Culture Matters: The “Oga” Factor in African Higher Education

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Of University education, “It should encourage original thinking, encourage research, help to add to human knowledge....”
James Emmanuel Kwegyir Aggrey

Abstract

Much has been written and reported, especially by the media about African Leadership and governance. A major coverage has focused on corruption and the lack of transparency; both issues emerging from the media within Africa and the West. The related literature suggests that the African people and the international community have levied the blame on African political leadership and Governance. Equally important is a growing public concern about Africa’s higher education. For example, the 2015 University Times Ranking has identified the top ten “best” universities: eight in South Africa and two in Egypt. The current lack of sustainable development; poverty, ignorance and disease; inadequate energy and water supply; and poor infrastructure constitute a major threat to peace and security in Africa. Thus, it may be concluded that African political leadership has failed the African people. And, based on available indicators African higher education has also failed to deliver on the promise of post-Independence Africa, especially to its youth. This paper probes the role of the African academy in sustainable development and the improvement of African quality of Life (AQOL). In this context the paper examines the impact of culture in African higher education; it argues that the “Oga” factor within the African cultural milieu has exacerbated the situation. Based on its findings the paper proposes far-reaching recommendations for consideration and implementation by African educators, policymakers and relevant international organizations.

Keywords: Culture, Oga, Leadership, Education.
Introduction

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that African higher education has been plagued for several decades with many challenges. These challenges have been investigated by scholars and practitioners with the intent of repairing the “bridge” Sawyerr (2004); Atteh (1996); World Bank (2000); Varghese (2012); Ajayi (1996); UNESCO (2010); Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (1991); Materu (2007); Mama (2003); and Assie –Lumumba (1993); and Cloete, Maassen and Bailey (2015). The challenges include quality assurance (QA), funding, capacity building, leadership and governance, decaying educational facilities and infrastructures, access to tertiary education, deteriorating teaching conditions, declining public expenditures on higher education, erosion of universities’ autonomy, gender equality, academic freedom, sustainable educational policies, an increasing rate of unemployment among university graduates and last but not the least is the perpetual student unrest on many university campuses. The problems in African higher education have been exacerbated by the emergence of for-profit private Colleges and Universities. These private institutions now face similar challenges experienced by the public higher education institutions; and in many respects the private institutions are worse. As Sawyerr (2004) points out the challenges facing the private institutions include:

i. Shortage of resources, infrastructure, and funds;
ii. their over reliance on part-time faculty from the public institutions with implications both for the quality of delivery at the private universities and for effective performance in the public institutions;
iii. the concentration of for-profits private institutions on directly marketable courses and programmes, thereby out-competing the public institutions in respect of a category of high-paying courses and programmes that the latter could use to augment their income earning capacity; and
iv. the absence of research in private higher education as necessary part of the higher education enterprise.

A recent analysis of African higher education focused on eight “flagship universities,” from 2008-2011: Botswana, Cape Town in South Africa, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, Ghana, Nairobi in Kenya, Mauritius, and Makerere in Uganda. It is worth noting here that the selection of these eight flagship universities for this study does not include any of the numerous universities, especially Ibadan, in Nigeria, the “colossus” of Africa; the largest population and economy in Africa. The study was initiated by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERENA), funded by the Carnegie Foundation, and led by the Center for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). http://www.universitiesworldnews.com. The following are highlights drawn from the summary of the findings in the study:

➤ In general, the African universities are not strengthening their self-generative capacity, and are thus struggling to make a substantial contribution to either new knowledge generation or the application thereof.
A review of the mission statements of the eight universities in the HERENA study shows that two of the flagship goals were to engage in high quality research and scholarship and to deliver knowledge products that will enhance national and regional development. The

- and regional development. The results suggest that Cape Town is the only university in this group that clearly satisfies these goals, and that Makerere university is the university that comes closest to Cape Town.

- Data showed that only three in the eight universities – Botswana, Cape Town and Ghana had 50% or above permanent academic staff with doctorates in 2011. Only Eduardo Mondlane (17%) continued to have an average well below 40%.

- The study showed that 40% of staff at the University of Cape Town were in their senior category (Associate and Full Professors) in 2011. Only Mauritius (24%) and Nairobi (24%) were above 20% in this category. At the opposite end, with the exception of Cape Town (31%), junior staff exceeded 50% with Eduardo Moondlane at 82%, Makerere at 71% and Dar es Salaam at 69%. These three universities also had very low percentages of senior lecturers (below 20%).

