Internationalisation of Higher Education in Botswana: A Route to Realising the Principle of Self-Reliance in Botswana’s Education Philosophy.

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Abstract
Botswana’s first national policy on education was unveiled in 1977 eleven years after the country became independent from the British. The education policy of 1977, which was commonly known as Education for Kagisano was based on the National principles of Botswana which are: Democracy; Development; Self-reliance; Unity and Botho. These national principles are imbedded in the nation’s education philosophy and reflect in all aspects of the nation’s education system. This paper was informed by the views of a group of third year students the researcher supervised during their internship programme. Relevant literature was used to augment the paper. The paper sets out to examine the extent to which the Batswana have been able to actualise the national principle of Self-reliance, as a result of the current wave of internationalisation of higher education in Botswana and goes on to argue that the wave of internationalisation of higher education in Botswana in the past decade, is positively contributing to the actualisation process of the principle of self-reliance in its education philosophy. This is evidenced by the international dimensions of the curricula of the various institutions of higher learning which are heavy on practical and vocational courses that equip the students with skills and knowledge to rely on themselves and be self-employed in the absence of paid employment.

Introduction
At Independence in 1966, Botswana just like most African countries, inherited an educational system that was modelled along the lines of those of their colonial masters. Botswana’s educational system in particular, was inherited from Great Britain, and it did not necessarily meet the peculiar needs of the country. In 1976, ten years after Botswana gained independence from the British, the first review of the country’s educational policy and development took place. This exercise which was carried out by the National Commission on Education, culminated in the National Policy on Education, published as Government Paper No.1 of 1977, commonly referred to as Education for Kagisano (Republic of Botswana, 1977). Botswana’s need for its own education policy was necessitated by the fact that a policy guides people in whatever course of action they take as a group or nation, and in making a policy, the individuals or parties involved do so to their own advantage (Summers, 1987; Hawkins, 1991). Botswana’s educational policy of 1977, was based on the National Principles of Botswana, which are Democracy, Development, Self-reliance, Unity, and Botho which cover the whole concepts of social harmony, social justice, mutual assistance and mutual responsibility (Republic of Botswana, 1977, p.24)

The aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which the Batswana have been able to actualise the national principle of Self-Reliance as a result of the current wave of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Botswana. The origins of internationalisation of higher education in Botswana and its effects on the educational system
and the way people perceive internationalisation of higher education in the country are also examined. The importance of internationalisation of higher education is critically examined, as they relate to Botswana and the practicalisation of self-reliance in their different life endeavours.

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Internationalisation of Higher Education is a phrase commonly used to describe the international dimension of higher education, and because it is often loosely used, it could mean different things to different people. Globalisation and internationalisation are now pertinent issues for higher education worldwide. According to Altbach & Tiechler (2001),


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This paper therefore examines the international outlooks of the institutions of higher learning in Botswana, and the contributions they make towards helping Botswana practicalise the principle of self-reliance as enshrined in Botswana’s Education Philosophy. It should be noted that while extensive research works have been carried out on democracy as one of the national principles of Botswana’s education philosophy, little or no research has been carried out on self-reliance aspect of the country’s philosophy of education. Linking self-reliance to internationalisation of higher education in Botswana will be an eye opener towards finding out the important and useful roles played by higher institutions of learning, towards the actualisation of the principle of self-reliance.

**Self-Reliance**

Self-reliance implies that the individuals and the nation at large should work hard to stand on their own. An average Motswana should be able or enabled to progress through self-help, hard work and personal initiatives (Iloanya, 2010). The country should be able to have its economy under local control by developing its own high level manpower. Being self-reliant however, does not mean that a country does not need the help of others, because no individual, community, institution or country can develop without support from other nations. Self-reliance requires that a country should strive and work very hard not to be heavily dependent on other countries.

