should attract attention. In the case of Nigeria this includes the current National Economic Empowerment Strategy (NEEDS). The mention of environment is significant for the reason that resources needed for HE success and effective leadership reside in the environment (Bhola, 2006; Obanya, 2006).

It is evocative, from the discourse thus far, that leadership with its quality is central to educational success. Higher education sector is not excluded. Thus leadership quality and higher education institution outcome appeared mutually consistent (Aderonmu & Ama, 1986; McKinley et al., 1993; Lucey, 1995; Taylor & Schonwetter, 2002; Bartels, 2003; Brown, 2004). It is not far from reality to presume that higher education quality, relevance and impact cannot rise above the quality of its leadership. In essence and as underscored by Baikie (2002) the critical factor in the management of authority in any HE institution, with special reference to universities, is the leadership qualities and management skills of the Chief Executive of the institution, namely the Vice-Chancellor, Provost or Rector. Olsen (2005) seems not to concur less. The author precisely endorsed, by extension, that the promotion of strong university leadership is a key in university organisation and governance as well as in future changes and reform. The leadership position conceded to the Vice-Chancellor, Provosts or Rectors is not in doubt. Hence, they are singled out for address whenever there is need for change in the system. In a challenge of the Director-General of UNESCO to the higher education institutional leadership in Africa in the early nineteen nineties, Bartels (2003) deduced four-pronged initiatives attached to the position:

- an innovative, entrepreneurial, effective and efficient managerial approach to university life and work as a preferred route to the fulfilment of a university mission
- organised information for renovating the University in the shape of such Business Plan and Management Action as are known in modern progressive industry and management
- an unambiguous recognition of the imperatives imposed by management on those who invoke it as a concern dictated by an urgent need of the times, and
- a willingness and determination to carry them out successfully.
It is clear from literature and the propositions that leadership of HE institution goes beyond the assumption of the ‘great man theory’ of leadership – ‘that leaders are born and not made’ – to reality of learning how an action is carried out, when, where and how. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the traits associated with the theory would not add value to leadership quality. This is an endorsement of Yukil’s assertion that “if a leader possesses some of these characteristics, the likelihood that he will be an effective leader will be increased” (Sobehart & Wipple, 2001 and Sashkin & Sashkin, 2004). Two types of traits have been reported by Sobehart and Wipple to be associated with effective leadership-personality traits and motivational traits. Elements of personality traits – self confidence, emotional maturity, and integrity – have been found to be associated with effective leadership, so also those of motivational traits of desire for achievement, willingness to assume responsibility and concern for people. It is, however, observed that ‘no single trait would guarantee that a leader will be effective (Sobehart and Wipple, 2001). It appears therefore, that institutional leadership does not simply reside in who one is, but also in the behaviour exhibited by the leader as proposed by the Behavioural Leadership theorists, in doing the right thing at the right time in a particular situation as suggested by Situational Leadership proponents and in the dimensional roles of charismatic role modelling, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation as stipulated by the Transactional Transformational Leadership proponents (Walsman, Bass & Yammanno, 1990; Honrig, 2001; Portugal, 2006; Gumusluoghu & Ilser, 2007).

Also, the trace of leadership theories shows that what makes an effective leader are not limited to characteristics or attributes identified by a particular leadership group but a combination of elements from the three popular classifications or groups. In other words contribution of transformational leadership proponents has not totally rendered unimportant certain leadership characteristics suggested by trait theorists in any effort to select a qualified higher institutional leader. At the same time, it has not proved otherwise that situation influences leadership behaviour. The question is, which attributes really matter in leadership effectiveness at the higher educational level?

