

**ON “ONE TO MANY MODEL” POLICY AND PRACTICE
FOR RWANDA’S HIGHER EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

Rwanda is a small landlocked developing country in eastern Africa. Influenced by the development of global higher education, the government has established new standards and operational norms for the form and connotation of higher education. Currently, Rwanda higher education presents a “one-to-many” model, that is, only “one public university”, and the rest are private institutions. This paper makes a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the policies and practices of higher education in Rwanda, and finds that the characteristics of its higher education lay on the greatest degree of privatization, reducing public funds, and increasing the accountability and autonomy in the colleges and the universities, but the low-quality risks are hidden in the process of privatization. It is of great reference value to the internationalization of China's higher education and the promotion of Sino-African friendship.

Keywords: Rwanda, higher education, policy, one to many model

INTRODUCTION

Rwanda covers an area of 26,338 km² and is a small landlocked country with the fastest growing economy in East Africa. In recent years, its economy has grown rapidly. According to Global Finance report (2017), Rwanda ranked 8th among countries with the highest GDP growth rate, with a per capita GDP of 774 US dollars, and is one of the most populated country in Africa with 12.5 million (UN, 2018). Historically speaking, Rwanda was torn apart by colonial rule, as a result, the 1994 genocide killed approximately 1 million Tutsi in 100 days and destroyed the whole country including its infrastructure, human capitals, education etc. With the aspect of social and the national unification, Rwanda is only one of African countries where citizens have a common language Kinyarwanda (L1) and the same culture, becoming one of the safest

countries to live, travel and trade in the world (Global finance, 2018). With such a stable domestic environment, higher education is the only choice for sustainable development and is booming.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN RWANDA

Rwanda has a long history of being colonized successively by both Germany and Belgium from 1884 to 1892 and later from 1892 to 1961. Within this period, Colonial education provided by Belgium ignored largely higher education (Lulat, 2005). The first institution of higher education was the Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, founded in 1936 by the Roman Catholic Church to train the priests of Rwanda. Rwanda gained independence in 1962 and the National University of Rwanda (NUR) was established in 1963. At that time, there were only 49 students who enrolled in the National university of Rwanda, and French was the language of instruction. However, it was the second language (L2) in Rwanda after Kinyarwanda (L1) (Ingrid Andersson et al., 2013).

Within colonial rule, Belgium adapted “divide and rule power” that divided Rwandan society into three tribes: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. The later mentioned tribes were very necessary for the ruling power to manipulate and exclude the unwanted tribes. Before 1950s Tutsi people were enthroned and later on Hutu majority people vis-verse. In the 1950s, they pushed the Hutu majority to become the de facto leaders of Rwandan society. In 1959, the violent suppression of ruling tribe (Hutus) exercised against Tutsis drove most of the Tutsi people across the border into neighbouring Uganda. In 1994, the majority Hutu people plan to clean up Tutsi carried out genocide against the minority Tutsi. In addition to the incalculable loss of lives, the country lost most of its human capitals, infrastructures: government buildings, businesses, agriculture, transportation systems and schools were destroyed; Higher education also did not escape bad omen (Schendel, 2013).

After 1994, Rwanda, which experienced a genocidal disaster, sought to reinvigorate the country economy. Many Rwandans who exiled and lived in the English-speaking and French-speaking countries returned to their hometowns (Marie, 2013), bringing back the experience and knowledge of their countries of study, reviving the ecology of Rwanda’s higher education, and laying the foundations for higher education in English and French. The foundation of the lingua franca provided opportunities for teachers and students to communicate in these two languages considering one’s competent language. Since January 2009, the lingua franca of higher education

has been switched to English (Tilak, 2015). Through the efforts of the new government and international assistance, higher education has regained vitality and made great progress, especially in the fields of information technology (IT), engineering and management, and computer science, which have met the demands for skilled labour in economic, social, and political development. Hence, the road to go is still too long to finish overnight.

Prior to 1994, there were at least seven private and four public higher education institutions (World Bank, 2003& 2004). As far as the case of private and public higher education institutions is concerned, although there are more private higher education institutions than public institutions, enrolment in public higher education institutions remains higher than that of private higher education institutions, as it is in other East African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. As of September 2013 merge, currently, Rwanda has one public university with six colleges in different campuses resulting in a “*one-to-many*” model, i.e. one public university and 35 private colleges and universities(Higher education Council, 2017).