- In terms of postgraduate knowledge outputs, the study showed that the masters graduate total of the eight universities increased from 2,268 in 2001 to 7,156 in 2011, at an average annual rate of 12% over the period. Two universities were responsible for 66% of the overall increase of 4,888 in 2011 compared to 2001-Nairobi, where the masters graduate total eight universities increased almost seven fold from 370 in 2001, to 2,533 in 2011, and Ghana, where the master graduate total almost tripled from 541 to 1,591. The doctoral graduate total across the eight universities increased from 154 in 2001 to 367 in 2011. Collectively, Cape Town, Nairobi and Makerere produced 80% of the doctoral graduate total of eight universities in 2001, 82% in 2007 and 76% in 2011.

- It is important to note that following the independence of most African countries in the 1960s higher education was hailed as agents of modernization, social mobilization and economic growth. Yet after half a century following post-colonial era, most African universities are now tumbling down. And from all indications, African governments are lagging behind other so-called developing regions in public funding of tertiary education.

- All these challenges are occurring in an environment which demands that higher education in Africa must focus on global competitiveness while it strives to be locally relevant and centrally placed to contribute meaningfully to sustainable total development of the continent, countries and individuals. The preponderance of evidence that supports the view that knowledge capability and capacity, rather than natural resources is the greatest determinant of a country’s effective participation in the global competitiveness. Put in another way, higher education contributes significantly to the political, scientific, technological, economic, social and human development of any country. It is even more so for the developing nations of Africa, a continent of more than 1.2 billion people, characterized by the poorest countries in the world with huge capacities development needs. Thus on the one hand, while Africa values higher education as an imperative in national development, it lacks transformational leadership and governance sine qua non to effective organizational management.
Definitions

- **Oga**
  
  A Dictionary of the Yoruba Language (2006) defines ‘Oga’ thus: Oga, (n) distinguished person in any sphere, chief, superior officer, headman, master. The origin of the word is not clear but it is attributed to the Yoruba, particularly the ‘Ijebu’. For example, the Ikorodu people of Lagos State (they are of Ijebu origin) are often referred to as ‘Ikoroduoga’ because of their air of superiority over their closest neighbors. Although a Yoruba word, the word ‘Oga’ has crept into the lexicon of many Nigerian languages and once used, the people share a common understanding of the denotation and connotation of the word.

  The ‘oga’ syndrome in Nigeria has to do with ‘bigmannism’. It may have a negative connotation when people see themselves as being above the law (A problem in many sectors in Nigeria). It creates sacred cows and makes it possible for people to flout laws with impunity. ‘Oga’ may be unquestionable because of his/her power, status, wealth etc. The ‘Oga’ syndrome underscores inequality because the ‘Oga’ enjoys privileges not open to those on the lower echelons of the socio-economic ladder. It is a word associated with favoritism, exceptions etc., (Bammmeke March 28, 2015)

  The word “oga” has a fascinating history that is deeply rooted in the history of the Yoruba people of Nigeria; suffice to note here that the word “oga” is associated with the ancestors who descended from the Remo stock of Yoruba tribe who came to settle on a plateau and named it Ikorodu, a shortened word from oko odu which literally means Odu farm. By the 17th century a large contingent Benin migrants came by land through Iki in Ogun state to the new area now known as Ikorodu. It is worth noting that the leader of the Benin group was wealthy and powerful man, Eregbouwa (now called Rebugbawa in Ikorodu) from the ancient royal family of Oliha of Benin city.

- **Theory**

  A set of ideas intended to explain something; a set of principles on which an activity is based. Chen (1990) defines theory as a frame of reference that helps humans to understand their world and to function in it. “Theory provides not only guidelines for analyzing a phenomenon but also a scheme for understanding the significance of research findings.” (Chez 1990, p17) Rudner (1966) joins Chen and others in stressing the crucial role of theory in research.

- **The Oga Theory**

  An idea that is being used to attempt to explain the African higher education crisis. It attempts to test the hypothesis that (a) African higher education does not exist in a vacuum; it has a cultural context, one of which is the “Oga” factor; (2) the “Oga” factor is inherently autocratic, (3) the source of the “oga” power is, to a large measure, referred to as traditional African value system and (4) it gives total power to the leader (ruler).
Leadership

Oxford Definition: Leadership is the action of leading a group of people or an organization.

Webster Definition: Leadership is described as the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

Leadership is the process of influencing others in making decisions, setting and achieving goals concurrently, it is the process of keeping the group together (James Burns 1978).

