IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION, EDUCATIONAL BRANDING AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ON DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study is an appraisal of the effort made by the management of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)), Ile-Ife at employing Educational Branding as a business strategy to re-brand it selves to becoming the foremost University in Nigeria and the 53rd in Africa. It discussed various branding and Educational Marketing strategies used in spite of the challenges of depressed economy, globalization, desire to meet the MDGs and the achievement of Education for All. It examined students and staff disposition to the branding program and the impact on the image of the university, management and quality of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Educational branding, marketing, globalization, changing economy, innovation, strategic plan.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The potential of new technologies in fostering national development, provision of quality education and in branding education is globally recognized. Just as other industries are facing the challenge of global recession, so also the schools need to develop authentic brands in order for them to attract the right students, faculty, staff, donors and friends. In Nigeria today, one of the panaceas to resolving the challenges faced in education at all levels is "Educational Branding". Some of these challenges are: access and equity, high rates of failure/drop-out, falling standard, poor infrastructures, shortage of staff and poor funding.

The Minister of Education (2009) sees education as a tool that can be used to foster the development of all citizens to their full potential. So that Nigeria can become a strong, democratic prosperous and economy model. However, Egwu (2009) says; for us to successfully achieve this, we must first transform and develop the capacity of our population into competent and highly skilled citizens that can compete globally. Good as this may be the constraints/challenges that can impede the actualization of the above has been identified. The challenges as identified by Egwu (2009) include:
➢ Low enrolment, retention and transition at the basic education level;
➢ Low carrying capacity at the tertiary level;
➢ Inadequate and obsolete infrastructure, equipment and library facilities;
➢ Inadequate numbers of teachers;
➢ Low capacity of staff in ICT, management and content delivery;
➢ Inadequate instructional materials;
➢ Poor funding; (p. 16)

Other obstacles to the achievement of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are problems of access, equity and non existence of an open school, system. Egwu (2009) commenting on the above says;

In terms of access there are deep issues of physical access, quality access and economic access. Provision of uniform access to quality basic education presents a big challenge in view of economic, cultural, urban-rural dichotomy and other disparities in the country (p.17).

In this age of globalization, the importance of equitable access to quality education can not be denied. This is because globalization takes its root in education, labor, international trade agreement, international/transnational partnerships, telecommunication and recently terrorism. Today, glimpse of globalization becomes evident in the practices of education especially with the need for re-branding, accountability and technology. Akanbi (2007) identifies ICT as one of the most powerful tools of globalization. Illich (1971) emphasizing the importance of these new technologies says: Education cannot be reformed unless we ensure individual learning or social equality though provision of quality education. Gell and Conchrane (1993) also opine that for the desired change to occur, the importance of new technologies in the globalize world must be considered. It must also be embedded with multiple spheres of influence.

Stair (1996), Rinne (2000) and Webster (2001) have criticized those that argued that education should not be part of the development of globalization. Webster (2001) says it is only when education is seen as an integral part of information business that there would be better understanding of education as being the core of globalization system. Today educational policy is becoming an important part of economic trade, labor and social policies all over the world. In the developing countries education has acquired an unusual profile in the struggle for national survival. The reason for this is the realization of the important role education plays as a core tool for achieving the MDGs plan. In Nigeria particularly, there has been an unprecedented growth in enrolment at all levels of education. However, despite this growth, the issue of access to quality education and the availability of qualified teachers still remains one of the enduring challenges. However, literature revealed that some of these challenges can be resolved through effective branding initiatives. Educational branding is a new field and it is relatively new in Nigeria. It is being used in the developed countries and there are many literatures on the importance of branding among are: (Levinson 2002, Smiths, Nelson 2006 and Teague 2009) .The problem with Nigeria is that branding in education, its application and the integration of ICT is still insufficient to meet the global needs of EFA and the MDGs. For this reason, the topic is timely.

GLOBALIZATION

The term globalization has different connotation. Some theories see it as an assemblage of micro-structural forces discernible in the networks of capital, information, labor, products and people across states and nation. Monahan (2005) sees it as the blurring of boundaries that are previously held stable and fixed under the condition of modernity between local, private, global structure and agencies. Akanbi (2007) views globalization from social, economics, political, cultural and educational perspectives. To this school of thought, education is considered as the core of the globalization process. Perraton et -al (1999) on the other hand describe globalization as the emergence of changed global structures that are driven by skill revolution, organizational explosion, money, goods, people and continuous flow of ideas.