The system of higher education is growing rapidly and becoming the sole pillar of sustainable development in a small landlocked country like Rwanda. When Clark(1963, p. 140)predicted the future trend of higher education, he said, “ higher education is increasingly privatized, and students are responsible for one-third of the cost; in areas where the gap in tuition fees is significant, there will be professors with high fees”. Zilkha (2007)added that in countries where the public sector is able to adequately respond to student demand, the public sector will be relatively small while in countries where the number of universities and areas of studies are scarce, the private sector tends to expand rapidly which is the case in many developing countries including Rwanda. A new trend in Rwanda's higher education is to maximize the privatization of higher education institutions to ease the burden on the state, increase accessibility and affordability to higher education, and improve the quality of education in higher learning institutions. That means that in recent years, higher education in Rwanda is singing the same song as being sung in other countries like in Eastern Europe,China, and much of the English-speaking world. Their higher education sectors have shifted from being treated by the government as a public service to a private commodity subject to the laws of supply and demand (Williams, 2016). Private higher education has helped Rwanda higher education to expand. Not only does it increase affordability and accessibility to higher education, brings additional funds and services, but also does not interfere with government control, regulations and supervision,

and is also to increase the accountability and autonomy of universities. However, the fact that the cost of public higher education in Rwanda is higher than that of private higher education is being questioned in the context of quality of education and research in private higher education institutions.

RWANDA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM ANALYSIS

In the following four aspects, the system design and practical operation of higher education in Rwanda are analysed respectively in terms of funds, admission, employment, quality improvement strategy, and internationalisation system.

FUNDING SYSTEM

Oketch (2003)&Johnstone (2004)cited in A. Semugaza 1994)said: “If rich nations are finding it difficult to support higher education, it is much more difficult for poor nations such as Rwanda”. The reform of higher education funding system has become the focus of policy discussions in developed and developing countries, and it should be revisited more and more because it is a major obstacle to the affordability, accessibility, and the development of higher education in general. Research by Abankinaet al., (2017) have shown that after the government lowers the budget for higher education, new funding channels will be used to cope with the decline in public funds. For example, countries like Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Hungary, Kenya, New Zealand, Tanzania, the United Kingdom etc. have introduced tuition fees to encourage parents to pay a great role for their children education. The tuition fee system is commonly spread except some few countries like Sweden, Finland etc. that do not allow fee-based track system for higher education (Tilak, 2015). In recent years, higher education system of fund in Rwanda has introduced the charging tuition fee system and cost- sharing strategy to fund higher education. Hence, not only does the new system of fund has increased pressure to some students’ families to bear fee-based system risks for their children’s education, reduce accessibility to higher education, impact on the quality of teaching and learning but also it has made the government flexibly promote open online course system throughout the country to re-expand access to education cost-effectively.

In response to the development needs of higher education, the Rwandan government initiated the reform of the funding system for higher education. There are three main reasons for this: one is to turn elite education into universal education. Twelve-year education program system of universal education has demographically expanded, and the government expects all young and elderly people to have access to higher education or higher technical schools. Not only does this meant to promote economic development of the country, but also to improve the quality of lives of citizens. The second is to raise the level of citizens accountability, each of whom is expected to play an active role in nation-building of his/her motherland. Finally, financial system reform is to promote the development of higher education through the legitimate engagement and cooperation of private sectors in higher education and recognize its profit-making nature, allow colleges and universities to ensure the normal operation of the school by tuition fees or other funding models, Students bear the full cost of education, public-private partnerships (PPP), the cost-sharing scheme implemented in 2008, bank loans, etc.

Publicness and privateness in Rwanda higher education system is clear-cut. They are accredited by the government institution, abide the national higher education mission, and they are differed in terms of ownership and income resourcing. Private institutions are predominantly relying on tuition fees. Public institutions are predominantly relying on government funds with few numbers of students enrolled in the fee-based part time track programme system and few numbers of students admitted to higher learning institutions who are required to pay half or full university or college fees in accordance with Ubudehe category (or computerised category of citizens' wealth level). GuryZilkha proved that the computerised category of citizens' wealth level is seen fruitful since high tuition fee is a major barrier to social equality, extensive public students aid in favour of law social-economic students is a just solution. Rwanda case as it was in the central and Eastern Europe from 1990 to 2005, private higher education institutions are a cheap solution to the expansion and access issues, however, private education in developing countries is criticized of its main objective of many candidates to enter a higher education institutions at any price and in any available program and in some cases but not all they are allowed to develop almost without any control and without due attention being paid either to quality or to labour market needs(Correia et al.,2002, de Boer et al., 2017, Filosofia et al., 2014&Kwiek, 2008). Teixeira and Amaral proved that private institutions focused predominantly on teaching, and have undertaken little or no research and appear to be low of quality than older

institutions. This is to say that it is more difficult for under resourced Rwanda's higher learning institutions to improve quality of teaching & learning, research and social services, and this is a major challenge to the "one to many model" in Rwanda higher education sector. As a result, colleges and universities are under pressure to how well their insufficient resources can be allocated and managed efficiently to meet their missions.