Leadership is a role that leads towards goal achievement, involves interaction and influence and usually results in some form of changed structure or behavior of groups, organizations or communities (Lassey and Sashkin, 1978).

Leadership may be defined as: a function of group process, personality or effects of personality, the art of including compliance, the exercise of influence, a form of persuasion, a set of acts or behaviors, a power relationship, an instrument of goal achievement, a differentiated role and finally as the initiation of structure (Stogdill,1974).

Leadership is a process of making a difference in a society (Gordon, 2014).

Methodology

This study is based on multiple sources and analysis: (1) extensive literature review;(2) field work in ten African countries; Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kingdom of Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania. The fieldwork included informal interviews, observations and conversations with faculty, staff, alumni members, students and parents.

The Historical Context

Although a comprehensive history of education in Africa is beyond the scope of this paper, it is useful to provide a brief historical context for examining the “Oga” factor in African higher education. As Samoff and Carrol (2003, p3) have noted “the roots of nearly all of the modern higher education in Africa can be traced to the colonial period and to external support to varied sources.” However for the purpose of this paper the history of higher education in Africa may be divided into three periods: (1) the period of the tradition of indigenous and Islamic higher education in pre-colonial Africa (2) the colonial period, and (3) the African independence era or post-colonial period.

First is the period of indigenous and Islamic tradition or the pre-colonial period. This period dates back to early civilization where learning was embedded in the cultural setting of the time. Prominent scholars in African higher education, including Ajayi et al (2005) and Lulat (2003); Assie-Lumumba (2006), and Lulat (2005); have extensively documented the beginnings of African higher education, tracing back to the pyramids in Egypt, the obelisks of Ethiopia, and the Kingdom of Timbuktu, Ajayi et al (1996). The existence of such institutions has been
referred to as the Alexandrian academy or the Universal Museum Library at Alexandria, established around 331 AD and 642 AD; the Al-Quarawiyin University, Fez, Morocco in 859 A.D; Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt in 970 A.D. and the legendary University of Timbuktu in the 11th century. And according to world-egiorgis (2013) “The 2,700 years old tradition of elite education in Ethiopia with an African script called Ge’ez could also be taken as example of higher form of education in pre-colonial Africa.” It has also been reported that one of the first African philosophers of the 17th century, Zera Yacob of Ethiopia (1599-1692) was also a product of such African Foundations, Lange (1987). It is therefore clear that higher education institutions existed in Africa long before European scramble for Africa. It should be noted however that these indigenous institutions of higher learning were established to serve and devoted to religious, philosophical, moral, medical and other studies to meet the demands of local people; they created indigenous knowledge systems. However they were disrupted, destroyed or disappeared with wars over slave trade and the appearance of European powers in the 15th century. Consequently, the African institutions were disconnected from its historical roots and alien models of higher education institutions were imposed through European colonization. This brings us to the second phase of the development of African higher education.

2. The colonial phase of African higher education was characterized by colonial ideology designed to compromise local authorities and their legitimacy as agents of cultural and institutional continuity. Africans resisted these changes but to no avail. As Lulat (2003) has documented, Europeans managed to create new African elites who passed through what may be characterized as Eurocentric educational systems only few individual Africans managed to access the system. By 1885, following the Berlin Conference, 1884-1885, all African countries were practically under colonial rule; the British and French played a major role while Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal and Spain participated in the process. It was not until WWII that only a few higher education institutions were established in Africa. Among these were Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone, established in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of London as an institution for training African Clergymen and schoolmasters; it is the oldest of all established in the Eurocentric model, Ridder-Symoens (1992); University of Cape Town, Khartoun (1902), Cairo University (1908); University of Algeria (1909). Only 8 institutions of higher education were established by the colonialist by the end of WWII: Makerere University, Uganda (1922); Egerton University, Kenya (1939); University of Ibadan, Nigeria (1948); University of Ghana (1948); Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia (1950); University of Zimbabwe (1952). And at the end of the 1960s Sub-Saharan Africa had only 6 Universities for a population of more than 230 million: Cape Verde, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Seychelles and Tome and Principe Teferra & Albach (2004).

3. African higher education has increased enormously since independence; by 2009 there were more than 250 public and 420 private higher education institutions, World Bank (2009). As of 2010 the Association of African Universities (AAU) listed more than 950 higher education institutions. This period has also experienced external support, especially from the West, for example, the World Bank the Ford Foundation, the Phelps Stroke Fund, the Rockefeller
Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation. At the same time public expenditures for higher education has declined substantially.

