



Mogaji, E., Maringe, F., & Hinson, R. E. (Eds., 2020). *Understanding the higher education market in Africa*. London: Taylor & Francis

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In modern times, the nature of higher education around the world has been largely determined by the models established in influential countries such as France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States of America (Pechar & Park, 2017; OECD and European Union, 2019). This book, titled *Understanding the higher education market in Africa*, offers theoretical and practical insights into the dynamics of higher education, especially the marketing of higher education, in this comparatively less-researched continent. It explores the key players, challenges and policies affecting higher education across the continent; their marketing strategies and the students' selection processes.

The authors E. Mogaji, F. Maringe and Robert Ebo Hinson are well-known scholars in the fields of higher education and marketing. Emmanuel Mogaji holds a PhD in marketing, and he is a Lecturer in Advertising and Marketing Communications at the University of Greenwich. Felix Maringe is a Professor and Head of Wits School of Education and Research and Assistant Dean at the University of the Witwatersrand. Robert Ebo Hinson is a Professor at the University of Ghana Business School.

This book, totalling 307 pages, comprises four main parts and an introduction and conclusion. The introduction, written by the editors themselves, talks about the history of colonization in Africa and how formal education came to be. Set against this background, it examines the idea of marketisation, how it emerged and settled in the higher education sectors of the continent, its emphases and omissions.

Part 1 is about private and government involvement. The authors assert that education is vital for national development and that it is a human right which unlocks individual potential and benefits for all of society, powering sustainable development. Thus, there is a strong need to conceptualize the market dynamics governing public and private universities. It is said that the price signal influences the two-tier universities' growth and that this signal has different impacts on the different stakeholders. Educational products have demand-based and supply-based attributes. The demand-based attributes rotate around tuition fees,

service personalization, student satisfaction and experiences, and brand image whereas the supply-based attributes centre on place, price, service quality, brand reputation and competition.

Part 2 talks about students and staff as stakeholders. Among other things, it delves into partnerships with other universities. It contains this noteworthy quote:

In the first two decades of democracy, much of the focus was on broadening and diversifying student access. There is much reason to celebrate significant achievements in this area, although much is yet to be achieved, especially concerning improving quality, student success rates and better pipelines into postgraduate study and research. Less progress has also been made concerning the renewal of the professoriate, and the representation of black people and women in the senior echelons of the academy remains alarmingly low (p. 87).

Part 3 is about positioning for added advantage, in order to achieve success in the higher education system in the continent. Whereas some universities in Africa aspire to become world-class institutions, some have the vision to become an international choice. The latter is different from just providing world-class research in Africa, as also other stakeholders and partners outside Africa recognize them and will be willing to partner with them. For example, the University of Johannesburg has the vision to become "an international university of choice" while University of Nigeria's vision is to "become a globally reputed first-rate university".

Part 4 focuses on marketing strategies for universities. Against this backdrop, this part distils how skills in educational marketing at the University of Ghana and Learning Centres (UGLC) at the School of Continuing and Distance Education of the College of Education are shaped. The book's conclusion is again authored by the editors. In this interesting finale, the discussion on the colonial imprint on the African continent should not be missed, highlighting the role of education within colonialism:

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. However, its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or adequate without mental control (p. 283).

Whilst the conclusion is worth reading, I do not concur with some of its parts because they potentially create sentiments of disunity with other parts of the world. Even so, in this modern time, the nature of higher education in Africa has been largely determined by the models established in influential countries, referred to as 'the colonial masters' in this book. Overall, I recommend this book, especially to those interested in the advancement of higher education in Africa.

Additional references

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