

Management by Objectives (MBO) Imperatives for Transforming Higher Education for a Globalised World.

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This study was conducted to determine the extent to which the stipulations and visions of Management by Objectives (MBO) would be integrated in higher education institutions in South Eastern Nigeria to enhance higher education transformation in a globalised world. Four research questions and a null hypothesis guided the study. A sample of 510 respondents (15 Registrars, 45 Directors of programmes, 75 Deans of faculties/schools and 375 Heads of Departments) was selected through stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected through a 18-item researcher developed questionnaire titled "Management by Objectives Imperatives for Higher Education Questionnaire" (MBOIHEQ). Items in the questionnaire were structured on a modified 4-point Likert rating scale. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis. Findings indicated that in the views of the respondents, various MBO stipulations would be integrated in transforming the areas of administration, curriculum, quality assurance and committee works as well setting visions for future directions in the institutions. The acceptability of MBO was the same across the Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics. This implies that it is imperative to integrate MBO and improve the ability of the institutions to attain the objectives of higher education in Nigeria as well as compete favourably with other higher education institutions around the globe. It was thus recommended among other things that the management of the institutions should adapt and integrate MBO principles and practices so as to transform their institutions to compete favorably in a globalised world.

Keywords: *Higher education, leadership, vision, Management by Objectives, transformation, globalisation*

The world is witnessing global transformations in every area of life. Such transformation includes knowledge explosion, technological breakthroughs, emerging democracies, and information and communications technologies among others. These transformations influence human attitudes, world views, values and expectations for Higher education institutions in fulfilling national and international development objectives. The leadership of higher education institutions is responsible for channeling their institutions towards fulfilling these objectives as well as monitoring their efficient development. Therefore, it is unavoidable to ensure a dynamic leadership in the higher education system.

Among the means to achieving this, Management by Objectives developed by Peter Drucker promises to yield fruits as an effective model for such leadership.

Hence this paper presents the results of a survey conducted to determine the extent to which the stipulations, areas and visions of Management by Objectives (MBO) would be integrated in South Eastern Nigeria to enhance higher education transformation in a globalised world. Besides, the paper discusses the necessity of doing fundamental evolutions and changes in higher education plans of the country and emphasizes revolutionizing university leadership through MBO as an imperative.

The Need for Transforming Higher Education for a Globalised World

Higher education systems of the twenty-first century face challenges of fast changing environments for their products or services as well as challenges of large scale inter-organizational problems and issues. Numerous studies in the US, Canada, Australia, UK, Asia and Africa have identified the challenges to higher education (Chalmers, 2007; Modebelu & Anebi, 2012; Nayan, Samsudin, Othman & Tiung, 2012; Sanyal & Martin, 2006). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) stated that the world is undergoing dramatic and unprecedented changes in this age of increasing globalization. The knowledge and information technology revolution, as well as many growing social and economic trends, have changed how people live, how organizations do their business, and how well countries perform in the global economy. Key among such factors is the creation of a high-skilled workforce with the ability to access, adapt, apply, and create new knowledge and technologies. Bees and Dee (2008) indicated that national education and learning systems thus play a major role in improving a country's development and competitiveness. As Tahir, Shafkat & Mohammed (2008) rightly pointed out, it has become imperative for countries to create a competitive base not just of physical infrastructure and materials but of human skills on the individual, organizational, and community level. This implies new challenges for developed as well as developing countries' education and learning systems to educate more, better, and over the lifespan.

The global economy also needs a changing social class of workers, i.e., "knowledge workers," who make strategic contributions to the organization through rapid and informal team-based decision-making. According to Freedman (2008), these workers need to emerge from quality higher education systems, relying as much on creative solving and collaboration as on basic labor or professional training. Fostering quality education presents higher education institutions with a range of challenges at a time when the higher education sector is coming under pressure from many different directions.

