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Chapter 1

Understanding the market in higher education in Africa

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Marketisation is the application of economic theory to the practice of higher education. This is based on the fundamental notion of the primacy of the market as a tool for business and strategic decisions. The market is the primary unit of focus as it determines supply and demand, while the ultimate goal is the maximisation of productivity and profit margins. However, there are persistent arguments against the marketisation of higher education. The commercialisation or commodification of education and its transactionalisation as a good to be sold by universities and purchased by students is probably the most prominent critics. The chapter theoretically explored the notion of marketisation and its growth on the African continent and discussed the six conceptual ideas had become well developed in the marketisation of higher education in order to provide a backdrop for the work covered in the subsequent chapters of this book. The concluding section of the chapter provides an overview of the chapters in the book.

Keywords: marketisation, marketing communication, branding, higher education, universities, Africa, edited book, introduction.

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Introduction

The African continent carries the blight of colonialism brought to bear by European imperialist countries. For centuries, European countries established colonies in Africa, ostensibly for spreading civilisation which was presented as a tool for modernisation on a continent widely considered dark, barbaric and uncultured. However, the major reason behind the imperialist project in the early 19th century was to expropriate the vast untapped resources of the continent, both material and human, to fuel the Industrial Revolution in Europe.

European countries scrambled for territories on the continent, plundering African resources with impunity. European settlers seized the most fertile land for highly successful agricultural production, much of which was shipped to Europe. Indigenous blacks were pushed into arid land in rural areas emptied of their mineral resources. Governments were set up by settlers right across the continent. These corrupt governments utilised both oppressive and discriminatory strategies to preserve and perpetuate white privilege, and dominate, oppress and subjugate the local populations.

The continent suffered intense epistemic violence (Mbembe 2016) resulting in total decimation of African traditional culture and values, indigenous knowledge systems, and the fundamental African sense of being. Even the dreams of people on the continent were captured, as Africans were taught to hate themselves and each other, to deprecate their sense of being, and to aspire to white values, culture, religions, education and other social values (Quijano 2007).

Set against this background, this chapter examines the idea of marketisation, how it emerged and settled in the higher education sectors of the continent, its emphases and omissions. Further chapters evaluate the extent to which Africa's brand of marketisation is a mere cut and paste job and the extent to which it promotes transformation and development. The following three factors are discussed in this chapter;

1. The notion of marketisation and its growth on the African continent
2. The conceptual field of marketing and marketisation in higher education
3. An overview of the chapters in the book

1. Marketisation and its growth on the African continent

Essentially, marketisation is the application of economic theory to the practice of higher education. This is based on the fundamental notion of the primacy of the market as a tool for business and strategic decisions. The market is the primary unit of focus as it determines supply and demand, while the ultimate goal is the maximisation of productivity and profit margins. Several arguments are advanced for the marketisation idea, the core of which includes the enhancement of quality as perceived by the consumers. This premise stands on the assumption that market-driven higher education is more responsive to the needs of students, parents and employers, and that the claims for quality are measured against customer and/or consumer satisfaction. The stronger the customer and/or consumer satisfaction, the stronger the claims of quality (Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon, 2011).

However, there are persistent arguments against the marketisation of higher education. The commercialisation or commodification of education and its transactionalisation as a good to be

sold by universities and purchased by students is probably the most prominent critics. Furedi (2011:17), for example, argues that: ‘The tendency to commodify education does not represent a triumph of free-market economics...’. Instead, it panders to often ill-defined and whimsical wishes and desires of consumers who may be more motivated by the ambition to obtain a qualification than the need to understand the requirements of an academic discipline. In Ancient Greece, Socrates and Plato argued that the Sophist philosophers who charged their students money in exchange for education compromised not only the relationship between student and teacher but diminished the value and sanctity of wisdom, something that no amount of money can purchase (Freydberg, 2008).

The marketisation of higher education in Africa is a more recent phenomenon compared to its emergence in the university sectors of the global north. Three critical developments led to its emergence in higher education sectors in Africa: the first of which was the emergence of neoliberalism.

