

RECRUITING FROM NIGERIA (MARKETING TRENDS AND FUTURE POTENTIALS)

a. Short overview of the Nigerian education system

Recently oil market which is the main stay of Nigeria's economy is dwindling but the need for quality Education of the teeming population cannot be over emphasized. The down oil price notwithstanding Nigeria is a huge market for recruitment of youth for quality education.

Nigeria with a population of over 170 million people and still growing is the most populous black nation in the world. Nigeria could be the world's third most populous Country by the end of 21st century according to UN projections. Nigeria has the world 7th largest oil reserves. Its GDP growth has been around 7% for the last few years as compared to 2.8% in the US in 2012 and less than 1% in the UK.

Nigeria is definitely a Country with potential, but with a total of one hundred and twenty nine (129) universities and other tertiary educational institutions both public and private to meet the huge demands of its growing students' population. With estimated 40 Federal Government, 39 State own and 50 Private own Universities (NUC: National University Commission). Yet these universities and higher institutions in Nigeria cannot meet the required demand of its students' population who are seeking admission into higher institutions in the Country because of the issue of carrying capacity.

To be considered for admission into universities in Nigeria, students who achieved a minimum of five credits including English and Mathematics are eligible to take the ***Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination***, the centralized university admissions test administered by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The cut-off marks for most universities are between 180 and 200 out of 400. For high-demand Universities or programs, the cut-off marks are higher. Many also conduct additional screening, post-UTME examinations, before a final admission decision is made. The Admission process into Nigeria Tertiary education institutions is rigorous and a times endurance tasking for candidates seeking admission, even their parents.

This rigorous admission process is not only time consuming but places constraints to a good number of students admitted each year out of the teeming population. Record shows that every year over one million students normally writes the Nigerian University entrance examination (Called JAMB), this year about 1.4 million enroll for the examination according to **Vanguard Newspaper, Thursday, January 15, 2015**. Last year, 1.2million students wrote this examination, but unfortunately Nigerian Universities admitted only 450,000 students (refer to fig1 of this paper). This means that the remaining number of qualified students who could not get admission into any of the nations' Universities would have to look for admission elsewhere in the different Countries around the World. Educational recruitment Agents, therefore always leverage on this situation to market their services and recruit students from Nigeria for overseas university education. Nigeria is today placed third on the list of Countries with the highest number of students studying abroad.

UTME Applicants and Tertiary Admissions (2004 - 2013)			
Year	# Applicants	# Admitted	% Admitted
2004/05	841,878	122,492	14.5
2005/06	916,371	76,984	8.4
2006/07	803,472	88,524	11.0
2007/08	911,653	107,370	11.8
2008/09	1,054,060	N/A	N/A
2009/10	1,182,381	- 148,000	12.5
2010/11	1,375,652	- 360,000*	26.2
2011/12	1,493,604	- 400,000	26.8
2012/13	1,503,889	- 500,000	33.3
2013/14	1,670,833	- 520,000	31.1

Application data from JAMB Statistics. Admissions data from JAMB statistics up to 2007/08, otherwise from media sources, which should be considered somewhat anecdotal.

** From 2010, the UTME (formerly UME) has been used for both university and polytechnic admissions. Prior to 2010, it was used for university entry only.*

Fig.1: UTME Applicants and Tertiary Admissions (2004 - 2013)

Figures from the United Kingdom Higher education Statistics Agency indicate that the number of Nigerians in UK tertiary institutions has tripled in eight year, while United states embassy's US Education Advising Center, (i.e US/EAC), has confirmed that Nigeria has more students enrolled in America than any other Sub-Saharan African Country (**University World News, 12 December 2014**).

b. *Student mobility from Nigeria: How many students are currently studying abroad in which sectors*

About 1.5 million Nigerians are currently studying in different part of the world. According to Jenifer Onyeukwu, Head of the US EAC, said in the above referenced Nigeria Punch Newspaper that there are about 7,318 Nigerians at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in 700 US tertiary institutions (**Vanguard Newspaper, July 18, 2014**).

Ike Onyechere, chairman of the **NGO Exam Ethics Marshals International**, said that Nigeria spends about US\$8 billion on students in foreign universities. This amount covers monies spent on scholarships, tuition, accommodation, medical services, health insurance and students sponsored by private and government institutions (**University World News, December 12, 2014**).

Nigerian students are studying in Countries such as **USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Germany , Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Hungary, India, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Ukrain, Netherlands, Singapore, Hongkong, Cyprus, Malaysia, Turkey and many more African countries like Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Tansania, Togo, Benin Republic, Bostswana, Uganda, Egypt, Sudan and many to mention but few.**

In 2014, Nigeria Federal Government paid allowances of over 322 Nigerian students on the Bilateral Educational agreement Scholarship in Russia alone (**Punch Newspaper, August 22, 2014**). Though Nigeria's student population remains the third highest from non-European Union countries, trailing 39,090 recorded for India and 67,325 for China, it would contest for second place by 2015.

c. **Which programmes are of interest for Nigerian students, future trends**

Nigeria students are studying in different field ranging from Medicine, Medical sciences, Engineering, Information Technology, Basic Sciences, Humanities, Business, Accounting, information sciences, Management courses etc. Government scholarship however, places more

emphases on Science, Engineering and Technology based on programmes such as Medicines, various aspect of Engineering and Aeronautical/Aerospace courses.