Admission System

Admission system often vary from country to country economically, politically, culturally, and traditionally. The ability to admit and retain students is important for institutions of higher learning because every student is so diverse. Higher learning institutions must balance demand, admit students fit for applied study program, ensure the diversity of student groups, and provide the necessary financial support, at the same time the provisional development strategy and management standards of colleges and universities are very important to identify students and ensure the quality of training they deserve (Penn, 1999). The purpose of improving the enrolment system is to maximize the resource benefits of institutions of higher learning, expand the enrolment rate, and alleviate the various challenges in society.

Rwanda's high school state standard test scores serves as an entry criterion for admission to public university. The admission for public university is so competitive that has sparked fierce competition among students, putting much pressure on students and teachers. On the side of Private institutions, they set their own entrance examination, requiring candidates to have a high school diploma, and of course being able to afford the cost of private education. Students choose their preferred private institutions taking into account their family economic background because private institutions tuition fee differs. Private schools offer a variety of advantages in terms of enrolment because their education cost is lower than that of public institutions. Despite the growing number of private institutions, and their entry requirements are lower than that of public universities and colleges, students enrolled in public university are more than that of its counterparts.

EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

Graduates employment is an explicit index to measure the quality of higher education. The relevant experience or skills of students is another important factor to success in employment (Rangel & Ivanova, 2014). As the number of colleges and universities and the number of

students is increasing rapidly, so is the unemployment rate. Hence, Rwanda's unemployment problem is not particularly serious in comparison with other countries in the region (East Africa)(Tusiime et al., 2017). The rise in unemployment rate can either be explained by the poor quality of education provided to students, lack of linking higher education curriculum activities with the labour market demands, and the government's failure to establish a sound employment policy.

The government has set target to increase respectively the gross employment ratio (GER) across sectors, and the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education. After the far-reaching sufficiency between the demand for production system and the supply of education system (Republic Of Rwanda, 2007), the state's policy on employment was revised and reformed in December 2007. The government's focus on human resource development is technical education, vocational training and higher education as well to respond quickly to social needs. David emphasized that the creation of technical education and vocational training centres, especially middle management work, is the only way to try the employability alongside higher education. However, technical education has been criticized for the inconsistency between the teaching skills of the vocational training centre and the market demands; The workforce is poorly educated and less inclusive (fewer women and fewer rural students) (Laterite Ltd., 2015).

Intensive policies for creativity and innovative entrepreneurship education were developed. The new policy is to encourage students to create new employment opportunities based on their attitudes and ideas. According to Laterite Ltd., (2015), the government has initiated three organs: The Workforce Development Authority (WDA), the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and the Business Development Fund (BDF). In particular, under the guidance of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), the Workforce Development Agency plays a key role in the implementation of the Rwanda Youth Employment Strategy. The WDA undertakes the task of "demand-oriented" and "*capability-based skills development*" to make Rwanda become "*regional centre for human resource development*". The RDB is an independent government agency, particularly on employment issues, working closely with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to implement the Entrepreneurship and Business Development component of the National Employment Plan (NEP). RDB offers an internship program for young people, as well as entrepreneurship programme designed to support young entrepreneurs, increase the number of new entrepreneurs and strengthen their entrepreneurial skills. This is meant the cooperation

between higher learning institutions and RDB to create employment opportunities for young generations was thought over. BDF as part of the national Small Medium Entrepreneurship (SME) development policy, plays a key role in providing funding to entrepreneurs (both youth and non-youth). Although this policy supports entrepreneurs through the development of innovation and entrepreneurial skills development, it is seen that entrepreneurship development studies in the colleges and universities in Rwanda are at its infancy stage, with a lot of challenges such as lack of qualified teachers, effective and efficient competency-based curriculum, and the lack of innovative internship centres that can match student specialization and company profiles.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

In the revised Handbook on the “Qualification Framework and Quality Code”, the Presidential order has strengthened the voice of the quality by publishing the quality standards of education in public and private institutions of higher learning in Rwanda in the no. 32^o gazette of the Republic of Rwanda 09/08/2010 (National Council of Higher Education Rwanda, 2007). The main reason of the order was to emphasize the strong need for quality of education in all higher learning institutions to transform the country into middle-income and knowledge-oriented society among other nations by 2020.