Although globalization is commonly associated with industry and business, but education has become the core of globalization process. In the field of Educational Technology, globalization is not new. As far back as 1964, MCluhan opines that Mass Communication revolution and the broadcast media have reduced the world to a "Global village". In the world today, educational policy is an important component of economy, trade and social development. Some examples of global development in the field of education are current rapid growth in open-distance education, workplace learning, basic education and the emergence of Mega Universities. Other dividend of globalization currently sweeping across the African countries is the Information Technology revolution. As a result of ICT revolution, national boundaries have been broken leading to equitable access to education. The revolution also ushered in a new era characterized by innovative ways of production, packaging,

transmitting and disseminating information and knowledge (Richard & Pricewater 1998). Not only this, the spirit of globalization also manifest in the statement of goals of many International Organizations and Professional Associations, such as the United Nations, UNICEF, Society for Information Technologies (SITES), The Association for the Advancement of Computing Education (AACE) and International Council of Education for Teaching (ICET).

It is also at this age of new economy and globalization that calls for modern and improved ways of service provision, productivity and training. In a globalize economy, our values and needs have changed because of the diffusion of ICTs. Not only this, the way we conduct business have also changed, in the same light, the diffusion of ICTs into education in a changing economy means increase in the rate of participation. The integration and diffusion of ICTs into education has implication for education and the globalize economy.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF SCHOOL

As in the industries where traditional jobs have changed to become multi-skilled, so also it is in education. Today, ICTs have helped to streamline management, information system, influence the nature of works, the need to develop new strategies and products based on new technology. Another area that calls for re-branding is the change in the client's demand as a result of the new economy. With the new economy, our clients are interested in new services and products. Their desire is that these products or services be delivered in less time than in the past. Not only this, they are also more sophisticated in expressing or asking for their demands. In an attempt at resolving some of these challenges, the management of Obafemi Awolowo University, (OAU) Ile-Ife took the following steps.

Setting the Stage

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (formerly University of Ife) was established in 1962 with students' enrolment of 224. Currently, the total enrolment is over 40,140 including the Pre-Degree, Diploma, Distance Learning and Postgraduate students. Prior to the commencement of branding its programme, the university had a public relation office. This office is responsible for linking the university with the outside world. However, the university took a new approach by establishing an Advancement Office with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. According to IMPACT (2009) the functions of the Advancement unit include among other things to identify and relate with potential donors and sponsors to advance the strategic goals of the university. This new unit is also to anchor the Alumni unit of the University. What was in practice before was the obsolete or the traditional method of sourcing for support which was not effective. The main activity of this unit then was to welcome alumni members who come on voluntary visit to the University.

During this period, the condition of the university was deteriorating due to poor funding, lack of infrastructures and mass exodus of qualified staff. Other challenges facing the university then were obsolete equipments, decreasing attractiveness of academic career to younger and intelligent scholars, gender disparities in admission into science and technology related courses. However, with the establishment of the Advancement Office with properly trained staff and clearly defined functions, the university's image has greatly improved. The advance Alumni relations and fund raising drives have also greatly improved. The improvement was due to the branding effort of the advancement office. The functions of the new Advancement Office as stipulated by the University Senate include:
➢   Re-brand the image/courses offered in the University;
➢   publish news letter, Alumni News;
➢   generate more money for the University using credible endowment;
➢   organize advancement workshops.

The effort of the Advancement Office at re-branding would not have been possible, if not for the development of a new strategic plan. It is true that the university management has been proposing a strategic plan, prior to

this period; the need for a strategic plan was not immediate. However, with the establishment of the Advancement Unit and the need to re-brand, the need for new strategic plan becomes necessary and very urgent.

Case Description
It was these that gave impetus for the birth of a strategic plan (2004-2008). The new plan proposed is participatory, involving all the students, staff, unions and other stake holders within and outside the Ivory Tower. The industries and their captains, labor markets and the banking sectors were not left out.

A committee was set up including the Directors of the Advancement Office, Linkages and Sponsored Research to oversee the implementation of the new strategic plan. The inauguration of the Committee in 2007 led the university to review and re-engineer the entire university system to meet the demands of a new economy.