Increasing challenges stem from global competition, a diverse workforce, diverse market demands, organizational structure changes, and fluctuating economies and markets (Bouce, 2003; Chalmers, 2007; Fife, 2003; Tabibi, 1997). Interspersed with these changes are the rapidly ever-changing developments in information technology with which organizations and their members need to become intimately involved for acquisition and processing of information from the internal and external environments (Bedard & Taylor, 2010). These challenges lead to real pressures to maintain sustainability in the world economy.

As a result, higher education institutions, and the people within, are pushed to produce continuously improving the quality of their services and products. They are asked to effectively manage people and resources while trying to maintain personal and organizational financial viability. Higher education institutions need to ensure that the education they offer meets the expectations of students and the requirements of employers, both today and for the future. As Hénard and Roseveare (2012) noted, higher education institutions are complex organisations where the institution-wide vision and strategy needs to be well-aligned with bottom-up practices and innovations in teaching and learning. Developing higher institutions as effective learning communities where excellent pedagogical practices are developed and shared requires leadership, collaboration and ways to address tensions between innovators and those reluctant to change.

UNESCO (2005) defines higher education as programme of study or training for research at the post secondary level provided by universities or other educational institutions that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent authorities or through registered accreditation systems.

Nigeria, like other countries of the world, has always depended on higher education as a precursor of scientific, technological, economic, political, and socio-cultural development. The government of Nigeria is committed to educational improvement and reform as a means toward national transformation and prominence regionally and internationally. This necessarily implies that higher education in Nigeria has to

be of quality, that is, it has to conform to certain acceptable standards in order to attain set objectives. Hence, higher education in Nigeria is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- contribution to the national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society,
- development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
- acquiring both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- forging and cementing national unity;
- promoting and encouraging scholarship and community service, and
- promoting national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2008).

However, for a long time, the attainment of higher education objectives in Nigeria has been very difficult. Widespread educational reforms introduced to achieve the set objectives have been difficult and challenging. Higher education has been accused of not living up to expectation. Nigerian economy, science and technology are grossly under-developed because the three providers of higher education (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) are not equipping the beneficiaries with the needed skills necessary for technological development. Onamade and Temitayo (2012) warned that this embarrassing situation poses a great danger to the nation particularly as poor quality graduates who are ill-equipped for the world of work are currently being produced. According to Modebe and Aniebi (2012), staff and students' indiscipline, inadequacy in quality and quantity of academic staff, personnel conflicts, inadequate funding, inadequate facilities, cultism, absenteeism, tardiness, poor teaching and learning environment, inadequate curriculum, obsolete equipment, poor

management techniques are evidences of the problems in higher education institutions in Nigeria. There are also problems of crisis in succession of vice-chancellors, strike-actions, sexual-harassment, drug-abuse, poor research culture etc. Given these problems, Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2012) observed that the state of higher education in Nigeria is yet to improve. Some of the problems being experienced today in higher education are management problems and would require the application of innovative management techniques to achieve quality and attain the aims of higher education. One of such management techniques is Management by Objectives (MBO).

Management by Objectives As A Transformation Process

The term "Management by Objectives" was introduced and popularized by Peter Drucker (1996), who stated that, "Objectives are needed in every area where performance and results directly and vitally affect the survival and prosperity of the business." It relies on the defining of objectives for each employee and then comparing and directing their performance against the objectives that have been set (Hassan, 2011; Paul, 1997, Rossi & Warglien (1999). It is also a process in which employees participate with management in the setting of goals or objectives. An essential feature of an MBO program is that it involves team work and staff in order to set concrete, objective goals for the employee's performance. A deadline is set for the measurement of accomplishment, and the paths to the desired goals and the removal of possible obstacles are discussed. After an established period of time has elapsed, the supervisor and subordinate staff meet again to review the subordinate's performance using the agreed-upon goals as a measuring stick.

