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DIVERSIFICATION OF GENERAL STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR LEARNERS' COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Specialisation without adequate general knowledge of the mechanism and dynamism of realities narrows human abilities. This is why general studies in higher education are established to avail learners in diverse fields with knowledge, practical know-how, skills and approaches necessary to face human tasks. As such, general studies are meant to promote students' versatility, competence and performance. The present incompetence and poor performance among many graduates within their specialised work environment exposes among other factors the inadequacy of general studies in higher education. This paper analytically investigates the present state of general studies in higher education. It proposes diversification of general studies as a paradigm shift for learners' competence and performance in the work environment. As such, this paper opts for true reflection of "general studies" in higher education, through its expansion to accommodate more disciplines and courses. Indeed, the study finds that general studies in global higher education are largely neglected. This deprives many countries of competent workforce; replete with necessary skills, knowledge and approaches that enhance effective practice in the work environment. The study therefore concludes that diversification of general studies education has the potential to expose learners to knowledge, skills, practical know-how, approaches scattered in diverse disciplines, enhance human competence and performance in the specialised work environment and sustain global development.

Keywords: Competence, Diversification, General Studies, Higher Education, Performance.

Introduction

Diversification of general studies (GS) in higher education is a key pathway for economic advancement, social mobility, competence and performance in the work environment (US Dept. of Edu., 2016). This is as diversified general studies (GS) have the potential to enhance human capital and resource development. This is also as diversified GS has the potential to solidify foundation for advanced disciplinary specialisation, through inculcation of extra knowledge, skills, practical know-how and approaches to cosmic tasks. This is too, as diversification of GS will constitute adequate intellectual materials for interaction and practice among individuals with diverse specialisations. In line with these prospects, the UK government and many employers advance that part of the essential knowledge and skills underpinning successful education and competent workforce would emerge through

inclusion of more disciplines and courses in the GS education (UK Dept. for Edu. & Skills, 2004). UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2000) similarly adds that the great need for diversification of GS is because, in a world that requires people to respond to and anticipate change, diverse knowledge, skills and practical know-how are essential to remaining competent.

Recently in Malaysia, several employers complain about the quality of local universities' graduates that lack generic skills and adaptation to tasks outside and within their field of expertise where they are excellently knowledgeable and technically skillful (Mohd, et al., 2007). Likewise, Okafor (2006) declares that in many African countries, more graduates are confused before most tasks outside and within their field of study, hence "wealth is lying everywhere but people keep passing by" (p.244). In developed countries like United States (US), limited General Studies is a disadvantage, as it is viewed to be largely leading to incompetence and poor performance in the work environment. As such, unemployment rate for recipients of minimal education increases since the economic recovery Carnevale, et al., 2013). In fact, the larger poor performance and set-backs plaguing today's workforce is not unconnected with poor general studies education prevalent in many countries. F*or, as Chinweuba (2020) observes, no workforce has an independent character. The levels of competency and performance of every labour force are true reflections of their expertise, degree of acquired quality broad range education, multi-skill and diversified knowledge. Based on these,* the U.S Department of Education (2016) concludes that mere education with gaps in expected students' experiences of valuable contents of other disciplines is also associated with poor pecuniary conditions, socio-economic disparities and diminished social mobility seen among individuals, groups, organisations and countries.

Truly, GS in higher education of many countries are not adequately diversified. In some places, the programme is seen as extra burden and hindrance to specialisation of learners in various academic fields. Consequently, GS education is not largely part of the academic tradition in many countries. Despite these, global landscape for labour force is currently charged with dynamic tasks, demands and high expectations from customers and employers whose solutions are scattered in diverse disciplines and subjects rather than specific area of specialisation (Nnamchi, 2007). This is why global employers now focus more on recruiting graduates with multi-analytic skill, diversified knowledge and approaches beyond their area of expertise. Thus, the labour market demand is now more for workforce with well-rounded knowledge and abilities to take initiative, think independently, analytical and dialectically in work complexities US Dept.of Edu., 2016). This then means that effective response to diverse and dynamic tasks is now the stringent requirement of work force environment and comparative advantage across continents, countries and organisations. This thus calls for overhauling of global higher education to extend GS to every academic department, and to increase its disciplines and courses to ensure learners' versatility, competence and effective practice (Mohd, et al., 2007).