In the past few decades, the international education policy environment has witnessed a significant transformation, characterized by the rapid growth of private education supply and has increased the task for quality management among higher education stakeholders and competition among private and public higher learning institutions is becoming more intensive than ever. This is consistent with Clark (1963, p. 140) prediction which had already become true that future education is more privatization as greater reliance on tuition that a reasonable general rule might be that students bear the burden of one-third of educational and general costs, with special attention being given to differential tuitions in area that lead to high income professions. Jamshidi (2012) has proved that in developed countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, some activity factors have an impact on the creation and growth of expensive private institutions with high teaching & learning and research quality, while in developing countries, the more the demands for higher education increase, the more the reduction in government funds for higher education is witnessed, as a result, poor under resourced private funded institutions are established. Nigeria and Rwanda are the fastest growing economies in Africa to expanding

higher education in size. The number of colleges and universities have respectively increased rapidly from 45 in 2000 to 132 in 2014 in Nigeria(Adetunji, 2016), and from 7 in 2000 to 35 in 2018 in Rwanda(Higher education Council, 2017). Adetunji (2016) added that the majority of the new colleges and universities in Nigeria are privately funded and managed, of which 44 were illegally operating, 8 facing prosecution, and 4 having already been closed down. This is to say that the expansion of under resourced poor private institutions has led to significant quality problems. Hence, the problem of quality of education in public university is also critical.

The efforts to educational quality improvement are on. Rwanda joined East African Community (EAC) in 2006. The Community goal is to promote East African development in all areas, securing freedom of movement, improving human development and education as well. Bologna framework model was adopted in higher education sector in 2008 to promote mutual recognition of credits within the region (Muhirwe, 2012). The adopted Bologna framework model was to improving the quality of higher education, establishing a learner-cantered approach (Gahutu, 2010), promoting students' independent learning and independent discovery, strengthening teachers' guidance to students, and changing the examination system, promoting globalization and internationalization in higher education (Mbabazi, 2013), strengthening the development and the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum(CBC)and promoting the international mobility in Rwanda higher learning institutions. In September 2013, the government consolidated its public colleges & universities by the merge of one public university, named University of Rwanda (UR) to respond to the national and global needs of educational quality. Currently, Private higher learning institutionsare dominating Rwanda's higher education sector in number and as a result, "*one to many model*"is clearly witnessed throughout higher education sector.

As it is in different parts of the worlds, the ranking models of higher learning institutions have played an evaluative role for quality of education. Academically influential colleges and universities' rankings such as the World University Academic Ranking (ARWU), US News and World Reports (national and global), the US Princeton Review, the QS World University Rankings, and the Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), etc. have guided the healthy competition between institutions of higher learning, providing parents and students with

a choice and admission guide for the right college or university. The university ranking models have enlightened many developing countries including Rwanda. However, the practice of university ranking model in Rwanda higher education is still at the bottom stage hindering competition between colleges & universities and making it difficult for students, parents and external community to assess which institutions that best meet their expectations and requirements (Adetunji, 2016).

Social evaluation is also a common method for assessing the quality of education in Rwandan universities. The social evaluation mainly comes from the employer, that is, the employer judges the employability of the graduates. Tusiime et al., (2017) have found that public universities in Rwanda are highly recognized in terms of employment possibilities and labour markets than private universities, with 87.3% having a high public reputation, compared with 67.5% in private higher education institutions. In terms of providing sufficient skills and abilities, the public institutions are 84%, and the private institutions are 72.5%; in granting highly recognized labour market degrees, 82.8% of public institutions, 68% of private institutions; in terms of the degree of employment possibilities, public institutions 69.3%, private institutions 66.8%; in terms of teacher qualifications, 80.8% of public institutions and 70.5% of private institutions. The results prove that the current private colleges and quality conditions need to be improved

Internationalisation of higher education

This sub-section reviews the Chinese higher education internationalisation with an intention to know how the Chinese higher education institutions are strategically and systematically performing in terms of internationalizing its higher education and know from how it differs from that of Rwanda's higher education internationalisation. In doing so, it does not mean to impose the same measures on to the Rwandan higher education institutions context but to explore their applicability to Rwanda higher education. This is because today, there is no doubt that China has become the first leading global destination country for studying. According to the latest official statistics from the Chinese Ministry of education (2016 & 2017) the number of African students studying in China in 2016 was 61,594, this was 13.91 percent of the total number of students studying in China. This is to say that it is of paramount importance to learn from the Chinese

internationalisation system and strategy to flourish higher education sector at home and maintain Sino-Africa-friendship.