In educational contexts, MBO involves a stream of objectives, decisions and actions of educational managers, which leads to the development of an effective strategy to help achieve educational objectives. One of the stipulations of MBO is that all managers in a firm should participate in the planning process and have specific objectives, in order to improve the implementability of the plan. Another

stipulation consists of cascading of organizational goals and objectives; specific objectives for each member, participative decision-making, explicit time period and performance evaluation and feedback. These stipulations are summed up by Fife (2003) who stated that:

Management by Objectives is an individual target-based system of compensation that assigns to each involved subject a set of targets to reach within a given working period (typically a year) and specifies some extra rewards (prizes) contingent to the fulfillment of these targets. Such a system of variable compensation aims principally to enhance productivity and working efforts of people subject to it, to shape converging expectations on future results between parties of the organization and to make compensation more flexible and variable (allowing partial risk shifting).

MBO is, thus, a technique, which empowers organizations to set and achieve their objectives by planning, organizing and controlling their resources meaningfully. It is a process involving the transformation of inputs in an effective and efficient manner to produce outputs. Based on a review of the literature, it is possible to identify a number of MBO steps that constitutes the conceptual framework for utilizing MBO to empower employees and achieve set objectives in line with global trends.

Conceptual Framework of the MBO Transformation Process

Although the steps involved in MBO may vary somewhat for the individual company, Wehrich (n.d) conceptualized the following to provide a logical framework for a focus on the MBO transformation process in terms of now the thrust of the discussion is on the traditional and more specific aspects of: setting objectives, of planning for action, implementing MBO, and control and appraisal.

1. Setting Objectives: Objectives are set jointly by the superior and subordinate. In MBO, the emphasis is on verifiable

objectives. That is, at the end of a period it can be determined if an objective has been achieved. Therefore, objectives should be stated, as clearly as possible, in terms of (a) quantity, (b) quality (c) time, and (d) cost. Objectives, then, should be measurable: i.e., contribute to objectives of the next higher organizational unit; focus on results rather than on activities; indicate performance and personal development; be challenging, yet reasonable; emphasize results, but not to the neglect of other important aspects of a job that cannot be quantified.

2. Planning for Action: Action planning determines what functions, tasks, and activities must be carried out to accomplish the objectives; how to achieve the objectives most effectively and efficiently; when the tasks and activities must be done; and who will do them. Action planning is therefore concerned with identifying and grouping activities; coordinating, vertically and horizontally, the efforts of groups and individuals; defining roles, authority, and responsibilities for each individual; scheduling the activities; and determining the need for human, financial, and other resources required to achieve the objectives.

3. Control and Appraisal. Control refers to the measurement of organizational performance, whereas appraisal, or more appropriately self-appraisal, emphasizes the evaluation of individual performance. Hassan (2011) added that a quarterly or annual review or appraisal is comprehensive and is done at the committees, department organization level. The actual annual results are evaluated against the set objectives. Such assessment is also used for determining targets for next year, for modification in standards (goals if needed, and for taking corrective actions in order to avoid deviations from predetermined objectives. Based on an

analysis of performance and deviations, positive steps can be taken to correct deviations and to prevent them from occurring in the future.

Studies in educational management have shown that the power of MBO to transform higher institution's management towards efficiency and effectiveness. In realization of the need to take advantage of the transforming power of MBO, tertiary institutions are expected to apply MBO in terms of formulating policies, capacity building, infrastructure, integration of staff and student personnel services, funding and research dissemination. The extent to which Higher Education managers agree with these expectations is the thrust of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The potentials of higher education in Nigeria as a vehicle for global transformation appear not to be maximally harnessed, as most tertiary institutions seem unable and ill prepared to face global challenges. Many higher institutions also appear not to reap the potentials of MBO to transform their administrative, academic and research work. One is therefore worried that the management of Nigerian tertiary institutions appear to be far from realizing the potentials of MBO and might not have made efforts to promote MBO adoption in these institutions. Does it mean that the imperatives of MBO are not acceptable to them? How can MBO be integrated in higher institutions in a globalised society to make clear what the institution's priorities and commitments are; provide a torch and touchstone that could be repeatedly used repeatedly to inspire, encourage and evaluate; re-focus energy when energy is being dissipated through rewards; be used as a measure by which the institutions wish to be judged and how can MBO be integrated to excite, inspire and concentrate the minds of all associated with the institution? These questions present the problems that propelled this study.