Moreover, diversification of GS highly predicates on its nomenclature. This nomenclature purports an inclusive design involving many essential courses scattered in all academic departments. Thus, the nomenclature 'general studies' remain a lip service so far the programme in most higher education merely consists of few disciplines, shallow and introductory topics that are inadequate in guaranteeing all round or broad based education.

Consequently, GS programme has been largely 'general' in principle not in practice. But to meet the present *global emphasis on adequate human capital and resource development, there is great need to expose learners to diverse work mechanisms, challenges, problems, skills, knowledge and approaches scattered in diverse academic disciplines. This paper therefore argues that s*pecialisation or expertise without adequate general knowledge of the mechanism and dynamism of realities narrows human abilities; competence and performance in the work environment. As such, this *paper burdens the task of promoting diversification of general studies as a core element in global higher education and work environment. This is based on the potentials of diversified GS in building versatile, dynamic, analytic, innovative, critical, competitive and responsive graduates that can stand as the hallmark of educated persons* in resolving pressing and persistent human problems (Obuasi, 2011).

Clarification of concepts

Plato in Oguejiofor (2009) once asserts that people argue because they do not understand the word being used in the first place. This assertion underlies the importance of philosophical explication, clarification and analysis of concepts to reveal the meanings lurking in words, and to ensure human understanding and knowledge. Since philosophical explication, clarification and analysis thrive in distinction, explicitness and creation of better insight into the meaning of words, there is need to clarify and analyse higher education, general studies (GS) and diversification of general studies (GS) which are outstanding concepts in this discourse. *Higher education is the knowledge and skills obtained in tertiary institutions;* Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. This type of education comes from diverse *courses of study, academic departments, faculties and directorates from which platforms degrees are awarded based on learners' performance. A*s such, higher education refers to learning that largely involves specialisation in different academic fields.

Higher education again refers to academic processes in tertiary institutions expected to impart in learners critical and pragmatic knowledge, skills, scientific and technological attitude as well as understanding, discipline and character necessary to excel in life. Nyerere (2007) shares this view asserting that higher education explicitly and implicitly prepares young people for future membership of the society and active participation in society's maintenance or development. *Higher Education is therefore all about achieving human resource and capital development that will transform knowledge into application and advance the society from consuming to producing type with technological base. This is as higher education gears towards developing the social, intellectual, and psychological aspect of learners through inculcation of right ideas and skills, so as to make them functional members of the society. Thus, higher education encapsulates academic exercises in higher institutions of learning that are mature with formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual.*

Meanwhile, general studies (GS) are the hub of knowledge and unifying forces of academic disciplines in higher education that enhance human competence and performance. This is as GS not only constitute basic requirements for most academic faculties and departments, but as it supplies the broad range knowledge and skills that strengthen fields of specialisation (ESUT, 2015). Consequently, Obuasi (2011) defines GS as "a curriculum (or part of a curriculum) aimed at imparting general knowledge and developing general intellectual capacities in contrast to a professional, vocational or technical curriculum" (p.128). In line with

this definition, the developed world, according to Ortega (1946) understands GS as that academic programme characterised by its focus on

> the whole development of an individual, apart from his occupational training…civilising of his life purposes, the refining of his emotional reactions, and the maturing of his understanding of the nature of things according to the best knowledge of our time (p.1).

Based on poor academic attitude prevalent in many countries, GS is also viewed as auxiliary or supporting academic programme.

However, diversification of general studies (GS) means bringing in broad range of disciplines and courses into the curriculum in order to widen learners' knowledge, skills and practical know-how. In other words, diversification of GS refers to adequate expansion of the number of disciplines and courses that learners offer in general studies. It points at spreading learning across different disciplines in order to increase human success. It also points at involving essential academic courses in diverse departments in general studies programme; which is actually part of the true meaning of the term 'general studies'. In these ways, learners would be availed of additional opportunities to imbibe knowledge, skills and experiences outside their field of study. In fact, diversification is like saying, since no one knows the type and amount of task that will confront us, let us study all the solutions. As such diversification contextually predicates on the principle that "what one studies in a field can be a powerful experience to be employed in solving problems in another field" (Nnamchi, 2007, p. 79).