The Philosophy Guiding the Project
The goals set by the committee are:
- enhancement of ICT potentials for teaching, learning, research and services;
- enhance resource mobilization through linkages;
- promote entrepreneurial resourcefulness for OAU Ile-Ife graduates;
- ensure gender equality;
- regain the image of OAU as an international institutions;
- develop a strong community relationship;
- establish several industry/university projects;
- attract research and academic funding;
- promote staff and student exchanges; and
- market academic and university research services (p. 8).

In order to achieve the above stated goals, another important unit that will assist the Advancement Office in its branding effort was established. It was called the Directorate of Linkages and Sponsored Research. This unit had made significant impact at getting grants and loans for the development of the university.

EDUCATIONAL BRANDING IN NIGERIA

Educational Branding mean different things to different people depending on the culture and location. In Nigeria, the concept is new in Education have been misconceived by many. There are those who still erroneously believed that education should not be seen or run as a business organization. According to Teague (2009) many people have asked him what Educational Branding means and his roles as a brand consultant. According to Teague the question came as a result of misconception and lack of knowledge about the importance of branding as a marketing strategy in education. Quoting Teague (2009) he said, those asking are often surprised to learn that brand development found its way into education". Other reasons advanced for the misconception is that people do not equate school or school system as a business out fit. There are many examples of such people in Nigeria. However events in Nigeria have shown that these categories of people are gradually shifting ground. These "old schools" are gradually reducing because of new information and the success stories as a result of educational branding strategies being employed in most universities.

Educational branding is a business strategy for developing authentic brands that are meant to give particular name and image to schools or institution of learning. This is done with the ultimate aim of attracting the right clients, staff, faculty, donors' alumni and other people within the community who are interested in helping to promote the success stories. It also involves using strategically targeted marketing designs, campaigns, agencies, integrated media approach and innovative technology to produce our own individual marketing strategy following well defined brand guide lines in order to promote expertise or attract more students and

fund to our institution. This concept was introduced during the regime of President Obasanjo. The concept of branding introduced then was private, public and community participation. (ADOPT A SCHOOL) The concept of branding is becoming a household name today in the country. The concept was first introduced into education by the then Honorable Minister of Education under President Olusegun.

It involves community participation in financing education and the different ways of improving education at the Basic and Post Basic education level due to inability of the Federal Government to shoulder the finance of education alone. This concept was vehemently opposed then, because the stake holders were not adequately informed and carried along .Although it was a laudable move but it was misunderstood. Branding concept is currently accepted, it is a common slogan and it is being used in Nigeria by the Honorable Minister of Information. She has coined a slogan "Re-Branding Nigeria". The main thrust of this paper is to highlight the success stories of how OAU Ile-Ife used this business strategy in re-branding itself to becoming the most beautiful University in Africa, foremost ICT University in Nigeria and the 53rd best University in Africa.

TECHNOLOGY/BRANDING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

Re-branding strategies employed by OAU Ile-Ife included advertising, selling promotion and public relations. These were facilitated by the Advancement Office, the Public Relations Unit and the Directorate of Linkages and Sponsors Research. The University employed advertising as the main promotion mix. The Advancement Office and the Directorate of Linkages made use of integrated media approach and new technology. Each of this unit created a web-site of their own that keeps the public informed about the progress made so far, the challenges ahead and what they can do to help resolve the challenges.

News letters and electronic letters were also made available to tell our success stories on branding. Video clips, visuals, community radio station called GREAT FM 94.5 and a new digital television station were established to produce programmes designed to change the image of the university and generated more fund for the university. On the international scene, Alumni and other ambassadors of the university who are excited and interested in helping to share our vision and goals were used.

CAPACITY BUILDING/TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT CONCERN

Realizing the importance of the pre-requisite skills in a new economy, the university management decided to organize several capacity training for students, staff and all stake holders under different components. About 400 staff was trained in educational marketing, programming using modern technologies and research methodology. They were expected to go back to their different units to train others.

Many other workshops were held outside Nigeria and were funded by Carnegie Corporation. These workshops and training programmes were organized with the view of improving the administrative powers and skills of the advancement professional, stakeholder and Advancement practitioners. There was other collaborated training. One of which was in conjunction with council for Advancement and Support Education (CASE) based in the United States of America.

The university management also was able to successfully organize some research fairs nationally. A business incubation centre was also established. It is hoped that this centre will act as a nucleus for the commercialization of the innovative business ideas of the university.