**Why Culture Matters**

We begin with the definition of culture. Webster’s Dictionary (1996) provides several definitions of culture, including; (1) a particular form of civilization, especially the beliefs, customs, arts and institutions of society at a given time; (2) Refinement in intellectual and artistic taste, (3) The act of developing the intellectual faculties through education. Similarly the Oxford English Dictionary (2007) defines culture as (1) the art, customs, etc of a nation or group; (2) The arts and intellectual achievements as a whole; (3) cells or bacteria grown for scientific study. Many scholars, including the following, have also shed light on the definition of culture: Mead (1953); Gyekye (2003); Zimmermann (2015); Bailey (1998); Harris (1975); Hofstede (1994); Keesing (1981); Linton (1936); Rushing (1983); Tylor (1871) and Awedoba (2007).

Although these scholars and others generally agree that culture is a part of the human experience, they differ in the analysis and nuances in the definition and application of culture. For example, the British anthropologist, Sir Edward B. Tylor (1871) popularized the idea that all societies pass through the developmental stages, beginning with “savagery”, progressing to “barbarism”; and culminating in Western “civilization”. Obviously this definition assumes that Western cultures were considered superior. It should be noted however that both Western cultures beginning with ancient civilizations in Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia and others) and Eastern cultures especially imperial China, believed that their own way of life was superior. The recent study of multiple cultures has enhanced our understanding of different cultures without imposing the notion of cultural superiority; it suggests the relativism of cultures. Gyekye (2003) in the same vein has provided an Africa-centered definition in the study of the cultural values of the African people. His definition was based on what can be extracted from African myths, maxims (proverbs), folktales, artistic symbols, religious beliefs, socio-political practices and institutions.

Definitions of culture have evolved to today’s definition. Hofstede (1994) has provided such a definition: “the totality of a group’s thoughts, experiences, and patterns of behavior and its concepts, values and assumptions about life that guide behavior and how those evolve with contact with other cultures”. And in so doing Hofstede, has classified what he deems to be the elements of culture into four categories: symbols, rituals, values and heroes. For the purpose of this paper, culture may be defined as a way of life of a group of people which includes: behaviors, beliefs, and value systems, arts, communication styles including symbols and proverbs, artifacts, music and dance, laws, costomology and world view etc.

An extensive review of related literature suggests the lack of meaningful considerations given to the role of culture in the discourse on African higher education. There was little or no attention given to the role of culture in African higher education at the most recent summit on African higher education in Dakar, Senegal (2015). Yet, arguably, the improvement of African higher education requires serious evaluation and well intentioned considerations of the cultural
context in which African higher education exists; African traditional value systems and modernity. Is there a clash of culture, the African culture on one hand and modernity as characterized by high technology on the other hand? To what extent does African culture impact African higher education? What is the nature of the “oga” factor, within the context of African culture? How does the concept of “oga” factor in the African value system that may impact African higher education? These are but a few relevant questions that scholars seem to fail to connect with the study of African higher education. Like most organizations African higher education institutions have organizational structures. These institutions are virtually headed by the Chancellors and Vice Chancellors. The position of the Chancellor is that of a figure head. In many instances the president of the country acted as the Chancellors. Thus, in practice the Vice-Chancellor runs the university; he/she is the “Oga” of the university. The organizational structure provides for various leadership positions such as Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Heads of academic departments (HOD) and administrative units (including the Registra and the Chief Consul) The structure also provides for Committees, Boards and Councils, such as Appointment Board, University Council, Academic Board etc. In practice however final decisions are made by the Vice-Chancellor, the Oga, subordinates who are also Oga in their respective positions of authority are afraid of making major decisions. The Oga derives his or her power from the African cultural value system, namely respect for authority, respect for the elders, the socialization process of African children and the youth. Some of my informants who are now Lecturers and Professors reported the relationship between their upbringings and their behaviors in the academy. They talked about how they were raised not to question authorities and their elders. They were drilled to behave humbly at all times.