Research Questions

The following four research questions guided the study:

1. Which of the MBO stipulations does management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics agree that should be integrated in institutional management?
2. In what areas of institutional management should MBO be integrated in the institutions as viewed by management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics?
3. What is extent of agreement by management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics on the integration of MBO visions in institutional management?
4. What is the extent of acceptability of MBO imperatives for transforming higher education by management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the acceptability of MBO imperatives for transforming higher education management by management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics.

Methods

A survey design was adopted for the study. This study was carried out in higher education institutions in South Eastern part of Nigeria. There are five States in South East namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State with twenty-eight higher education institutions. The Federal government owns ten of the institutions, state government owns eight and private bodies own the remaining six. There are thirteen Universities, ten colleges of education/agriculture/technology and five polytechnics. The target population for this study consists of the management staff - these are persons who are in charge of making decisions. They include academic

administrators (Heads of academic Departments, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Institutes/programmes, and non-academic administrators (Registrars).

Sample and Sample Technique

Sample comprised 510 respondents selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The institutions were stratified according to institution type (University, College of Education and Polytechnic). Then through random sampling, two universities, two colleges and one polytechnic were obtained. This gave rise to six universities, six colleges and three polytechnics. Then from these institutions, a sample of 510 respondents (15 Registrars, 45 Directors of programmes, 75 Deans of faculties/schools and 375 Heads of Departments) was selected.

Instrumentation

Data was collected through 18-item researcher developed questionnaire titled "Management by Objectives Imperatives for Higher Education Questionnaire" (MBOIHEQ). Items in the questionnaire were structured on a modified 4-point Likert rating scale. Two experts in educational management and policy validated the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of the instrument was checked using the test-re-test method. To do this, copies of the questionnaire were administered twice in a three-week interval to a sample of 17 respondents (1 Deputy Vice chancellor, 5 Deans, 1 Registrar, 5 HODs, and 5 academic staff) from institutions outside the area of the study. On retrieving the completed copies of the questionnaire, the researcher collated the scores and analysed them using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher collected data with the help of twelve research assistants who are staff in the selected institutions. The researcher explained to the research assistants the objectives of the study, how to politely approach the respondents, the number of staff selected in each institutions and how to collect the filled copies of the questionnaires. Copies of the questionnaire were then distributed to the respondents by the researcher and the research assistants. After several attempts to retrieve the copies, 26 copies were lost and only 485 copies representing 95% percent were retrieved and used for data analyses.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean scores were used in answering the research questions. The questionnaire was weighted thus: strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point). The acceptable level of mean score was 2.50 and above. The three stated null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 significant level. The choice of ANOVA is because data was interval, and more than two mean groups were compared.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings of The MBO Stipulations for Integration In Institutional Management.

<i>Items on MBO Stipulations:</i>	\bar{X} UNIV	\bar{X} COE	\bar{X} POLY	\bar{X} CUM
1. Identifying environmental trends to drive the setting of objectives to meet new workforce requirements.	3.78	3.41	3.67	3.62
2. Instituting and monitoring administrative procedures for allocating responsibilities and resources to achieve set objectives.	3.56	4.00	3.77	3.77
3. Ability to understand and manage differences in staff competencies and needs for better goal attainment.	3.87	4.00	3.65	3.84
4. Rewarding resourceful staff and students for their contributions to the success of set objectives through memos and awards	3.89	3.77	4.00	3.88
5. Identifying management weaknesses and seeking how to transform those weaknesses into strengths	3.45	4.00	3.93	3.79
6. Focusing on designing successful, quality, high-level performance objectives into the administrative process	3.56	3.71	3.68	3.65
Average	3.69	3.82	3.78	3.74

Key: \bar{X} = Mean Score, UNIV= University, COE= College of Education, POLY=Polytechnic, CUM= Cumulative Mean

In table 1, the entire six items had mean ratings above 2.50 in all the columns. This means in the opinions of staff of Universities, Colleges of

Education and Polytechnics, the MBO stipulations listed in these items should be integrated in the institutions.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Areas of MBO Integration In Institutional Management.