Not only this, the university has also embarked on regular update of the Alumni database; this is with the view to strengthening or consolidating their effort as a major source of income for development in the university. The captains of industries were also involved in the re-branding process.

Success Story on Branding

A number of memoranda of understanding (MOU) were signed under the private-public partnerships. In the area of international collaboration, the university as a result of the branding programme has firm linkage agreements backed by memoranda of understanding with more than 85 higher institutions from the entire continents of the world. The resultant effect is research collaborations, international exchange of staff and students. Having told the success story, it is necessary to investigate how the students and staff perceived the branding effort and their reactions to it. It is also necessary to find out the impact the branding efforts have on the university. In Doing this, the following questions will be provided with empirical answers.

Research Questions

➤   How did the university staff and students react to the branding move?
➤   What impact did the university re-branding efforts have on management and administration, students, staff and image of the university?

In order to provide empirical answer to the following question, the following research objectives are stated.

Research Objectives

The following objectives are to guide the study:
➤   investigate the students and staff perception of the branding efforts;
➤   find out the students and staff disposition to the re-branding efforts;
➤   assess the impact of the re-branding effort on the students;
➤   examine whether it significantly influence management and administration.

METHODOLOGY

This Pilot Study Employs Survey Design

Three hundred and eighty participants constitute the sample for the study. They were drawn from the population of OAU Ile-Ife community. Three hundred students and eighty staff were selected using stratified sampling based on faculties and job-type for staff. A-25 items questionnaire was developed to collect information from the sample. It was made up of different sections. Demographic data of the sample, faculty for students, department/unit for staff, and the next section solicited for information on how the students and staff perceived the re-branding of the university. Section III asked for their disposition/reaction to it. The fourth section is concerned with the impact of the re-branding efforts on students. The last section examined the influence of branding programme on management and administration in the university. The questionnaire was tested for reliability. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using simple percentage, Pearson correlation statistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Familiarity with the concept of branding

Valid	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes	288	96.0	97.3	97.3
No	8	2.7	2.7	100
No response	4	1.3	1.3	
Total	300	100	100	

From the data collected, it was glaring that 96% of the students sampled are familiar with the meaning of Branding in Education. Students were further asked where they first heard about the term, below is the data collected in this respect.

Table 2
First place of knowing about the term branding

Valid	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
School	147	49.0	50.3	82.2
Home	93	31.0	31.8	31.8
Internet	52	17.3	17.8	100.0
No response	8	2.7	100.0	
Total	300	100		

Forty nine percent of the students first heard of the term used in the school, while 31.0% at home during media broadcast "Re-brand Nigeria and 17.3% through personal reading on the internet. On the disposition of students to the branding programme, find the results of the data analyzed.

Table 3
Students Disposition to the Branding Programme

RESPONSE	OPTION		FACULTY					
		Agriculture	Education	Social Science.	Technology	Arts	Pharmacy	Total
I am favorably disposed to the integration and application of branding.	YES % of Total	34 12.6%	28 10.4%	32 11.9%	34 12.6%	36 12.8%	31 11.5%	195 72.5
	NO Count % of total	10 3.7%	19 7.1%	7 2.6%	15 5.6%	8 3.0%	15 5.6%	74 27.5%
	Count % of total	44 16.3%	47 17.5%	39 14.5%	49 18.2%	44 16.4%	46 17.1%	269 100.00

The result of the data collected in respect of students' disposition to the branding effort showed that 72.5% of the students across the six Faculties samples were favorably disposed to the university branding programme while 27.5 were not favorably disposed.

Table 4
Paired t-test on staff attitude toward branding

	$\overline{X}$ MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	STANDARD ERROR	tc	df	Sig.
O.A.U. Staff Attitude to Branding	5.100	5.625	0.629	8.11**	79.	0.01

*Significant at 0.01 level.

From table 4, a mean value of 5.1 was obtained with a standard deviation of 5.625. When this was subjected to a t-test to determine its level of significance, the t calculated value of 8.11 was obtained. (tc = 8.11 df=79 p < 0.01). This result was very significant. It therefore implied that the staff of O.A.U. Ile-Ife was favorably disposed to the branding effort of the university. On the impact of the branding programme on students, find below the findings in table: 5.