**Higher educational leadership quality**

The foregoing discussion establishes the strategic place of higher educational leadership with its quality in institutional outcome and effectiveness. Hence, the quality of HE leadership – Provost, Rector or Vice-Chancellor – is said to be critical in the management of the institution and achievement of goals (Baikie, 2005). Greater responsibilities are even bestowed on university leadership by the demands of autonomy, globalisation and knowledge-based economy. Amidst the expectations a highly qualified leadership should be chosen. In fashioning out leadership requirements and qualities, consideration should be given to theoretical propositions of what qualities make an effective leadership and to vision and mission of the institution. Once done, it will constitute a standard of minimum qualities necessary for selection of a Vice-Chancellor and the evaluation of his or her performance. More importantly, there are several studies dealing with organisational effectiveness with leadership qualities and characteristics that matter being isolated but very few on higher educational leadership qualities and institutional outcome or effectiveness. Borrowing from findings from those studies, the following trends can be discerned. First, personality characteristics – age, emotional stability, extroversion and dependability – are frequently mentioned as qualities of leadership and are found to be positively related to organisational effectiveness. But questions of where and how each contributed to leadership quality and organisational effectively are seldom answered (McKinley *et al.*, 1993). Second, experience
on the job, communication ability, knowledge and qualification of the job, tend to affect the quality of leadership. While additional qualification beyond first degree may not make a difference in leadership quality in non-academic institution or organisations, it is important for a higher educational leader to obtain a higher degree, especially where it is a prerequisite for promotion to higher rank – professorship. Finally, administrative and leadership skills and behaviours – interpersonal relations, management of self, administration and communication – are important to effective leadership and organisational effectiveness (Brown, 2004).

But what appear as job description of an HE institutional leadership can be found in the act, edict or statute establishing the institution. For example, a vice-chancellor in a Nigerian Federal University is expected to:

- Draw up development plan, formulate specific guidelines in respect of annual work plans and arrange for the implementation of the plan and guidelines;
- Arrange for teaching, research and moral education;
- Draw up plans for internal structure, nominate candidates for the posts of Deputy Vice-Chancellors, and appoint and remove Heads of Department of the University;
- Appoint and dismiss teachers and other workers of the university, subject to the approval of the governing council;
- Keep control of the school roll;
- Give reward and punishment to students;
- Draw up and implement the fiscal budget;
- Protect and manage the property, lawful rights and interests of the university;
- Provide information on the proper planning and management of the university to the Governing Council and the Commission;
- Prepare and submit a comprehensive report and audited account to the visitor through the Commission;
- Cause an annual review of each academic member of staff, the result of the review including independent assessment by the students taught by the staff to be filed with the Governing Council for the purpose of determining the tenure of staff; and
- Perform other duties provided for in the statute of the University; and other provisions of this Act (University of Maiduguri, 1985).

Going by the stated roles, the vice-chancellor is no less expected to provide strategic direction and leadership. Moreso, it is recognised that the academic landscape of HE institution is one in which momentous changes and challenges are occurring (Portugal, 2006).

Also, the roles and functions of the university in general, suggest that the leadership responsibilities of the vice-chancellor are in three fronts: administrative leadership, academic leadership, and community leadership. As an administrative leader, he/she is responsible for organising, identifying, prioritising, facilitating and coordinating opportunities within and outside the university. At the same time, along the principles of strategic planning, he or she is responsible for identifying the strength of the institution, the weaknesses, the immediate and potential opportunities as well as all the internal and external threats to the institutional growth and advancement. On the academic leadership, he/she is expected to promote scholarship, ensure quality of curricula, ensure adaptation of teaching methods to make students more active and develop an enterprising spirit, work towards expansion of and greater flexibility in training facilities so as to make use of the possibilities afforded by ICT and to guarantee the internalisation and networking of curricula, students and teachers. And for community servicing, he/she should provide leadership through organisation of the instruments of the institution to relate and support the community in its tasks with research,
advice and consultancy. There is no doubt, the tasks are onerous, but as a manager he or she is expected to get the tasks done through individuals, committees as well as ground within and without the institution. He should therefore possess the qualities that will make the led to follow willingly. For emphasis, Brown (2004) singled out the following qualities: expertise – with knowledge he could attract followers; character – represented by leader’s traits, attitudes and abilities with two components of integrity and empathy recognised; vision – creation of goals which must be realistic and measurable and in line with institutional goals and mission; and, motivation – motivate the followers to pursue vision (emphasis added). In concluding this section, attention is drawn to the observations made by Ker (2006):

The leadership of the new university we all aspire to create, must fall in a strong academic whose credentials are impeccable and who can match his peers anywhere in the world...

Today’s vice-chancellor must be tested academically and professionally. A sound knowledge of his subject is inspiring to colleagues... In addition he must be of a sound character.