<i>Items on MBO Areas:</i>	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
	UNIV	COE	POLY	CUM
7. Providing transformational leadership for continuous staff performance appraisal and improvement.	4.00	3.78	4.00	3.92
8. Devolving leadership responsibilities to departments/ units to work out modalities for achieving department level objectives in line with institutional goals	3.56	3.87	3.34	3.59
9. Setting up quality assurance systems for quarterly performance appraisal of set objectives	3.67	3.22	3.53	3.47
10. Enabling staff involvement in designing curriculum to enable them adapt the curriculum to individual contexts	3.87	3.69	3.43	3.66
11. Applying essential administrative skills to set clear, specific and measurable curriculum objectives	3.71	3.87	3.88	3.82
12. Assigning committees to evaluate the attainment of curriculum objectives for every academic session	3.89	3.77	4.00	3.88
Average	3.78	3.70	3.70	3.72

Key: \bar{X} = Mean Score, UNIV= University, COE= College of Education, POLY=Polytechnic, CUM=Cumulative Mean

In Table 2, mean ratings above 2.50 were obtained for the entire items in all the columns. This means in the opinions of management staff

of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, MBO stipulations should be integrated to the listed areas in the institutions.

Table 3: Mean Ratings For Integrating Visions for MBO In Institutional Management.

<i>Items on MBO Vision:</i>	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
	UNIV	COE	POLY	CUM
1. Fostering effective management/staff interactions to facilitate networks for open talk, sharing and collaboration on new visions and objectives for institutional growth	3.78	4.00	4.00	3.92
2. Working with staff to set missions, visions and values to drive future objectives of the institutions.	3.21	3.56	3.63	3.46
3. Communicating clearly to staff the core mission, visions and values for achieving set objectives at specific periods.	3.86 3.86	3.09 3.35	3.02 3.12	3.32 3.44
4. Designing and utilizing staff self-appraisals to review institutions strategic plans, visions and objectives	3.34 3.75	3.78 3.24	3.78 3.67	3.63 3.55
5. Integrating departmental level visions to prioritise tasks and activities to efficiently and effectively lead to goal attainment.	3.63	3.50	3.54	3.55
6. Adopt a new vision and philosophy of intolerance of poor service and complacency towards set objectives among staff.				
Average				

Key: *X* = Mean Score, UNIV= University, COE= College of Education, POLY=Polytechnic, CUM= Cumulative Mean

The entire items in Table 3 got mean ratings above 2.50 in all the columns. This means in the opinions of management staff of Universities,

Colleges of Education and Polytechnics, MBO visions should be integrated in the institutions as listed in the items.

Figure 1: Extent of acceptability of MBO imperatives for transforming higher education management by management staff of Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics.

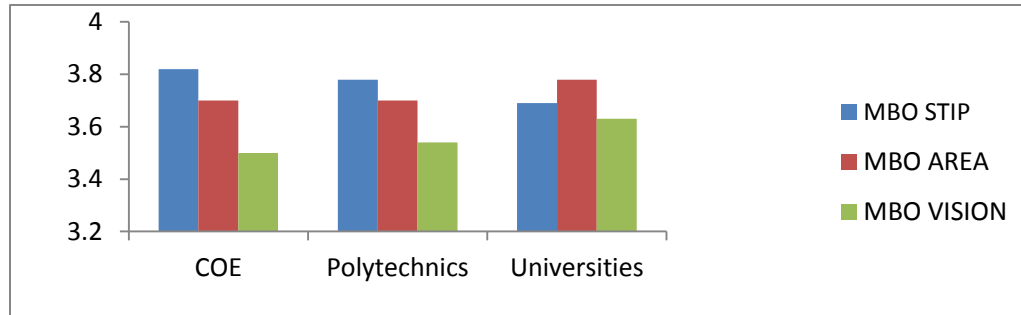


Table 4: ANOVA for MBO Imperatives for Transforming Higher Education Management

Source of variation	Sum of scores	Df	Mean square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Between groups	3.47	2	1.73			
Within groups	1107.07	482	2.30	0.75	3.00	Ho
Total	1110.54	484				Accepted

In table 4, with 2 and 482 degrees of freedom and at .05 level of significance, the F-cal is 0.75 while the F-crit is 3.00. Since the F-cal is less than the F-critical, the test is not significant and the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of management staff in Universities, Colleges of Education, and Polytechnics on the MBO imperatives for transforming higher education management.