Effectively, the rise of neoliberalism has decimated the traditional values of higher education (Olssen and Peters, 2005). The characteristic open debate and intellectual inquiry were replaced with managerialism, performativity, with emphasis on measurable outputs, strategic planning, customer satisfaction and the growth of profits.

In Africa, since the early 2000s, we have witnessed the growth and increasing significance of management positions at universities. The values of the pure pursuit of knowledge and intellectual growth have become eroded as those of business performance, and efficiency has taken over the higher education enterprise. Today, universities look just like any other corporate organisation, selling research and innovation and charging students exorbitant sums of money to attend lectures. We have also witnessed the closure of non-performing or poorly performing disciplines based on whether they were attracting sufficient students to ensure financial viability and not on the assumed significance of the discipline or subject. Physics and Engineering departments were among those that were closed at some universities in Europe for these reasons. Effectively, the uncompromising business gaze, not the pursuit of academic development, has infiltrated the higher education sector with a vengeance. On the back of neoliberalism, the economic importance of higher education thus became a more critical preoccupation of higher education than the academic and intellectual dimension.

After neoliberalism, the second critical development leading to the emergence of marketisation in higher education sectors in Africa was the Bologna Declaration of 1999. Affirming the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, the Bologna Declaration was signed at a meeting of 29 European member states who gave support to the significance and need for a highly competitive, connected and harmonised higher education space in Europe. It was also positioned as a blueprint for the development of higher education across the rest of the world (De Wit, 2007).

In part, the declaration noted:

A Europe of knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space (Mbembe, 2016).

Harmonisation of higher education systems across Europe, in terms of establishing a system of transferrable credits between institutions, was also seen as an essential dimension of the Bologna Process.

In Africa, following the Bologna Process, a flurry of replicative activities started taking place in higher education systems. Although there has now been as much development and success compared to the range and substance of activities in Europe, many universities in Africa have now embraced marketing offices on campus, established external relations departments, regularly conduct customer satisfaction surveys, and have well-developed student recruitment strategies. It is also safe to say that despite these developments on many campuses, the marketisation of universities has continued to be the subject of contention and critique.

The third force in the emergence of marketisation in universities has been the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (United Nations, 1995). GATS is a product of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which sought to liberalise and remove trade barriers between nations and to allow for the free movement of goods, services and people across the borders of nations. Education was identified among the 12 services sectors that required liberalisation. The mandate was to trade in valuable services and to export successful and profitable educational services. GATS has come under persistent criticism for providing a legal basis for commercialising and commoditising education, creating consumerism in higher education where degrees could be purchased.

2. The conceptual field of marketization

Six conceptual ideas have become well developed in the marketisation of higher education (Figure 1). This chapter will briefly focus on these in order to provide a backdrop for the work covered in the subsequent chapters of this book.