In this context, diversification is not the same as shifting, giving up or replacing the traditional GS disciplines and courses with new ones. It also has nothing to do with neglecting candidates' areas of specialisation or expertise. It rather implies adopting and taking more essential disciplines and courses within the GS, without giving up the existing ones. It also implies taking these courses alongside candidates' academic areas of expertise. With these in mind, Shukla (2007) describes diversification of GS as "all education not included under special education" (p.93). *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2008) moreover implies that it consists in bringing in broad knowledge of facts about many different subjects to the learners.* And Federal Republic of Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) depicts it as an academic programme that guarantees all round improvement in tertiary education and beyond.

It therefore means that diversification of GS points at inculcating broad based knowledge; cosmic mechanisms, practical know-how, skills and approaches in learners. It also means increasing human competency and out-put in the face of challenges. Charles Drew University (2011) corroborates these views, stating that GS must be designed to provide additional skills, information, inquiry methods and intellectual values by "introducing students to the richness and diversity of various academic disciplines, broadening students' intellectual perspectives as educated members of the society and encouraging students to develop commitments to, and mutual respect for diverse groups" (p.1). Diversification of GS therefore points at involving many other essential subjects in arts, humanities and sciences in order to provide general knowledge that will enhance learners' versatility, intellectual and physical capacities beyond their professional, vocational or technical curriculum (Obuasi, 2011, 128).

State of General Studies in Higher Education of most Countries

Apart from United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) and few other countries with some level of commendable General Studies (GS) in higher education, GS education is highly neglected in other countries. In these other countries, GS is either nonexistent or involves very few courses (Lindsay, 2017). This is contrary to the import of 'general studies' and broad academic statements of higher institutions of learning in those countries. In fact, higher education of many countries offer very few GS courses merely taken from disciplines in arts, humanities and social sciences to the total or partial negligence of courses in core sciences and technology. Thus, higher education of most countries merely exposes students to general studies in philosophy, psychology, English language and social science. "The belief is that exposure to such subjects helps to create the 'finished' graduate" (Asiegbu, 2005, p.2).

Sadly, these few GS courses in many academic institutions are even accorded elective or optional status. As such, not all departments offer all of them. Based on this, most academic departments in higher education of many countries merely choose GS courses to complete the credit unit required per semester. Consequently, departments with enough courses hardly offer any GS course while some departments offer only one or two. To be true, the few incorporated courses that form the General Studies in most higher education consist of topics that hardly inculcate the anticipated critical thinking, broad knowledge, skills, methods, practical know-how and approaches required for learners' competence and performance in the work environment. This is because contents of those GS courses are not largely programmed instructions. Worst still, they are replete with introductory, shallow or less important topics. Consequently, they yield little or no positive educational outcome. These educational realities propel many students towards feeling that GS courses are not relevant in their areas of specialisation. This, thus, exacerbates "it does not matter attitude" among these learners, leading them further to rare show of interest in lectures, assignments and continuous assessment tests of the very few selected GS courses (Orisawayi, 1992, p..192; Nnamani, 2009). However, the few selected GS courses are split in first and second semesters, and taught only within the first and at times second year of tertiary studies. As such, the departments offering GS courses merely do one or at most two per semester.

Due to the nonchalance attitude of some Governments that result to limited number of academic staff in some parts of the world, GS involves large classes. Against this development, Obuasi (2011) regrets the discouraging attitudes of administrators towards staffing of tertiary education and its hindrance of seminar and lecture character of GS, and advises that teachers of GS courses be made to have less number of students for effectiveness. In Nigeria as in many countries, academic faculties are often organized in groups captured by the school wide time table, and GS lectures are occasionally delivered based on this pattern. This is as general school programmes, departmental programmes, lectures and unforeseen circumstances often conflict with the scheduled period and take precedence.

