INCORPORATING THE TUNING APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULAR REFORMS & COURSE DESIGN IN TANZANIA FOR ENHANCING GRADUATES' COMPETENCIES: VIEWS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

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1.0. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

❑ Tanzania HED system is dual-composed of universities (public & private) & non-university institutions

❑ In 2016-there were 59 universities (48 private & 11 public), employing about 9,000 academics

❑ Total enrollment: 218,958 students-66% enrolled in public universities & 34% in private universities

❑ PRUs (allowed in 1998) enroll few students due to inadequate infrastructure They are demand-absorbing and for-profit, disguised

1.0. Introduction…..Continued

❑ Majority of academic staff in universities (public & private) are assistant lecturers, very few professors (most of them retired on contract), more dominant in PRUs

❑ Inadequate governmental budgetary allocations to Pus, therefore inadequate T & L facilities

❑ PRUs have more financial problems-they depend on student loans provided by HESLB

❑ Tanzania Commission for Universities regulates all universities & National Council for Technical Ed. regulate non-university institutions

2.0. Background to the Study

❑ Motivated by 2014 survey of employers' opinion of graduates' competencies in the East African region conducted by the Inter University Council of East Africa.

❑ 61% of TZ university graduates lacked requisite job skills, were unfit for jobs, Uganda 63%

❑ **Conclusion**: Graduates from the EA universities lacked employability skills due to massive enrolment expansion & inadequate T & L resources

❑ In my view: application of TA in course design & curricular reforms is the factor

2.1 Objectives & Research Questions

1. Find out the level of understanding & awareness of the Tuning approach among academic staff & its significance in curricular reforms/course design?

2. Explore academic staff views about graduates unemployment/underemployment and the potential application of the approach in curricular/reform as a strategy of enhancing graduates 'competencies to reduce graduate unemployment

2.1. Continued…………………………………….

- 3. Find out academic staff's views on the market-driven degree programs introduced in universities (competence/skill-based, relevance & contribution to national development, likelihood of enhancing graduates' employability)

- 4. Solicit graduate students' views on graduates unemployment & solutions and application of Tuning approach in curricular design to make university education more competence-based to enhance graduates employability.

- *RQs are derived from the objectives above*

3.0. Research Design & Methodology

❑ Case study-using the UDSM, School of Education (SOED). The UDSM is the oldest public university & has implemented several curricular reforms & introduced several new courses through Institutional Transformation Program.

❑ SOED is one of the oldest schools (1960s) & is well-versed in matters related to curriculum design, implementation & evaluation.

❑ Sample size: 110 respondents (89 masters' students volunteers & 21 academic strategically selected to reflect experience in curriculum design & impl.

3.0. Continued…………………………………

- ❑ Data (qualitative & quantitative) collected through: questionnaire (open & close-ended items) & documentary review.

- ❑ Quantitative data analyzed through Microsoft excel and qualitative data through content analysis

4.0. Major Study Findings: Highlights

- *4.1. Academic Staff Awareness of Tuning Approach & Related Concepts*

  - 57% aware of the approach & its significance in curricular reform, and in course design & implementation to make university education more competence based.

  - 43% claimed were unaware, but were sure to have been using the approach without knowing it

  - All were familiar with the concepts of OBE & OBTL and 81% observed the two were applied in course design at the UDSM

4.0. Major Findings Continued……………..

- *4.2 Academic Staff Views on Application Tuning Approach to Reduce Graduate Unemployment*

- 62% were of the view that if Tuning approach is applied in HE curricular reforms & course design can enhance graduate competencies & skills for employment;

- *BUT* recommended capacity building of academic staff in the approach & paradigm shift from the dominant teacher-centered approach in university teaching & consideration of cultural factors

4.0. Major Findings Continued…………………

- *4.3. Academic Staff Views on Graduate Unemployment, Causes & Recommendations*

- 48% supported the popular view in Tanzania that university graduates lack employability skills because university education is not competence-based and ***recommended:***

- Review university curricular to emphasize competencies & practical skills

- Train university teachers to design competence-based degree programs & courses

- Government to provide adequate resources

4.3. Continued…………………………………..

- *4.3.1. Views on University Education Alignment to the Labor Market Needs & Graduate Unemployment*

- 67% agreed that university education in TZ was theoretical and not aligned to the labor market needs. **Recommendations:**