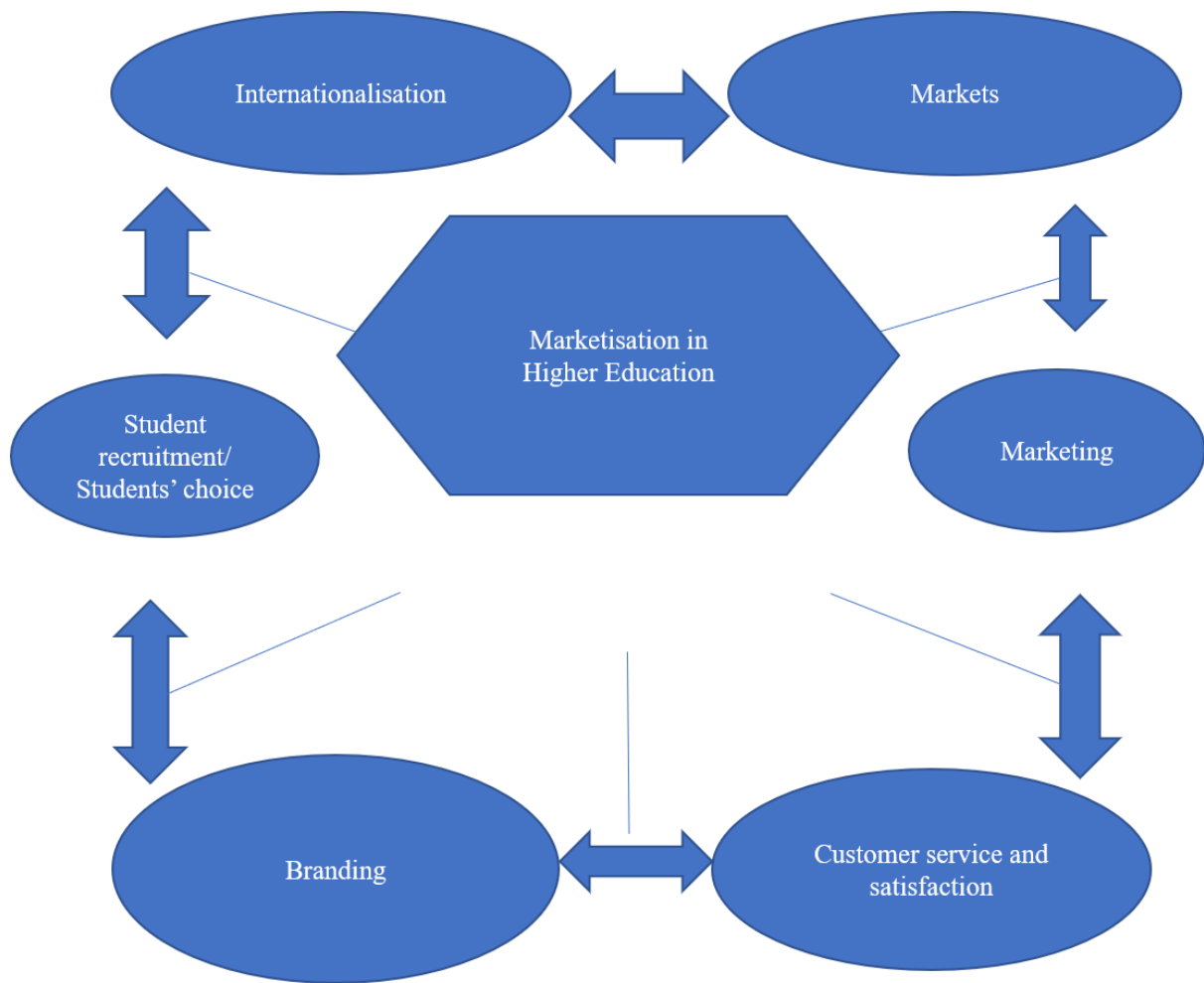


Figure 1: The conceptual field of marketisation

2.1. Markets

Essentially markets work on the principles of supply and demand. If there is demand for tertiary qualifications in a country or region, governments and private organisations work towards supplying the need by building new universities and other tertiary institutions. However, demand is not a monolithic concept. Students, parents, public services, private services, employers, employment opportunities, global trends in higher education and funding opportunities exert a combined influence on the decisions made by the government and other private organisations about both the nature and the scale of supply of higher education in a country or region. Thus, markets need to be segmented to have an in-depth understanding of their characteristics and how those characteristics could dictate the appropriate marketing strategies.

The higher education market, however, cannot be a pure market. At best, it is a quasi-market, whose mandate and operation is always carefully regulated and monitored by governments and other providers. In South Africa and other post-colonial countries, for example, government intervention is solely required to make sure that the poor can access higher education services, especially in times of increased cost of higher education. Indeed, the recent call by students for free higher education was, in part, a call for the government to mitigate the excesses of the

markets, which if left alone tend to widen inequality by making access and participation impossible for marginalised communities (Maringe, 2017).

2.2 Marketing

The concept of marketing, like philosophy and theory, comes with significant amounts of baggage. While philosophy is associated with thinking about thought, and theory is considered to be utopian and impractical, marketing is closely linked to deception by manipulating people's thinking about a product and influencing purchase decisions. For example, many students apply to universities that promise an amazing higher education experience. In many post-colonial nations, like South Africa, the phenomenon of graduate unemployment has become a reality. However, as Chiramba and Maringe in chapter 7 of this book, marketing is a value-creation process. It seeks to maximise the benefits that people anticipate from an exchange arrangement while minimising the difficulties they might experience in the process of empowering themselves. Marketing has been closely linked to advertising, although I must emphasise that the two are not synonymous.