However, periods allotted to GS courses per week in these school wide time tables are often scanty. These limited teaching contacts are again bedeviled in most parts of the world by incessant academic strikes, constant delay of academic planners in releasing teaching time table, and late admission of learners who are recipients of GS programme. Nnamani (2009) testifies that in many places, some of these learners are admitted few weeks to the end of academic exercises. This leaves the few GS lecturers with too short a time to make any

meaningful impact on them. As such, GS students in many parts of the world are shallowly exposed to contents of the courses involved. This contributes to GS in higher education of most countries becoming a shallow learning deprived of in-depth studies that guarantee human competency and performance. It as well contributes to GS in most higher education being a lip service; "general" in principle, instead of in practice involving all round education (Shukla, 2007, p.38).

Apart from these, little or no pride of place is accorded GS in most tertiary education calendars. This is why school based inaugural lectures, colloquium, conferences, seminars, workshops and symposium hardly revolve on it. Adversely again, some of the GS courses are merged with each other; making them loose their essential contents and forms. Along this lane, some are being struck off on the claim of being hindrances to specialisation of students in their academic fields. This is coupled with inadequate quality lecturers that handle GS courses in higher institutions of learning. In reference to this, Obuasi (2011) comments that some academic institutions even advocate part time teaching from lecturers, and manage GS education with a hit-and-run type of teaching that cannot suffice for the enormous importance of general studies. Moreover, not all lecturers borrowed for general studies are qualified, qualitative, willing and devoted. The situation is worse in some places as some of these academic staff are allotted the GS courses that are not part of their academic field of major. This hinders their performance and presents GS divisions as dumping grounds for poor academics.

The Other Side of the Argument – Functionalists' Perspective on Diversification of General Studies in Higher Education

Against diversification of general studies (GS), some scholars argue that education has broken barriers and is already diversified; with each discipline cutting across other fields of study. As such, there is no need for GS or its further diversification. Some others however hold that learners in tertiary education has in primary and high school levels passed through all fields of study, and should therefore be able to operate effectively and efficiently in the work environment (Anaenyeonu & Chime, 2011). For these scholars, primary and high schools are comprehensive schools that offer learners a general education (Fafunwa, 2004). As such, they argue that GS or its diversification would constitute extra burden and hindrance towards increasing specialisation in higher institutions for the labour force. However, other schools of thought advance that modern schools have libraries, where students are encouraged to read contents of other disciplines in order to boost their competence and performance after graduation (Ugwuanayi & Okwor, 2011).

Contrary to these arguments, evidence has shown that studies at primary and secondary schools are elementary. Hence, in developed countries like US, the unemployment rate for college graduates is about half of the national average (US Dept. of Labour, 2016). And now, experts predict that fully two-thirds of jobs from the year 2020 will require a post secondary education characterised by general knowledge, multi-skills and approaches to tasks (Carnevale, et al., 2013). This indicates that attainment of post secondary education, solidified by wide range studies has become increasingly important due to technological changes and increasing demand for broad range knowledge and skilled workers (US Dept. of Edu., 2016).

Besides, the primary and high school learning is in many aspects different from academic activities at the higher education level. For learners in higher education not only need to learn most courses through GS education but how to apply it in real world. At higher education level therefore, learning is not about content acquisition as visible in primary and high school but how to think and apply the product of thought. More so, gaining critical thinking and problem solving abilities happens best at 18-20 years when many people have passed out of primary and secondary schools. And at primary and high school levels, not every person's cognitive ability is fully developed. Adding to these is the fact that in diversified GS at the higher education level, learners are would be exposed to multiple disciplines and ways of thinking, and provoked to make meaning across disciplines. Nevertheless, library learners lack lecturing which is an essential means of inculcating diverse practical know-how and approaches to life predicaments (Northedge, 2007). For, lecturing has the capacity to sweep learners' thoughts along, provoke thoughts, create insights, enhance grappling of meaning in new concepts/ideas and thus widens learners' experiences.