As one of the principles of Botswana’s education philosophy, self-reliance means a lot to the Batswana. It is expected that the spirit of self-reliance will motivate them to take initiatives and be determined to attain high levels of success, without relying heavily on the government to do everything for them. According to the National Policy on Education (1977), communities and parents in Botswana must accept their responsibility for training of the young and the inculcation of the right values in their children. This will go a long way in helping the children to imbibe the resilient spirit that will help them embrace the zeal to be creative and self-reliant in life.

Self-reliance can also be promoted through the curriculum, by emphasising on the courses or careers that will equip the individual learners with skills and capacities that will enable them to be self-employed and establish their own businesses, in the event that they do not get employed by the government upon graduation from institutions of higher learning. While expressing the need for graduates’ employability, Botswana’s Revised National Policy on Education (1994) has as its main philosophy to establish the education that will prepare Batswana for the transition from a traditional agro-based economy to the industrial economy that the country aspires to (Republic of Botswana, 1994 p.5). The RNPE further stated that the Batswana need the type of education that will equip the learners with skills
and capabilities that will enable them to face the technological challenges of the 21st century. By acquiring skills in technical, vocational, business education, the graduates would be able to engage themselves in self-employment. As a result, self-study skills which encourage learners to be innovative, should be encouraged in order to enable them develop critical thinking skills well in advance, before facing the world of work.

In the light of all the above, this paper examines the role of internationalisation of higher education in Botswana towards the actualisation of the principle of self-reliance in their education philosophy, as espoused by the country’s education policy. It focuses on the nature of internationalisation of higher education in Botswana, the curriculum content and the staffing, as well as the impact on the actualisation of self-reliance in Botswana.

**The Origins/Roots of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Botswana**

Researches on internationalisation of Higher Education in Africa cannot be complete without looking at the origins of colonial education in the continent and the subsequent effects on the present wave of internationalisation and globalisation of higher education.

Zeleza (2013), points out that the internationalisation of higher education in Africa is not new, because the ancient universities of Africa, Asia, and Europe were designed and also served as regional communities of learning and scholarship. It further states that after independence many universities in the African context were international, because universities such as the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland were staffed by foreign academics that were largely drawn from the former colonial power, and they also attracted students from different countries in the region because of the shortage of universities immediately after independence.

Zeleza further explained that the current trends in internationalisation of higher education allow for perpetual global relationships, because the flows of students and academics to the north and the borrowing of institutional and intellectual models from the north have dominated the historic patterns of internationalisation for African higher educational institutions.

The origins of and development of the international dimensions of Botswana’s Higher Education dates back to the arrival of the various European missionaries who introduced western education to Botswana, alongside with the propagation of the christian faith. The institutions were modelled after the European interests and their purposes were geared to meet the needs of the Europeans in the colonies, (Kallaway, 1984). It is an established fact that the institutions whether church or state financed had been modelled on the educational systems that had been developed in the industrialised countries. Hence, the domination of English as the medium of instruction and research. All these point to the fact that developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic super powers of the west, Altbatch (2000).

Judging from the above it can be said that, there was a transnational and international undertone in the roots and growth of higher education in Botswana. The emergence of transnational higher education signaled a dramatic change in the nature and character of higher education. Knight and de Wit (1995) cited by Branch (2016) states that the international of higher education has historically followed four different dimensions:

a, activity—the internationalisation of curricular and extra-curricular activities such as international exchanges and joint research;

b, ethos –the creation of an international culture in an institution;

c, competency—the development of international skills and attitudes

d, process—the integration of an international dimension in all university programmes, policies and procedures. This paper looks at the further development of the internationalisation of higher education in Botswana as it concerns the realisation of the principle of self-reliance in the education philosophy of Botswana’s national policy on education.