I interviewed a few Ph.D. candidates at X African Universities as to why they seem not to be able to critique published articles and books written by their professors and other scholars. A unanimous response was, “we were taught not to question people in authority or even eat on the same dinner table with the elders.” Nonetheless there are a few students and junior faculty and staff who have done otherwise; they also have stories about the consequences of their behaviors. The fear of the Oga is real. There are cases where university vice-chancellors, the Oga hires and fires faculty without any recourse. In other cases the Oga can veto the decision of a Promotion Committee or Academic Board. In other case studies we find that students especially females were afraid to ask questions or be critical of the views of their Lecturers in the classroom. Is this behavior not to raise critical questions in the classroom attributable to African cultural values? Yes and no, because there are students paying attention to their cell phones and/or have failed to prepare for their lectures and therefore will not raise any questions. This apparent convergence between African culture and modernity (high-tech) in African higher education deserves further examination beyond the scope of this paper.

**Visions, Missions and Goals Statements**

A convenient sample of African universities having vision, mission and goal statements reveals the following:

- To create a world-class research university or a leading/premier university in Africa.
- To be a center for academic excellence
To engage in quality research and scholarship
To produce and/or deliver knowledge products for the enhancement of national and/or regional development.

These aims, as nebulous as they may seem, provide the baselines for measuring outcomes. It is in this context that we must now evaluate the impact of the Oga factor in African higher education. However, it is important to note here that in general the vision and mission statements of African universities are usually neither grounded in African value system and cultures nor on critical issues relevant to African development agenda. For example, the role of higher education in affecting community social cohesion and other social goals, the promotion of human capability and greater opportunities for social justice, competitiveness and productivity; reduction of inequality, poverty and disease; and the mitigation of conflicts and crisis. University visions and missions can be built around these examples, thus creating Africa-centered higher education institutions instead of replicating western versions of vision and mission statements.

The Oga Factor

Theorizing the Oga factor in African higher education as discussed earlier in this paper helps to explain its impact on African higher education in particular and the African community in general. Thus its practice and impact may be viewed from three related perspectives (1) academic environment, (2) knowledge production and application, and (3) higher education and national development.

1. Academic Environment. The literature points out the relevance of conducive environments to academic achievement; an environment conducive for learning, teaching and research is imperative for critical thinking etc. Based on the history of the inherent autocratic nature of Oga, it does not encourage critical thinking; so does the African traditional socialization process which begins after birth through primary and secondary education. Frequently, the Oga factor engenders fear; there is no questioning the authority of the Oga and the elders. The culture inhibits creativity, independence and self-actualization. Yet, it is considered the sign of respect, something ingrained from early childhood. The academic environments in African higher education institutions are not generally student-friendly. This in part explains the lack of effective alumni associations. Students want to graduate and never to return to their alma mater. There is a general feeling on the part of the students and some progressive liberal Lecturers that students are being treated as children. This feeling often leads to student unrests and strikes. Nigerian universities lead in this category of student activism. And such behaviors are considered deviant and outside the African cultural milieu.

2. Knowledge production and application. As noted earlier in this paper, African higher education promises knowledge production through engagement in high quality research and scholarship. However, the evidence from the field as already noted in the HERENA study and others, neither much of knowledge production is taking place nor the application of knowledge. In fact according to Gordon (2010) the gap between knowledge (what we know) and application
(what we do) is widening globally especially in Africa. There are practically no “silicon valleys” or the “research triangle” (centers for innovation and application) created by African Higher Education in Africa. This outcome in African higher education is to be expected; the culture does not seem to encourage new knowledge production and critical thinking, thus robust research activities are often lacking. As the HERENA report has noted in an attempt to explain the low productivity of knowledge in African universities “this raises the issue of whether the universities have structures in place for the management of research and whether they have been able to introduce incentives designed to improve the research activities of academic staff members.” This speculation may be true but we also need to understand the cultural value promoted by the Oga that makes little or no provision for critical thinking and certainly no incentives for research productivity. Moreover the idea of research grants and fund development is new in African universities; historically they were used to huge government subventions, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation’s generous donation; albeit some of that still goes on; they have collectively created a culture of dependency rather than a culture of collaboration.