Internationalisation in Rwanda higher education has achieved its success despite the long journey that still needs to go. Internationalisation has been seen elusive concept that is often defined purposely according to the definer. Yang (2016) proved that Internationalising higher education refers to the fact that higher education in different countries need to communicate with each other, and borrow from each other's experience. He added that higher education has its own logic of development, its systems in different countries with different social systems and ideologies share certain common ground, and that shared part is international, and is indeed a heritage of the whole human society. Ever Since an establishment of the university of Rwanda in 1963, an institution was characterised by foreign academicians' domination and study abroad programmes in countries like Belgium, France, united states of America, UK etc. and continues to struggle for international standards in colleges and universities. Likely, the case of China's higher education has characterised by the great thirsty for internationalisation after the cultural revolution of 1966-1978 by adopting an opening up policy& reform at the end of the 1970s and the internationalization of higher education become a real prospect.

The openness of Rwanda higher education sector environment to the external world is an important step to learn from others, work together and share experience with others as China's did. The case of China was different with any other countries because it was not simple act to open up the Chinese society with its strong rooted traditional values of at least 5000 years and something, while in Rwanda, from the beginning of the establishment of the first university (University of Rwanda) in 1963, the foreign expert in cooperation with the state government worked hand in hand to found it. There was no Rwandan traditions and values that was seen to slow down internationalisation process in higher education. However, Rwandan higher education system failed to maintain its socio-cultural characteristics. From the perspective of internationalisation of higher education in Rwanda, joining an East African Community (EAC) is the first step to higher education quality improvement; The realization of the Bologna system to promote credit transfer and mobility in higher education is the second step; The merger of one public university by ensuring the sharing of resources respectively among higher education institutions and their stakeholders and stepping up to elimination of all kinds of excessive and unrelated projects that consume higher education institutions budgets, eliminating their adverse

effects to the greatest extent is the third step. English language had become instructional and Rwandan universities scholars and students have no difficult in communicating internationally in academic exchange. As reference to internationalizing higher education in China, according to Yang (2016), since the 1990s China has gradually established a comprehensive program of higher education internationalization, to which the main approaches include the following: First, China's strategies for internationalization have been most strikingly featured by its vigorous engagement with the outside world, especially with Western societies. This attitude is not only unprecedented in its modern history, but also differs much from many other developing countries' interactions with the developed Western world. China's embrace of the English language serves as a telling example here. Seeing the dominant status of English as a historical fact, China has initiated various policies to adapt to it, instead of resisting it, in an effort to promote internationalization. China's efforts are already paying off. Chinese scholars and students in major universities have little difficulty in communicating with international scholars. Their English proficiency has contributed to China's current fast, successful engagement with the international community. From 1980 to 2010, peer-reviewed papers published by Chinese researchers rose 64-fold. Such experience contrasts markedly with those of many other non-English speaking countries including many China's neighbours.

Second, according to Cannon et al., (1997)& Altbach (1998) the "hard" sciences usually attain higher levels of internationalization than the "soft." Their development tends to be much more emphasized, while the humanities and social sciences become under-represented in international programs, and Chinese humanities and social sciences scholars have not achieved the emerging visibility of their natural science and engineering peers in the international community. According to World Bank (2000), China's overall representation in the international scientific community has grown rapidly, few publications produced by Chinese social scientists have appeared in international citation indices. The Chinese number of international publications increased to 202 in 1996 (Fan, 2000) while in 2010, China had 121,500 scientific publications listed by the Science Citation Index, of which 5,287 (2.41%) were in social sciences Zhang et al., (2011).

The Rwandan colleges & universities environment differ from that of Chinese. Bringing the Chinese society to the world and introducing the world into the Chinese higher education was seen difficult enough to cope with because the Chinese society enjoyed the superiority of its

traditional culture for many years now on. However, currently the Chinese society has made tremendous progress for internationalising its higher education. Yang (2016) again proves that Since the founding of the Chinese first modern university in 1893, the Chinese philosophy to learn from western countries, USA and the Asian giant Japan, to import the European knowledge into the Chinese society to become strong country had paid off. As a result, China's higher education internationalization has begun to pay more attention to exporting Chinese knowledge to the world. Hence, the Chinese an internationalizing higher education in China higher brought another hot debate to the Chinese higher education maintains its own characteristics that distinguishes it from that of westerners. The same case in Rwanda goes to the point of the fact that Rwanda's higher education system is that of westerners-alike, so when will Rwanda build its higher education system with its socio-cultural sovereignty and characteristics?

The creation of Open Distance Learning (ODL) to promote higher education inclusiveness for those who do not have the opportunity to benefit from traditional education settings, such as the disabled people in any case (geographically and physiologically), and others who are restricted in time and space (in-service teachers etc.) were provided with opportunities and technical supports (MINEDU, 2008). Information Computer Technology (ICT) has been proved to be the catalyst pillar to the development and Some Rwandan colleges & university students attend foreign online courses. The government gradually implemented the ICT education master plan for ODL, However, the overall planning policy for ICT education to support ODL was criticized by its unclarity and it is difficult to translate the aspirations into reality (Mukama, 2016).