- Design competent-based curricular

- Involve potential employers of university graduates & labor market experts in curricular design

- Adopt competence-based T & L

- Conduct regular graduates tracer studies to get feedback from employers

4.0. Major Findings Continued……………….

- 4.4. *Views on Market-Driven Degree Programs & Courses at the UDSM*
- **4.4.1: Competence & Skills**
- 90% market-driven courses were not competence & skill based. Reasons:
- Introduced without needs assessment, ad hoc basis
- Designers not trained in competence-based curriculum design
- Profit motive dominates
- Poor teaching & learning conditions

4.0. Major Findings Continued…………….

- **4.4.2. Relevance to National Development**
- 76%-No. Why?
- Focus on short-term labor market needs which saturate with time
- Courses motivated by urge to generate extra income
- Address sectoral labor market needs, not holistic
- Not aligned to nation's strategic development plans & needs
- T & L methodologies cannot address national needs

4.0. Major Findings Continued……………..

- 4.4.3. Enhance of Graduates' Employability
- 50% Yes & 50% No. No responses: Reasons:
- Introduced without comprehensive labor market needs assessment
- Not competence & skill based
- Designed on ad hoc basis
- Teaching more teacher-centered
- Irrelevant
- Not focused on enhancing ability for self-employment

4.0. Major Findings Continued……………….

- 4.4.4. Generic Competencies for Employability Most Wanted by Employers: Faculty & Student Views (Rank Order from Weighted Averages)

Faculty Ranking

1. Critical thinking & analysis
2. Technical skills related to the job
3. Ability to plan, organize & prioritize work
4. Ability to solve problems
5. Decision making
6. Verbal communication
7. Ability to work in a team

4.4.4. Competencies Ranking Continued……..

☐ **Faculty Ranking:**

- 8. Quantitative skills (ability to analyze quantitative data)
- 9. Ability to obtain and process information
- 10. Time management
- 11. Ability to write technical/professional reports
- 12. Leadership skills
- 13. Adaptability (Flexibility) (Adapting to different work environments)
- 14. Proficiency with computer software programs

4.4.4. Continued…………………………………..

□ **Students' Ranking of Generic Competencies**

1. Critical thinking & analysis
2. Technical skills related to the job
3. Decision making
4. Ability to work in a team
5. Ability to solve problems
6. Verbal communication
7. Time management
8. Ability to plan, organize & prioritize work
9. Leadership skills

4.4.4. Students' Ranking Continued.........

- 10. Ability to obtain & process information
- 11.Ability to write technical/professional reports
- 12. Proficiency with computer software programs
- 13. Adaptability (Flexibility)
- 14. Quantitative skills
- ❑ **Concurrence in Rankings Between Faculty & Students**:
1. Critical thinking & analysis
2. Technical skills/knowledge related to job
3. Verbal communication

4.5. Students' Views on Graduate Unemployment & Causes, Tuning Application & CBTL

❑ Students (100%) agreed that university education is theoretical, graduates lacked innovation & requisite job skills

❑ Application of Tuning approach & CBTL can enhance competencies & graduates' employability

❑ All student respondents agreed graduate unemployment & underemployment were serious problem mainly caused by graduates' lack of competencies & skills required by the job market (31.46%).

Other causes in rank order:

- Irrelevant curricular to the job market (28.08%)
- Massive expansion of higher education (15.73%)
- T & L approaches are not competence-based (7.86%)
- Degree programs are not competence-based (6.74)
- Lecturers' lack of knowledge in designing CB programs (5.61%)

5.0. Conclusion

❑From the findings it is clear that there are great potentialities of applying Tuning approach and competence-based teaching & learning in design and implementation of university curricular to enhance graduates' employability.

❑ **Constraints & challenges:**

1. Poor teaching & learning conditions, e.g. large classes, inadequate financial & human resources

2. Lack of training in the approach

3. Dominance of teacher-centered approach

THANK YOU!

4.5.1. What Should Universities Do

- Design competence/skill-based curricular (34%)
- Design relevant curricular to the labor market in consultation with employers (23.5%)
- Include entrepreneurship/self-employment skills in curriculum (20.2%)
- Change student assessment/evaluation mode (9%)
- Use innovative teaching & learning approaches
- Lecturers should learn or be taught how to design competence-based degree programs