Above all, diversified general studies education has the potential to strengthen disciplinary specialisation by providing extra knowledge and skills, as well as a solid foundation for advanced learning and specialisation. It would also provide a common intellectual currency for interaction and practice among individuals with diverse specialisations. It would again help in understanding some of the courses offered at the higher level within the area of learner's specialisation. This is why adequate diversification of general studies education is an excellent investment for individuals and nations. For, the present education in the modern world does not inculcate enough skill and knowledge that will enhance human competence and performance over complex dynamic tasks that evolve at the dawn of each new day. As such, there is no *doubt that the current set back among global workforce is consequent of the dislocation between adequate learning and practice.*

Diversification of General Studies in Higher Education: A Paradigm Shift for Learners' Competence and Performance in the Work Environment

Diversification of general studies (GS) would bring in a new phase in higher education. This is as it would be a move beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries towards exploration of relationships among different subjects and acquisition of diverse ways of thinking about the world. This would be so because; diversification of GS will expose learners to courses on liberal and scientific education beside their field of specialisation. Through this exposure, learners' larger awareness of human environments, improvement of economic and educational opportunities and maximal productivity would be enhanced. As well, graduates' option would be open as diversification of GS would enhance movement not just within job, but from job to job rather than the parochial approach to job or traditional model of having one job career. This would be so because, knowledge of diverse fields sharpens human critical thinking and analytic skills, breaks down stereotypes, reduces bias and volatility of human societies, enables fulfillment of educational roles, and increases success in diverse and interconnected world (US Dept. of Edu., 2016). Indeed, academic diversification will maximize human potentials, enhance problem solving, and create a knowledgeable population that will be susceptibly open to hardwork and positive change Rousseau in Adetutu, 2010). This will be so because, "what one studies in a field can be a powerful experience to be employed in solving problems in another field" (Nnamchi, 2007, p.79). Thus, learners will be replete with diverse concepts/ideas in diverse disciplines, and thereby possess

an increased knowledge that enhances philosophical dialectics of concepts/ideas to produce principles that will serve as solutions to human problems. Ngwoke points to these prospects, asserting that problem solving involves combining different or similar principles and applying them to the same or wide variety of problems and situations (Ngwoke, 2010).

As such, the disciplines, courses and teaching methods in diversified GS will yield the common intellectual and moral attributes, which are the hallmarks of the educated persons (Okwor, 2010). The educated persons in this sense will thus comprise of people who have informed acquaintance with the contents of quantitative techniques, mathematical and experimental methods of the physical and biological sciences, main forms of analysis, historical and qualitative techniques of arts and humanities needed to investigate the problems in modern societies and arrive at rich and varied solutions. This implies that diversified GS will satisfy global needs of producing specialists in medicine, engineering, agriculture, etc that are versatile in diverse knowledge and versed in their specialised areas. This is why Okafor (2006) avers that diversified GS will engender personal development, social responsibility and career development. With diversification of GS still, learners will be able to initiate, assimilate and manage the high level technology and quality information available in the modern world. Again, there will be increased competent population that will achieve long term socio-political, economic and technological goals. For, diversified GS is an excellent channel of preparation for the flexible, knowledge-based careers that will dominate the different tiers of the modern market and work environment.

From every indication therefore, it means that diversifying GS stands to sustain the growth of many organisations, civil societies and countries. This is based on the broad range knowledge it would provide prospective professionals or technocrats; Doctors, Engineers, Nurses, Lecturers, Astronauts, Scientists, politicians, business tycoons, policy makers, etc that manage diverse human activities; initiate and generate the necessary production of goods and services that boost socio-economic development. In fact, the prospects of diversifying GS are essentials for performance in the present transforming and globalizing world where new politics, economic, social life and organisations are emerging, and almost everything is networked (Guilherme, et al., 2010). It therefore means that diversification of GS will largely foster the transformative role of education by building skillful, resourceful and effective workforce in human societies.

Diversified General Studies in Higher Education: The Catholic Institution and Philosophy Departments Experiences

The workability of diversified general studies (GS) is visible in most Catholic institutions and philosophy departments. In the Catholic formation of candidates to the priesthood, diversified GS has been workable and prospective. In order to produce competent priests that are capable of solving problems in their work environment, the seminary curriculum involves diverse essential disciplines and courses. Beside philosophy, theology and practical experiences, catholic priestly curriculum cut across commendable studies of law, psychology, linguistic, physical and health education, spirituality, music, etc. Canon 1029 of the code of Catholic canon law refers to this curriculum as sources of all round knowledge (Coriden, et al, 1985). Before and after ordination, most candidates of these catholic institutions under diocesan or congregation arrangements also undergo further studies. This is in order to deepen their knowledge of other disciplines and enhance their competence and performance

in their work environment. With these dynamic and diversified human capital and resources, Catholicism as an institution has been sustained for hundreds of years. More so, the skillful impacts of their priests are felt in secular societies.