Table 5
Perceived Effect of Branding on Students performance

RESPONSE	OPTION	FACULTY						
		Agriculture	Education	Social Sci.	Technology	Arts	Pharmacy	Total
My academic performance has improved significantly due to the branding programme.	YES Count in %	39 13.6%	48 16.7%	45 15.7%	39 15.7%	45 15.7%	40 13.9%	258 89.2%
	NO Count in %	5 1.7%	2 0.7%	3 1.0%	9 3.1%	2 0.7%	10 3.5%	31 10.8%
	NO RESPONSE							
	Count of % total	44 15.3%	50 17.4%	48 16.7%	48 16.7%	47 16.4%	50 17.4%	269 100.0

The data obtained in respect of the branding programme on student's performance showed that 89.2% of the students opined that their academic improved. While 10.8% said there was no improvement in order to determine whether the perceived effect was significant a Pearson correlation was carried out below is the results obtained.

Table 6
Symmetric Measures of student's perception of the effect of branding

Branding and its effect at improving students academic performance	Pearson correlation	0.0787*
	Approx. significant	0.010
	Number of valid cases	287

*Significant at 0.01

From the Pearson correlation r = 0.787 at 0.01. Since the r obtained is higher, it implied that student's performance improved after the branding progrmme. The fact that students performance improved may not be unconnected to better provision of infrastructure, teaching materials, various collaborated programmes and improved methods of teaching/learning which were dividends of the re-branding efforts. One may therefore conclude that the branding efforts have significant impact academic, image and the financial status of the university. In order to determine the impact of the branding efforts on management and administration in the university, questionnaire was administered on the staff of the university. Find below the result of the analyzed data.

Table 7
T-test of Branding and impact on management and administration

	$\overline{X}$ Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	25% confidence interval lower	Upper	tc	df	Sig.
Branding effort and impact on management and administration at O.A.U. Ile-Ife.	-2.08	7.14	0.80	-3.66	-0.486	-2.60*	79	0.01

- Significant at 0.01 level

Table: 7 above revealed that t-calculated value of -2.60 was obtained. It was also evident that the t value was very significant, tc=-2.60, df=79, p<0.01. From this result, it implied that there was a remarkable improvement in management and administration after the branding programme.

The improvement in management and administration may not be unconnected with the applications and integration of modern theories and the various collaborative advancement training aimed at improving the professional skills of administration. It can therefore be concluded that the collaborated training by "CASE" and other Advancement workshops have yielded positive results.

CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED

Some of the problems or set backs that would have prevented the success of the branding effort were it not for the doggedness and resolve of the university management were: resistance of both students and staff to the innovation, high cost of implementation, epileptic power supply and misconception of the relevance of branding to education.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings ninety-six percent of the students are familiar with branding 82.2% heard about branding at schools, 31.8% at home and 17.8% through personal research on the internet. 72.5% of the students across the six faculties were positively disposed to the university branding programme while 27.5% were not. O.A.U. staff was also positively disposed to the branding programme. There was also a remarkable improvement in students' performance. Also there was remarkable changes and improvement in management and administration at O.A.U. Ile-Ife. The image of the university was greatly improved both at home and abroad; quality of teaching was also greatly improved. Research opportunities with grants and collaboration with outside world was enhanced. Finance has greatly improved in spite of low government subvention to the university. It was this branding programme that made OAU Ile-Ife in Nigeria the most beautiful university in Africa, the foremost ICT and best university in Nigeria.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the problems identified earlier, the university man agent had put in place on how it will ensure sustainability of financing beyond the duration of the Carnegie Grants and the other grants from the Corporate Organizations. In this respect the university has established private ventures, research centers and

corporate units to market the university products to the International and local communities. The problem of epileptic power supply was addressed by making provisions for alternate heavy weight generators at specific and important centers in the university. This was in anticipation of the new E-Learning projects, e-administration and the complete digitalization of the Hezekiah Oluwasnmi Library, the Bursary and the Health Center. Understanding the importance of adequate facilities, the management have planned upgrading major facilities like internet , the bandwidth and other ICT facilities under 3 phases(First generation that have passed, second generation that have also been achieved and the third generation which we are yet to be implemented. It include Staff Quarters, students hall of residence, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital Complex(OAUTHC).The University management purchase a VSAT   Earth Station   4.5/1.5Mbps and 256/128Kbps. International and transnational partnerships were made in training ,research, workshops and manpower development/ web content development and authorship as a way to reduce costs.

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