Discussion of Results

Findings from the research questions identified several ways in which MBO can be applied for effective management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This implies that for the

realization of an effective and efficient organization, administrators agreed that both objective-based management and leadership are necessary. Hence, many of the stipulations of MBO would be evidently integrated in the management of the institutions. The MBO stipulations would be mostly applied to transforming the areas of administration, curriculum, quality assurance and committee works. This finding supports Dahlsten, Fredrik, Styhre, Alexander & Williander (2005) and Fife (2003) who advocated that MBO should be applied to all facets of an organisation. Hassan (2011) also pointed out that MBO could be used in providing an enabling organisational climate, improving staff behaviour through performance management, managing rewards, application of supportive supervision, mentoring employees

and organisational career planning. MBO as identified in this study could lead the management of institutions and staff to set individual objectives, put in more effort, time and interest into their work to achieve the objectives and to identify themselves within the overall goals of the institutions.

Findings also indicated that MBO integration would require the institutions to set future as *against now vision*. An institution with now vision lacks direction and future because the vision points to a future and the mission reflects the purpose or reason of the institution. Setting and fostering realistic vision as with the pursuit of any objective requires a realistic assessment of the starting point – the current level of quality – and a way to measure the progress made with a view to improving the future. Hence as Jacoby (2006) noted, MBO visions will involve systematic, planned, long-range efforts to make the organization more effective by improving future human and social processes within the institutions.

Finally, the acceptability of integration of MBO is the same for Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics that were used for the study. This is because no significant differences were found in their responses. By so doing, the respondents, irrespective of their institutions, agreed with Rossi & Warglien (1999) who saw MBO as a comprehensive managerial system that integrates many key managerial activities in a systematic manner and that which is consciously directed to the effective and efficient achievement of organizational and individual objectives.

As Weilhirsch (n.d) noted, for MBO imperatives to be implemented effectively, a number of conditions must be met. First, the management of the higher education institutions must not simply give lip service to MBO; they must be involved in the process. Second, the management must nurture and foster an organizational climate conducive to MBO philosophy. Third, objectives do not exist in isolation; they are interdependent. Therefore, coordination and a team approach must be used where appropriate. Fourth, objectives are based on premises that may change. Consequently, objectives must be reviewed from time to time, and MBO must be flexible enough to adapt to

unforeseen changes in the environment. Fifth, MBO must be understood by management and its institutional level stipulations clearly communicated to staff. Sixth, in most organizations, the implementation of MBO requires changes in the institution as well as changes in managing. Success in the implementation does not happen by chance; it must be planned. These would ensure successful and sustainable transformation efforts in Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics using MBO.

Conclusion

Management by Objectives (MBO) is one management strategy alongside others that would help to transform higher education in line with global trends. The management of higher education institutions in Southern Nigeria has agreed that MBO stipulations would be applied in the areas of vision, research, curriculum, innovative leadership and quality assurance to meet global challenges with the emphasis depending on the institution's mission and strategic objectives. It is imperative that these institutions implement MBO within the broader institutional context, closely linked to quality assurance mechanisms and supported by the development of suitable performance appraisal tools that are robust, reliable and meaningful. MBO procedure should be an imperative in the management of higher Education and every higher institution should uniquely design its own MBO procedure that will fit its specific need. The management of the higher institutions would involve other stakeholders to help to provide conducive environment for effective development and implementation of the procedure (i.e. in terms of funding, facilities). When these are done, the inputs to the institutions would be transformed through the MBO process to produce the desired outputs of Higher Education for a Globalised World.

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