Despite the effects of leadership quality and higher education outcome and effectiveness, most developing countries in Africa and Asia, appear uncritical about the selection of HE institutional leadership. For instance, selection of leaders for higher education institution in most countries in the regions is often characterised by intrigues, manoeuvrings and even crises with acrimony (Baikie, 2002; Shehu, 2005; Ming, 2007) and most often the process is challenged. This cuts across the continuum provided by Markham (1996:2) in a survey of the methods used in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors in Commonwealth Universities. The scale has six categories:

1. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the head of state or his/her appointed Chancellor without consultation with the University Council.

2. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the head of state or his/her appointed Chancellor after formal consultation with University Council.

3. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Government from a list of nominations put forward either by University Council or a specially convened selection committee.

4. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by University Council but the appointment must be approved by the Government.

5. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the University Council, which has a substantial number of Government representatives (more than 33%).

6. The Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the University Council or other university body, on which there is little or no Government representation.

A summary of the survey of the methods used in Asian countries showed that 55 percent of the universities in the region had their Vice-Chancellors appointed by the government, in 18 percent the Vice-Chancellor was chosen by Council but had to be approved by the government; and in 27 percent the appointment was made by University Council. In the case of African countries, only 25 percent of the universities had their Vice-Chancellor selected by government, 17 percent had the Vice-Chancellor chosen by Council with the approval of the
government while 50 percent of the universities questioned said their Vice-Chancellor was chosen by the Council (Markham, 1996).

That the selection of Vice-Chancellor in most developing countries, is bedevilled with problems and challenges is not necessarily because of the selector – government, council or mix – but for the subjective selection instruments and unstandardised selection template employed with ridiculous extraneous factors such as ethnicity and religion featuring prominently in the process (Baikie, 2002). This may explain the decline in HE institutional leadership quality earlier noticed (Chandrasikanan, 2005).

Against the backdrop, the perception of 125 respondents of participants at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Nigeria Academy of Education was sought on the necessity of requirements used in short listing and selecting candidates for the post of vice-chancellorship in the country. The respondents comprised a former Minister of Education, retired university professors, serving academics, researchers and administrators from Universities, Colleges of Education, Educational Research Institutes and Quality Assurance Agencies such as National Universities Commission and National Commission for Colleges of Education. Their ages ranged from 33 to 75 years with an average of 41.5 years.

On the procedure, each respondent was given a copy of a questionnaire which comprised five sections – A, B, C, D and E. Section A was on the requirements necessary for the position of a Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Provost. This section contained 11 items including: age limit nor more than 60 years; ICT proficiency; home grown-leadership selected within the institution; having impeccable character; federal character representation; relevant training to programmes in the concerned institution; ten-year professional experience; administrative experience as a deputy vice-chancellor, dean or director; international acclaimed professor through publication; community servicing through research and publication; and sound health. These items were replicate of requirements for the post of vice-chancellor as advertised in national dailies for four federal universities in 2007. The respondents indicated the extent to which each item was considered necessary on a scale ranging from very necessary with a weight of 4 points, necessary (3 points), just necessary (2 points) to not necessary (1 point). Section B was a list of five leadership qualities and the respondent was asked to rank them in order of importance with 1 given to the most important and 5 to the least. Section C was a list of selection instruments or procedures and the respondents were also asked to rank them in order of importance in selecting HE leadership. Section D asked whether the respondents were satisfied with the selection procedure employed in their respective institutions. The section also demanded reason(s) for the answers. Finally, Section E was on personal characteristics. The means and standard deviations of the distributions were obtained. Also, correlational analysis was employed. The results are presented in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4.
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Ranking Order and Correlation Coefficients on Selection Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age limit</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT Proficiency</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home grown</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impeccable Character</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.49*</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Character</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Training</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.65*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professorial Experience</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.90*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Experience</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Contribution</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Servicing</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Health</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p > 0.01: Every other coefficient is statistically significant
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, Ranking Order and Coefficients on Important Leadership Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Experience</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity and Character</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All coefficients are statistically significant at p < 0.01

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics, Ranking Order and Coefficients on Methods of Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Test</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Test</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Vitae Assessment</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>2.082</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Test</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All coefficients are statistically significant at p < 0.01

Table 4: Satisfaction with Current Selection Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(57.6)</td>
<td>(42.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages in parenthesis