**Higher Education and National Development**

Historically and in contemporary terms, higher education has always been viewed as a major factor in the African quest for national development. It is now abundantly clear that knowledge is the most important marketable commodity in the global economy. Thus knowledge capacity building has become, and it has always been, sine qua non to development. Needless to say, that ideas and knowledge are essential for leadership development on multiple levels. African universities, based on most of their vision, mission and goal statements, are expected to produce well educated graduates to manage local, national and international affairs. As Dr Nkosazana Dlamani Zuma (2014) Chair of the African Union (AU) noted that “African Universities and particularly research universities – would enable Africa to grow its prosperity for the next 50 years. At the current level of few highly qualified manpower and ideas for national development, the ability of Africa to win a sustainable future is not promising. First of all, the universities are not producing enough scholars at advanced level, the PhD’s and other doctorates. Here again, the HERENA report and several others have documented the low doctoral graduate production in African universities. Undoubtedly several factors are responsible for the universities inability to accomplish their well-intentioned aims, including the lack of senior faculty members with the doctorate degrees; library resources, funding, mentoring and good management of available resouces. There appears to be no incentives for students to pursue advanced studies in African universities. A case in point is the funding and the use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) at the flagship University of Ghana. Students with the master’s degrees (M.A and M.Phil.) are employed at the university as civil servants; they assist Lecturers and professors, for tutorials; in many departments they are not allowed to mark papers. They work from 8:00am to 5:00pm daily; they are not allowed to enroll as postgraduate students. Teaching Assistants in the USA, for example, are usually qualified students pursuing advanced degrees: The rules guiding these practices are not even subjects for review by the Oga of the university notwithstanding a strong support by the Institute of African Studies for change to reflect “best practices” at world-class research universities.
Conclusions and Recommendations

It is not an exaggeration to conclude that higher education is sine qua non to Africa’s ability to achieve sustainable development, thus winning the future. And yet many studies have characterized African higher education to be in a crisis mode; some have even suggested that the only way to save African higher education is dependence on foreign philanthropists, governments and international agencies. The dependency approach is not new; in fact the history of African higher education during the colonial and the neo-colonial era is the history of the culture of dependency. Yet African higher education remains in crisis and underdeveloped. Doing the same thing over and over again can only guarantee the same results; expecting a different result is most unwise.

The central argument in this paper is two-fold (1) that the study of African higher education is inextricably connected with the African cultural context, the historical foundation of the Oga factor. The operational organization of the Oga factor presents a clash in culture between traditional African values and the culture of modern academic setting in higher education. The Oga factor has its origin from African tradition of respect and sometimes fear of consequences of questioning authority and the elders. The modern academic institutions of higher education, especially in the West promotes critical thinking, academic freedom, and quality assurance, among other things. African higher education institutions are struggling to adopt these Western standards, often against their cultural values. Similarly African contemporary political systems based on Western models were adopted; the outcomes of which have been, to say the least, a dismal failure. The African educational system has also failed the African people. And the Oga factor has exacerbated the situation; the Oga factor has failed miserably to develop Africa-centered educational systems. Some of the Ogas even question the relevance of African Studies at their universities.

The Oga is pre-occupied with his “bigmanism” and how to make more money for himself from the West, the West that he pretends to dislike and hate; this is the Oga hypocrisy. The autocratic nature of the Oga is not sustainable; but it will take time to deconalize and change; it requires transformational leadership instead of the current transactional leadership. For now we can only hold African educational systems including higher education equally accountable with political leadership for failing to deliver the promise of independence, improvement of African quality of life (AQOL).

Recommendations

1. Any fundamental change in African higher education must include the African cultural context. The lessons learned from the history of great world-class universities support the relevance of culture in African higher education.

2. An end to the Oga factor in African higher education requires enormous efforts by parents to change how African children are being raised. In general, education begins at home; here is where the value of critical thinking must be encouraged and nurtured. This process must
be guided and promoted by public policy from pre-school through tertiary education. At the same time an Africa-centered education must be developed; African students must learn their rich history; after all Africa is the cradle of civilization.

3. The Lack of funding is often cited as a reason for the failure of African higher education to accomplish its stated mission and goals. Africa is blessed with human and natural resources; for example, Africa has most of the world’s natural resources; Africa has more than 50 billionaires and thousands of millionaires. African governments should develop tax incentive policies to encourage philanthropy; create for example, an African Endowment for Research and Development. The development of student friendly atmospheres on university campus will go a long way to greater and sustainable alumni support groups/associations. This model works very well in the West, especially in the United States, a former British colony like the former British colonies in Africa.

4. We should note the assertion that “no amount of money, including foreign loans, grants and aids can save African higher education without transformational educational leadership”. Thus special efforts must be made to develop new leadership for change in the African academy. Creative and effective leadership are at the core of the development of quality higher education in Africa. Knowledge production and its application must be a priority for African higher education.

5. We strongly recommend re-visioning of African higher education to reflect its environment, history and cultures in a global context as a major challenge, especially for African educators and national leadership; neither World Bank, UNESCO, IMF nor the emerging neo-colonialists can do it for Africa; it is in the hands of Africans.
References