Another picture of diversification of GS is also visible in most philosophy departments and institutions. This is as philosophical studies in these departments and institutions generally consider natural and supernatural world, and consequently cuts across all human disciplines. As such, philosophical studies go beyond specialising in philosophy to other fields of study. Thus, philosophy students are exposed to engineering, psychology, politics, management sciences, social sciences, natural sciences, medical sciences, arts and humanities. Referring to this diversification of learning under the platform of allied branches of philosophy, Joad (1933) avers;

> Philosophy takes into account all branches and aspects of human knowledge and experience: the inspiration of the artist, the vision of the mystic, the social urge of the reformer, the emotions of the lover, and the moral intuitions of the plain man, all are grist of the philosopher's mill. He must also take into consideration the conclusions and discoveries of the scientist (p.16).

Such broad range knowledge is the secret behind the competence and performance of most philosophers in diverse work environment. Thus, philosophers are enabled to practice in all consultancies, welfare, guidance, counseling, administration, commercial, management and technological sectors (NAU, 2016).

Consequences of present Inadequate General Studies in Higher Education of many Countries

Inadequate general studies (GS) in higher education of many countries contribute to the "fall of academic performance and standard of education" (Ele, 2018, p.238). This is as it deprives learners of broad range knowledge needed for better understanding of some courses and academic activities within their areas of specialisation. This is as it constitutes a reduction in the quality of present global education. With present inadequate GS in higher education therefore, there has been geometric growth in less quality graduates whose abilities are narrow, and their impacts on societal development are pragmatically minimal (Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2018). In fact, inadequate GS in global higher education gives rise to graduates who are poorly prepared and less equipped for the task of adequate comprehending and evaluating realities (zoagab, 1991). Worst still, inadequate GS education largely contributes to the disconnections between learning and practice prevalent among labour forces in many countries. This is as it enhances difficulty in critical thinking, initiation of relevant ideas, problem solving and innovation within the work environment. Consequently, transformation of many organisations, socio-economic groups and societies towards progressive stages has largely remained a dream.

Perceived Constraints of Diversification of General Studies in Higher Education - The Global Debate

Despite the obvious prospects of diversifying General Studies (GS) in higher education, global debate largely revolves on its adverse impact on learners' area of specialisation. Thus, diversifying GS education is viewed as addition of unnecessary work and stress, a waste of

quality time, energy, and a hindrance to learners' expertise. The debate also revolves on enormous financial resources it may take, as well as the probability that most governments and students may be unable to fund the programme. It is also debated that diversification of GS may be deprived of basic facilities, infrastructures, instructional materials and quality instructors due to poor funding. This deprivation however was based on the apathy of most governments towards education sector. This apathy is visible in the poor educational policies, implementations and paltry budgetary allocation to education sector in many countries. This regrettable situation is viewed to be further exacerbated by corruption that remains largely unchecked in most countries. Dike (2010) for instance observes that "out of every 10% of annual budget set for education in Nigeria, only 2% actually gets to the classroom" (p.1). Consequently, Nigerian education sector and those of many countries suffer quantum set-backs (Abiogu, 2010).

The debate on diversification of General Studies also boils down to other factors. Such factors include its character of large classes, discomfort, strained impersonal relations between students and instructors, limited teaching facilities, resources, workload, and a negative perception that instructors of GS classes are of lower status in academic institutions (Carpenter, 2006). In addition to these, diversification of GS is viewed to require increment in the number of years spent in higher education. It is as well viewed to require extension of academic activities. These may be displeasing to students as they would like to graduate early and to have more time for after-school activities. However, this perceived extension is not only a burden to learners, but to resource persons, administrators and management as more work would be involved. Above all, diversification of GS is perceived as a programme that may displease most parents and guardians. This is as they may spend more resources in sponsoring their children. Consideration of these realities indeed constitutes a hindrance to diversification of GS and underlies global discussion on GS education.