According to a research conducted by Institute of International Education, UK (2014) and presented in Open Donors Report of 2014 to analyses fields of Study of Students from selected places of Origin studying in the United States for the 2013/2014 Academic year. The 7,921 Nigerian students studying in the U.S, record shows that Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM) recorded the highest percentage of 56.8% followed by Engineering (23.9), Business Management recorded 14.2%, Health represents 12.7%. This report represents the real categorisation of Nigerian students with rest to their preferred choice of study when compared to their choice courses in the Nigerian Tertiary institution at home. Engineering, Medicine, Sciences, Law and Business Management are the top courses of interest to Nigerians, both home and abroad.

d. Students and Parent expectations

Nigerians are thirsty for qualitative and productive education and training with enhanced entrepreneurial Education contents to address the challenge of graduate unemployment and job-seeking syndrome by graduates of Higher Education Institutions. As a result, many Nigerians travel abroad in search of the envisioned robust educational studies afore stated.

The preference of many Nigerians to study abroad is for them to be able to place themselves properly in terms of their career because of the way the global job market stands. They have a better chance in Nigeria than anywhere else because they are appropriately positioned to get good jobs in Nigeria than their counterpart who studied locally when they come back home. This is because multinational Companies prefer foreign degree holders, which is a necessity for them because they need to employ people with relevant employable skills and attitude.

These training and ability to display innovation in execution of tasks, eloquence and dedication are more imperative than certificates. (The Guardian News paper, November 27,2014)

The expectation of both students and parents however are similar. It is expected that the Nigerian candidates secure admission into recognized world class institutions devoid of those challenges that have made admission into tertiary institution difficult.

Beyond the challenges mentioned above, students and particularly parents are more concerned about the safety of their children's life and property in the country of study. This issue has become very important as there have been reports of attack on Nigerian students studying abroad of lately, even killing and death of Nigerian students in foreign Universities. Generally speaking, Nigerians (Students and Parents) expects that the destination for study should be better positioned in some, if not in all of the following areas;

1. Academic and constructive Recreational programmes
2. Safe place for study and accommodation
3. Affordable tuition
4. High quality education and instructional delivery systems
5. Availability Scholarship opportunities
6. Efficient and effective feedback arrangements to regularly inform parents of their children's academic progress, physical movement and general welfare in their study locations
7. Establishing a tripartite linkage between the educational Agent, parents of students and foreign institution where the students is studying
8. Easing the difficulty in getting student visa
9. Less cumbersome application process
10. Language barrier, etc
11. Less cost of living

e. Scholarships for Study Abroad

There is huge scholarship budget from different levels of government in the Country for students studying abroad, but this is usually subjected to varying critical factors such as academic performance, need-driven, etc.

Nigerian's Federal, state and different government/corporate agencies have various scholarship Awards for students at different levels of study such as Bsc, Msc, and PhD to study abroad. Some of the institutions with scholarship schemes in Nigeria are Federal Scholarship Board of the Federal Ministry of Education, TETFund (i.e scholarship programmes for lecturers in Nigerian Tertiary Education Institutions both locally and abroad for Masters and PhD programmes) PTDF, NNPC, NITDA etc scholarship opportunities for Nigerian students to study abroad. States like Kano, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Sokoto, Bauchi Yobe, Kaduna etc, have initiated scholarship schemes for qualified students from their respective state.

According to Alhaji Abdulkadir Jelani, the Chairman, Sokoto State Scholarship Board, the government planned to sponsor more than 230 students to study in 19 countries in the world and 15,000 others in various institutions of higher learning within the country in 2014. This initiative was targeted at preparing the beneficiaries for future leadership roles (Punch Newspapers, December 14, 2013).

Similarly, it was reported in **The Nations Newspaper of August 16, 2014** in a press release with the Chairman, Yobe State Scholarship Board, and Alhaji Ibrahim Toshia, that the State government had spent USD\$3.5 Million as scholarships on 9,000 students in the last two years. According to him, "In 2013, Yobe State Government paid USD\$465,391.9 as scholarship funding to 3,253 students within the country and N235.4 million to 89 students abroad out of which 12 were medical students. Government also paid USD\$1.3 Million for the training of four helicopter pilots, USD\$172,906 for 52 law students and USD\$77 Million for special courses to 88 students studying Arabic and French. In 2014, government paid USD\$824,131 to 5,446 students in various institutions across the country. The Yobe state government also paid USD\$288,715 to 17 students in tertiary institutions in Europe, Asia and African countries out of which six are doctorate degree students. Most of the overseas students were studying engineering, medicine, aero-space engineering, environmental management and other sciences.

In a statement issued by the Director of Press and Public Relations to the Kano State Governor, as reported in **People's Daily Newspapers of November 23, 2014**, Kano State government has within the last the years, has made substantive investment in the sponsorship of 2,600 students

from Kano state to study abroad in various academic fields like Computer Science, Anaesthetic Nursing/Operative Nursing, Medicine and Pharmacy.