Experience and lessons of higher education policy and practice in Rwanda

Any nation needs proficient and accountable policies for sustainable development. As a result, implementing strong educational policies is comprehensive and conducive to the rapid development of cultural and socio-economic development. As a quick developing nation, Rwanda has positioned higher education to a front line to transform the country into middle-income country by 2020. Numerous policies have been adjusted and others have been adapted, despite the implementation and the successes of the adapted policies and practices, the low-quality risks are hidden in the process of privatization Rwandan universities. The following section discusses: The government's efforts and effectiveness in dealing with education equity and quality control and Policy challenges, and Educational quality management issues.

Policy Challenges

Kinser (2009) and Levy (2004) said, “Higher education institutions especially private higher education is developing rapidly, and we need to fully understand it” in order to redefine practically new policies with excellent educational quality. Jamshidi et al., (2012) found that in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, privatization has been successful and private higher education has outstanding performance while in developing countries the situation is opposite. Levy (2004) argued that the growth of private higher education can be seen in connection with the international “crisis of the welfare state,” the “crisis of development,” and the shift from state to private or mixed private-public forms. Bayram (2018) supports Levy’s idea that public education in Turkey and in many countries has been removed from the basic human rights and commercialized and transformed into a commodity that has been bought and sold where publicness is missing its independent, with an intent to reduce states public spending and realize privatization. In sub-Saharan Africa, the spread of for-profit higher education is part of the trend of privatization worldwide, and places high hopes on the future welfare of society. However, this privatization policy has been challenged.

Gender equality in tertiary education has been the challenging issue with much discussion. Tusiimeet al., (2017) conducted a survey on the enrolment and graduation rates of boys and girls in public and private universities in Rwanda revealed 3 findings: The first, is the number of male graduates in public universities doubles that of women in the same university category (68.9% male to 31.1% female) because many girls fail in the national examination and are not qualified for a public university. The second is that the number of female graduates in private universities is higher than that of males, but the difference is not large (53.8% females to 46.25% males). The third is that the percentages of male graduates outnumbered that of females with high margins in STEM disciplines while females outnumbered males in non-STEM disciplines. The aforementioned results are related to traditional culture, that women are at a disadvantage in STEM education, vocational training and higher vocational education, and still affect the performance of female students. Rwanda Youth Employment Report by Laterite Ltd., (2015) shows that the number of girls in technical education and vocational education schools is limited, indicating the failure to the sensitization and mobilization policy activities that are not enough to out-reach the whole society and communicate for the redefinition and the

reform of tertiary education policies and practices to bridge the gap of existing gender differences in education.

From the angle of the policy of “Rwandan public colleges and university to the merge of one public university”, the quality of education is not cheap, it therefore should not be left to only the state government(Barr, 2004). Why are public university fees more expensive than domestic private universities? In many private universities and colleges, should a single public university be expensive? The answer is that public university is highly competitive state-sponsored institution that is meant the mixed institution (accepts both privately-paid students and government-funded students). However, most privately fee-paying students are not prepared to bear the cost of education because the cost is higher than that of private higher education institutions. It is unfair to parents of these students. It may happen that students who are admitted in public university, who cannot afford high tuition fees of public university are abandoning their public university admission and choose to continue to private universities.

Educational Quality Management Issues

Quality education has caused a lot of controversy and has become a central issue for colleges and universities, higher education institutions and partners in the new era rapid development. While the term “quality” confuses many stakeholders what it is meant in education, to how it can be defined, efforts are still needed to develop strategies and measures to redefine it, and evaluate it. If the quality of higher education supply is low, then there may be doubts about the management of higher learning institutions. It is undeniable that the lack of an effective academic quality management system, lack of Institutional cooperation, inadequate resources and lack of knowledge sharing channels, lack of qualified teachers (limited academic professionals), especially in the School of Public Health, part of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences and disproportionate student-supervisor ratio of 15 students per PhD-holding faculty member are the factors that lead to low quality. Another commonly challenging factor to low quality of education was proved by European University Association (2018)that strengthening the link between scientific research and teaching is impacting on the quality system of higher education in many countries.

The role of East-African community (EAC) is recognized and appreciated in terms of promoting higher education mobility, sub-regional credit transfer. Not only doesMuhirwe

(2012) criticized to not link East African Quality Assurance Framework with the adoption of the Bologna process but also in terms of quality control, it doesn't empirically show some clear collaboration efforts to transform its mission into reality. This can be interpreted as there are no implemented actions that speak louder than the signed agreement available in official documents.