Towards Diversification of General Studies in Global Higher Education

Diversification of General Studies (GS) calls for higher education reform. This is a reform that will redirect higher education administration, curriculum, academic programmes and activities. This is a reform that has to ensure availability of required methods, facilities, and maximize educational outcome. In this global reform, diversification of GS will be workable in three ways. The first way is for GS divisions to work with academic departments towards modification of departmental courses, time and spaces to accommodate more interdisciplinary courses under the platform of GS. The second way is for higher institutions' administrators to spread the diversified GS courses within the first and second year of students' admission into higher education. In this option, learners would be expected to take more GS courses and fewer courses from their area of specialisation in the first and second years. The third way in which GS education can be functionally diversified depends on extension of learners' years of learning by a year or two. Diversification of GS can thus be implemented within this year(s).

Along this lane, great attention should channeled to the review of the entire education system (especially that of Nigeria, etc) to be in tune with the demand of the economy and labour market. As such, educational emphasis must shift from mere paper qualification to functional or pragmatic education (Okoli & Okoli, 2014). Sequel to this, government of various nations should create a road map towards growing the economy via small acquisition and vocational

education to be incorporated in the GS. For in the 21st century; diversified knowledge has become the greatest factor of production, rendering to a secondary position the traditional factors of production; land, labour and capital. Thus, sustainable economies in this new global order are now those powered by diversified knowledge based advantage.

ersification of GS also depends on the adequate funding of higher education by governments and stakeholders. This is to ensure availability of functional structures, equipments, facilities, basic amenities and instructors. This is also to ensure sufficient implementation of the programme and actualisation of the expected educational outcome.

Indeed, diversification of GS will be more functional on small group basis. In this sense, departments have to be grouped. The number of departments forming a group will however depend on the number of candidates within each department. Advantages of small group teaching in diversification of GS are visible in the increased instructor-learner contact, "decreased instructor costs, efficient use of faculty time and talent, availability of resources, and standardisation of the learning experience" (Carpenter, 2006, p.13). Along this line, selected courses would be exempt for candidates from departments where they are domiciled. Diversification of GS demands team teaching where lecturers of a selected course should have regular periods to impart their assigned topics or have interactive session with the learners within the weekly hours provided in the academic time table. Of course, this teaching schedule has to be formulated in a manner devoid of clash with departmental courses.

Moreover, the teaching methods applicable in departmental courses will also be operational in diversified GS. But the educational outcome in diversified GS would be actualized through programmed instructions. As such, instructional materials of selected courses have to be structured with planned instructions that will ensure the desired objective of diversification of GS. Such instructional materials should be replete with exposition of essential topics, mechanisms and dynamisms of existential problems as well as principles, approaches, heuristic methods and strategies for solving problems optimally in the ever changing work environment. With these methods and facilities, there is bound to be adequate global implementation of diversified General Studies in higher education. And the outcome will be great improvement in inductive, deductive, analytic, logical, imaginative and synthetic reasoning of the future workforce leading to maximal competence and performance in the ever changing work environment.

Conclusion

Human specialisation without versatile knowledge hinders productivity. This is why it is insufficient to specialise in particular academic field without commendable knowledge of skills and practical know-how in other disciplines. For, initiating adequate solutions to diverse tasks in the work environment also depend on general knowledge, practical know-how, skills and approaches scattered in other fields. Thus, effective problem solving and optimum development of human societies truly calls for diversification of general studies (GS). This is in order to strengthen specialised areas, and enhance human competence and performance in problem solving and maximal development. Based on this, tertiary education commissions of diverse countries require a paradigm shift from being mere watchdogs of higher education to accreditation and quality control czars. This will widen academic horizon and satisfy the needs of the work environment.

Similarly, administrators and stakeholders of higher education in diverse countries must discourage the general attitude for fewer courses. This is by diversifying GS in order to produce a quality workforce that will fix the dynamic demands of the modern world, boost entrepreneurship, industry and global economy. Except general studies is properly diversified, global education system will continue to lack countervailing propensity to address human situations, increase the number of quality professionals, satisfy the needs in work environments, boosts private sectors' productions and services, ameliorate vulnerable socio-economic groups, create a lucrative present and render a certain future.

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