Results and Discussion

Table 1 includes means, standard deviations, ranking order of the criteria or requirements according to the mean values, and correlation coefficients among the eleven variables. All the variables significantly and positively correlated with one another except for the relationships between age and impeccable character (r = 0.49, p > 0.01); home grown and impeccable character (r = 0.47, p > 0.01); federal character and impeccable character (r = 0.39, p > 0.01); sound health and age (r = 0.045, p > 0.01); sound health and home grown (r = 0.43, p > 0.01); and sound health and federal character (r = 0.36, p > 0.01). The ranking of the criteria appears more revealing. Sound health ranked first, followed by impeccable character, relevant training, administrative experience, community servicing, ICT proficiency, contribution to research, professional experience, age limit, home grown and federal character representation, in that descending order. The first eight criteria can be summarised under domains of leadership qualities – personality with motivational characteristics and behavioural skills proposed by Yukil (1998). The issue of age is controversial. While age is assumed to be synonymous with wisdom and maturity in many cultures in Nigeria, practical experience has shown that a young and transformational leader could be more effective than an old and insensitive leader. The last two variables may not add value to the effectiveness of HE leadership as perceived by the respondents. The observations made on the result presented in table 1 also hold for that of table 2.

The result presented in table 3 seems interesting. Table 3 presents the respondents’ preference with regard to methods of selection. Ranking the modes, of assessment of curriculum vitae ranked first, interview ranked second, intelligence test ranked third, administration of personality test ranked fourth, medical testing ranked fifth, and simulation ranked sixth. The positions occupied by curriculum vitae assessment and interview or
interaction might not be unconnected to the popularity of these two modes in the country. The subjectivity of the two modes particularly that of the curriculum assessment, has been pointed out elsewhere (Fajonyomi, 2007). In practice it is possible to favour a candidate by using his/her curriculum vitae as basis for judgement of other candidates’ resume. Besides, it appears that employment of curriculum vitae assessment and interview or interaction is grossly inadequate to ascertain the health condition of a candidate, determine his or her personality status, or judge his or her behavioural skills in varying conditions. In all, with subjective modes of selection, it will be hard to get a competent and effective candidate on the seat of Vice-Chancellorship in most of the universities in the developing countries. This possibly explains the result in table 4 with 72 (57.6 percent) of the 125 respondents expressing their non-satisfaction with the current selection process in Nigeria. Three major reasons for expressed opinion by this group include:

- Too much politisation of the position
- Many at times the third on the list is chosen out of the three names sent to the visitor
- Emphasis is placed on locality and consideration given to religion

**Policy implications for higher education development**

This paper, if not for anything, has pricked everyone to research assiduously into the leadership qualities that would really make a difference in higher education institutional outcomes. At the same time, there would be need to re-define more specifically, outcomes which have knitted to the factor of leadership to outcome to avoid overestimation or underestimation of the contributions of leadership factor. If done, this will facilitate the development of a standard template useful in ascertaining effectiveness or otherwise of an HE institutional leader. Such research findings will precisely suggest variables that should be expunged or retained, in the template currently in use, especially in developing countries where extraneous factors are often introduced to the process of HE leadership selection. The developed template could also serve as basis for performance evaluation of the leader, a culture which appeared strange to the universities in most developing countries. In other words, every university in the developing countries should imbibe the culture of self evaluation – inputs, process, programmes and outcomes, a common exercise in the developed countries (Breuder’s report in 2007 for example). Such regular evaluation exercise will make the HE leaders more accountable and responsible than hitherto.

On the issue of assessing the personality and behavioural aspects of would-be HE leaders, it is clear that reliance on referees’ reports, assessment of curriculum vitae and or interview is not sufficient. The time is ripe that aspiring HE leaders should be tested in such areas as intelligence, interest and personality. It is proven that “the most accurate predictor of managerial successes is the clinically oriented assessment” (Flippo, 1980). As such battery of selection tests should be developed.

The bottom-line for a formidable quality assurance is resources. Leadership should think of attracting resources outside the university by using qualified professionals and workers in private and public sectors of the economy as resource persons or associate lecturers. Such effort could further strengthen the relationship between town and gown. And fund provided should be invested wisely and prudently to win the confidence of the provider.

Finally, attention has been drawn to the intrinsic value of institutional leadership in HE quality control. It is suggestive therefore, for cost-effectiveness, to strengthen leadership at this level, through capacity building arrangement.
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