Reflections on Policy and Practice of Higher Education in Rwanda

It is expected in many developed countries such USA, UK and Australia that private universities are top-classes. Among some reasons but not all, are on the fact that universities establish their own income generating projects, enjoying high academic autonomy and freedom which contribute to high quality teaching, research and social services, and they have no bureaucracy delay" which impact on the quality of education, as a result, the state government encourages them because of their great role to help in economic recovery transformation and at large their competition with public universities are so intensive. However, the situation is opposite in Rwanda. Despite the increase in the number of private higher learning institutions, the number of students enrolled, high-level teachers and doctoral programs have not increased significantly. Additionally, higher learning institutions suffer poor quality of education, failure to attract international students, lack of international cooperation and exchange is also witnessed. The strategies that would be used to improve quality in higher learning institutions would include the following:

First, guiding and Encouraging Students free Development from Senior High School to University. From the perspective of higher education and career development, the "ability of self-selection" occupies an important position. "Self-selection" refers to the student's independent choice of his/her major subject, in accordance with his/her overall family and academic background development and it is very significant individually, socially and nationally. Before a student chooses major subject, a group talk of three people (parent, student and the teacher) is of paramount importance to help student acquire the knowledge and skills that best suit his or her academic development and is helpful for the right choice, rather than choosing for him/her. The career development department in an institutional setting should also guide students to understand and observe the world and help them to open their horizons so that they can adapt to future university studies. This is because the education that a student pursues is the life, soul, and the fundamental value of educational work. We need to cultivate student's morality,

intelligence, physical fitness and development, train useful talents who can support the social development with Rwandan values. This is the fundamental task of Rwanda higher education and the starting point of higher education reform.

Second, clearly encourage new teaching mechanisms and focus on cultivating innovative talents. Rwanda is trying to become a technology-led, knowledge-based society and middle-income country through its long-term plan “2001-2020” by 2020. Innovation and entrepreneurship institutional agency should be established to awaken the technologically innovative spirit of college students and teachers. This will help students and teachers to use knowledge-based innovation, translating new knowledge into real-life and learning new application-oriented knowledge. There is no harm to providing students with the theoretical support awareness from job-seeking to job creation, which should be linked using local networks and global networks is crucial. In addition, teaching methods should shift from overall holistic teaching strategies and theories to individualized teaching strategies and theories and teachers Paradigm shift from the use of local computing techniques to global computing techniques will be developed as well as.

Third, Higher education cost sharing problem should be flexibly thought about. The private education fee-paying in public university should be charged in line with Rwanda’s private higher education standards, allowing more students to enter a public university, because students who cannot afford the cost of a public university may choose a private university as their second choice. Munene (2009) Studies have shown that all public universities in East Africa have a two-track system, some of which are funded by the government, and others are on private fee-paying track (students are responsible for their own expenses). They either pay the full tuition fee or according to the established national financial test requirements (Financial means test) to pay tuition fees.

Forth, revisiting policies for women’s vocational training, higher vocational and technical engineering and Science, Technology, Engineering and mathematics (STEM) education to eliminate gender differences. Here, apart from the sensibilisation and mobilisation that should be done by Ministry of education (MINEDUC) through workshops, conferences and seminars, social medias can also be good channel to convey message to the entire Rwandan society.

Fifth, transform “water class” into “golden class”; Increase learning motivation & learning pressure to students, give students enough school works, emphasize independent thinking &

learning among students. According to the Chinese Ministry of education (2018), “Water class” refers to all culture of hampering teaching and learning activities to take place, it is also low level of accountability and outmoded contents and teaching & learning methods. For example, students enjoy doing unrelated things for their own fun rather than studying: Playing telephone and laptop games, sleeping too much, drinking much beer and forget to attend class, staying up the whole night watching games, ending class without homework to students, etc. while “golden class” refers to the act of facilitating and guiding students in their learning activities, guiding students in innovative and creative activities, a shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge creation, thinking mode and developing imagination ability among students, investing all your time in academic related matters, and evaluate the whole teaching & learning process. It is also a high level of accountability. The situation in colleges and universities are seen as if there is neither anyone who is responsible for teaching nor learning, and the process of teaching and learning has become *laissez-faire* style. In his remarks on challenges of the education sector that hinder the sector from achieving quality of education in higher learning institutions held in Kigali on 12 November 2018, MINEDUC (2018) reminded Vice chancellors, professors and Doctors of higher learning Institutions that their core business is teaching and mentoring students. He encouraged them to be present on field where students conduct practice sessions, to see what really happens and make sure students get what they are supposed to learn. In order to really achieve this, universities and colleges’ leaders should propose practical interventions to mitigate existing identified challenges by supervising what is happening around in the academic institutions. We should change the teaching & learning assessment and evaluation mode, adopt a conducive teaching and learning methods, emphasize scientific research activities. Teachers should love their jobs and teach from deep of their hearts, recognize that teaching Rwandan citizens is a big contribution to the sustainable development of a country. Colleges and university teachers and professors are no longer monopolists of professional knowledge, they are no longer the authorities in the eyes of the students. We should encourage students to greatly realise the role of internet and the rapid development of mobile internet, knowledge information acquisition channels and help them form the habit and ability to obtain learning resources from the internet not to only use internet for fun. To make teaching and learning effective university teachers should be aware that it does pose great challenges because teaching does not need only the inputs from teachers but also the attention of the students and the whole teaching process.