**The Internationalisation of Higher Education in Botswana towards the Realisation of the National Principle of Self-Reliance.**

In 1977, Botswana launched its first National Education Policy, with the main strategy thrust of imbuing the local content into the policy. The philosophy was to promote social harmony, which the Batswana hoped would be achieved with the national principles of Development, Unity, Democracy, Self-reliance and later Botho, driving the philosophy (NPE, 1977). The curricula for tertiary and non-tertiary institutions were guided by the national principles of Botswana’s education philosophy.

The importance of Self-reliance as one of Botswana’s education principle cannot be over emphasised. The Batswana inherited an education system that was modelled along-side the system of their colonial master, and that did not fit well with the aspirations of the people. So, Self-reliance for the Batswana was a way of indicating that they had reached a stage where they could do it themselves, rather than having things done for them. That, in any
case does not mean that they do not need others in their lives, rather the help they ask from others should be the type that makes them better able to care for themselves. Unnecessary dependence dulls character and destroys personal freedom. Self-reliance comes with a major challenge, and that is determination and hard work, and human beings value whatever they must work for (Rweyemamm, 1992).

Self-reliance demands that people should spend more of their time learning to do practical work, participate and contribute to their own up keep and the development of the community they are part of. The educational system should give the people the opportunity to make the world and their own lives better. Self-reliance also brings out the spirit of clarity, initiative, invention and constructive activity from the individuals. Infact, it leads to self-realisation.

According to Nyerere (1967), education for self-reliance requires thinking, scientific and objective application, on the part of the individual, to problems of the nation. Practical oriented education, whereby the emphasis should be nation appreciates the inculcation of international dimension into its education system, towards the realisation of its education philosophy. As indicated earlier, the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education has as its aim, the introduction of technologically based education system which will help the Batswana to meet up with the challenges of the 21st century (RNPE, 1994).

To make the above possible, faculties such as Engineering and technology, Science, and Business have been established at the University of Botswana to help students acquire the skills and knowledge to enable them stand on their own, in the case that they fail to gain formal employment from the government upon graduation from the university. The newly established Botswana International University of Science and technology (BIUST) is also another giant step by the government to provide international education which will help the Batswana acquire skills that will equip them with the principles of self-reliance.

The emergence of private institutions of higher learning in Botswana, with diverse curricula aimed at equipping the graduates with skills that can help them to create jobs for themselves, is contributing immensely towards the actualisation of self-reliance in Botswana’s education. NIIT from India opened its doors in Botswana as a computer college, providing high quality computing skills to the students. From their modest beginning, NIIT progressed to Botho College in 2008 and now Botho University in 2013. They currently run courses in computing, accounting, business and education, and imparting skills in the students which could help them to be either employable by government or parastal establishments or self-employed. Other private sector providers of higher learning education include, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology based in Malaysia, with a branch in Gaborone; Gaborone institute of Professional studies; ABM University College; and Ba Isago University College. also enhanced the overall quality of the education system through comparison with other education providers from other parts of the world.

The Critical Theorists are however of the view that the current wave of internationalisation of Higher Education in Africa is geared more towards profit motives, than Engagement. Notwithstanding this view, internationalisation of higher education contributes tremendously towards students’ employability and prepares them to become global citizens.

**Conclusion**

This paper has shown that the internationalisation of higher education in Botswana dates back to the advent of colonialism, which influenced the curricula and the language used in schools then. Furthermore, the paper reveals that the national principle of self-reliance in the Botswana’s education philosophy is being positively affected by the internationalisation process taking place in the institutions of higher learning in the country. In Africa, practicability is needed more than theory; so, courses such as arts, crafts, entrepreneurship, computer studies, textile designing, pottery, among others, should be emphasised in the tertiary education curricula. Education for self-reliance rather than for employability should be given priority. One can be educated yet not employable, but with education for self-reliance, diversification and flexibility in job creation are promoted. It goes without saying therefore, that the international dimension as indicated by the curricula of the various institutions of higher learning in Botswana, have contributed tremendously in the actualisation process of the principle of self-reliance, as enunciated in Botswana’s education philosophy.

**References**