It is remarkable to state that beneficiaries of the various scholarship schemes return to Nigeria to contribute to the development of their respective states and Nigerian nation at large.

Below is a list of some scholarship opportunities to study abroad for Nigerians.

- Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) Scholarships Programme
- TETFund scholarship for Academic staff of Nigeria Tertiary Education Institutions tenable in local and overseas Universities
- Federal Government Overseas Scholarships for Nigerians
- Imo State Government Scholarships for Imo State Students
- Ikeoha Foundation Scholarship Awards for Enugu State students
- BAT Nigeria Scholarship for Undergraduate Students
- MTN Foundation (MTNF) Science and Technology Scholarship scheme
- Shell BP Nigeria University Scholarship Programme
- MTN Foundation / MUSON Music Scholarship Awards for Nigerian students
- Nigeria LNG (NLNG) Scholarship Scheme for undergraduate students
- Globacom GBAM Scholarships for Nigerian students
- Total Nigeria National Merit Scholarship Programme
- Mobil Nigeria Undergraduate National Scholarship Programme
- NNPC/Addax National Tertiary Institutions Merit Scholarship Programme
- Rivers State Government RSSDA Undergraduate Overseas Scholarships
- Commonwealth Scholarships for Developing Commonwealth Countries

f. Educational Agents in Nigeria: how to work with them, how to select the right ones

There are quite a number of Agents recruiting Nigerians students for schools abroad, identifying reputable ones have become *a case for diligence*. There are many reputable recognized Agents in Nigeria like FAB Consulting Nig Ltd and many others etc.

FAB Consulting has been an Educational consulting Agent by helping willing and genuine students to achieve their long dream of obtaining qualitative education. Over the years, have placed many students within and outside Nigerian Universities and have done successful placement of students into Universities and colleges in countries such as **UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Cyprus, Malaysia, Turkey, Singapore, Hungary, Ireland, Sweden, Thailand, Philippines, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Netherlands, Hongkong, etc.**

The activities of British Council, US Education Advising Centre, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to mention a few, also facilitates Nigerian candidates/students processing of admissions into universities/institutions abroad to study.

Factors to consider in selecting an agent in Nigeria to work with is dependent on individual International University's standards. Deciding on which Agent to work with and how to work, it is necessary to ask such Agent to submit reference letter from at least five (5) universities abroad the Agent had worked with in the past two (2) years. This will enable the establishment of credibility of such Educational Agent in the recruitment and management of admissions and handling of students.

References:

Vanguard Newspaper, Thursday, January 15, 2015

University World News, 12 December 2014

Vanguard Newspaper, July 18, 2014

Punch Newspaper, August 22, 2014

The Nations Newspaper of August 16, 2014

People's Daily Newspapers of November 23, 2014

Table 1: FIELDS OF STUDY FOR SELECTED PLACES OF ORIGIN, 2013/14

Place of Origin	TOTAL STUDENTS	<u>Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (%)</u>					<u>All Other Fields (%)</u>							
		STEM*	Engineering	Health Professions	Math/Comp. Sci.**	Physical/Life Sci.	Business/Mgmt.	Education	Fine/Applied Arts	Humanities	Intensive English	Social Sci.	Other	Undeclared
Nigeria	7,921	56.8	23.9	12.7	7.5	12.7	14.2	1.8	2.1	1.9	0.4	6.8	11.3	4.6
Brazil	13,286	22.0	10.5	2.4	2.9	6.2	21.1	1.6	7.3	3.1	14.4	7.7	16.9	5.8
Canada	28,304	35.6	8.2	15.0	3.2	9.2	14.7	6.5	8.5	3.9	0.1	12.4	14.8	3.6
China	274,439	41.6	19.8	1.4	11.5	8.9	28.0	1.7	5.3	0.9	2.8	8.1	8.6	3.0
Colombia	7,083	30.9	14.0	2.6	3.5	10.7	20.4	2.2	8.1	4.7	6.9	9.7	13.2	3.8
France	8,302	25.6	13.9	1.1	4.2	6.3	26.1	0.8	5.2	6.4	1.5	8.7	20.4	5.4
Germany	10,160	20.4	7.8	1.7	3.3	7.5	29.4	1.8	4.1	6.6	0.6	12.2	16.3	8.5
India	102,673	78.6	38.0	4.7	26.0	10.0	11.7	0.5	1.4	0.5	0.2	2.7	3.4	1.1
Indonesia	7,920	31.8	16.8	2.1	5.4	7.5	29.5	2.4	8.9	1.4	1.0	8.6	11.7	4.7
Japan	19,334	14.4	4.3	2.9	2.4	4.8	18.8	2.8	7.7	4.5	15.2	10.3	20.9	5.4
Malaysia	6,822	49.8	28.5	2.5	6.5	12.2	19.3	2.1	4.6	1.4	0.1	9.7	10.4	2.6
Mexico	14,779	31.5	17.3	3.0	3.9	7.4	21.3	2.8	8.4	3.7	2.8	9.5	14.7	5.4

*Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math Fields

**Math/Computer Science

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