Sixth, taking university ranking as a key catalyst for improving the quality of teaching and research competition in universities. We can consider the parameters of research productivity, internal self-governance and provision improvement, academic freedom, strong and competitive provision for in-service academic faculty staff's capacity building, effective and suitable allocation of few existing resources, provision for national, regional & global collaboration with institutions. The point to rethink is that in East African countries, there is very little research and consultancy taking place in higher learning institutions especially in private universities because the majority of universities are mainly engaged in teaching rather than in research and consultancy to such an extent that in some universities the number of years an academic staff has taught at an institution is a criterion for promotion rather than research and publication in peer-reviewed journals (Ishengoma, 2007). By promoting the research productivity, universities and colleges should be able to attract young senior academicians, regionally and internationally-acclaimed professors from public universities or elsewhere to work with them on a full-time basis. Failure to attract young senior academicians, regionally and internationally-acclaimed professors can be interpreted as unsatisfactory and negligible working conditions or salary system problem. The university ranking agency will assist to increase the level of accountability in corners of higher learning institutions.

Seventh, build a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education-based university. The government of Rwanda has long established study abroad scholarship programme which sends a number of Rwandan talents abroad to pursue studies especially in priority courses, the programme that takes one part of all higher education budget. The government instead should gradually reduce the budget expenditure allocated in this programme to start high reputed and research universities at home by recruiting young senior academicians, regionally and internationally-acclaimed professors. This will not only improve STEM education environment and research capacity in Rwanda but also will increase at home products consumption. Salmi (2009, p. 39) (Salmi, 2009) suggested three strategies for building high reputed university, which can be used either individually or in combination: First, government can upgrade a small number of existing institutions with potential to excel (picking winners). Second, they can merge existing institutions to create a single World Class University (WCU), through a synergistic effect (hybrid formula). Third, they can create a new WCU from scratch (clean-slate approach). Since the late 2013, the Rwandan government has primarily employed the second

approach to upgrade existing Rwandan public university and colleges by merging one public university which caused “one-to-many” model in Rwanda higher education environment, that is, only “one public university” in many private higher learning institutions, the government still has to make a clear classification of public colleges into three category models: Research, teaching & learning, and application-oriented colleges model.

Eighth, Adopting a new regulatory strategy for culture of quality education. To achieve this, there should be the legitimate competition-based activities among public and private higher learning institutions, the establishment of the inter-academic exchange platform and establish an effective culture of quality of running a school, make a provision for strong thirsty of quality of education, an effective internal driving force for the direction of quality assessment and evaluation behaviour path. With the formation of internal quality culture in both public & private higher learning institutions, the quality of education under the academic freedom & autonomy tradition will be realized. An exception goes to the basic trajectory of the development of private/private higher education in that the blueprint for a shift from standard education to self-sponsorship, from external quality assurance to internal quality improvement. Therefore, private colleges and universities must recognize the stage characteristics of their own development and have a rational understanding of government supervision. The government should evaluate its quality according to the development of private colleges and universities and give more autonomy.

Finally, openness of higher education to the outside world, enhance the level of scientific research activities by signing an educational exchange agreement with foreign universities which stipulate faculty and information exchange as well as joint research, enhancing the level of internationalisation in Rwanda higher learning institutions (public and private) by adopting a dynamic attitude toward international communications, establishing frequent exchange programs and activities with Foreign universities, and increasing the number of international collaborative research projects. This will give us enough experience to develop our educational scientific research activities, improve educational services and teaching learning activities. It is also with this regard colleges and universities can benefit greatly from their alumni. Higher learning institutions also must work harder and harder to attract the outsiders (scholars, international students & professors, researchers etc.). An internationalisation is to be much better implemented in priority disciplines areas such sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics than in arts,

humanities, and some social sciences. In addition, Rwandan colleges and universities should run over opportunities to co-operate with international partners or win grants from external resources.

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