Over time, the most widely used framework for creating value has been delivered through the 4Ps model: Place, Product, Price and Promotion. The idea is to manipulate these four elements to create the maximum value for the customer and the provider. In contexts that are more service than product-oriented, the 4Ps model (Gummerson, 1998) has been expanded to 7Ps (Ivy, 2001) (Figure 2).

There are arguments for and against considering higher education as a product or as a service. There is intangibility about what the product is in higher education. Indeed, there are tangible things such as books, lesson plans, furniture, computers and other forms of technology that we use when educating young people. However, these cannot be considered as the ultimate products of higher education. At best, they are a means through which we try to deliver other more essential outcomes. Therefore, it is rather difficult to pin down the product of higher education. For some, it is the wisdom and knowledge gained by learners, while for others, it is the opportunity that the higher education experience provides for young people to access jobs. For governments, it is the tendency for the population to adopt liberal, democratic values and the acquisition of various skills that enable people to become more economically involved and productive. One could say that at best, that the product of higher education is a rather delayed phenomenon. The experience is nothing similar to what happens when one purchases a product from a shop.



Figure 2: The 7Ps of services marketing

In addition to the 4Ps, services marketing introduces Physical environment, Process and People. In service focused transactions, manipulating these additional dimensions helps to enhance the value-creation process further. The argument against the marketing of education is precisely that: there is far too much sugar-coating that has been brought in to the educational space, which has nothing or very little to do with the development of knowledge and wisdom.

2.3 Customer service and customer satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction is central to the marketing model. The logic behind customer satisfaction is easy to follow: satisfied customers bring repeat business and, thus, more profits to the business. In higher education, satisfied students are likely to return for postgraduate studies and deploy word-of-mouth to speak well of the institution.

Broadly, customer satisfaction has four dimensions, which have spearheaded research and development in the field.

The first is customer expectation: the group of predictive factors used as a basis for determining strategies for meeting customer needs. In higher education, we could ask the question: How do students anticipate to benefit from the educational experience? We could then use these expectations to create the required educational experience and to measure satisfaction across the expectations.

The second dimension of customer satisfaction is the notion of value. This is closely related to anticipated customer expectations but differs from it in that perceived value is an assessment of the value of the educational experience. It is more of a post hoc assessment of the value customers and/or students anticipate from experience. Higher education means different things to different people. For many, it is a priority to be experienced early on in life. It is usually seen as the preparation for everything else that follows in life. For others, however, it is a diversion from the more important things, such as finding a job, getting married and raising children. In a study on non-participation in higher education, Fuller et al. (2008) found that there is a sizeable group of young people who see more value in not going to university in their youthful years, but remain with higher education aspirations as more of an end of life experience. Thus, the perceived value is time-sensitive rather than a fixed entity.

The third dimension of customer satisfaction is customer loyalty, which is measured in terms of commitment to the product brand, to involvement in word-of-mouth marketing and in recommending the brand to other people.

The final component of customer satisfaction is the customer complaints dimension, where customer complaints are measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. This dimension of customer satisfaction measures both the type and nature of the complaint, the frequency with which customers cite those complaints, how solutions are developed and implemented, and how the success of resolution is measured, amongst other things. Generally, the customer survey approach is most utilised, although focus groups, discussion boards and in-depth interviews are also used to assess the nature and resolution of complaints (Townley, 2001).

2.4 Branding

Branding and external relations are increasingly being used as premier approaches in strategic marketing (Kotler, 2012). In the highly competitive higher education space, institutions need to differentiate themselves clearly from their competitors. This is to access resources more efficiently and as a strategy to reduce competition (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). More funding follows universities that brand themselves as research-intensive institutions. Universities with a global or world-class identity also tend to stand out in the market place (Chapleo, 2007). Branding is a complex process, which brings together images and words to build an organisational or institutional identity, that makes the institution stand out from the crowd. Branding also recognises that no single institution can be excellent at everything, and no one institution can adequately address the needs of all customers. Institutions need to find distinct ways to position themselves in the market. Segmentation is an essential dimension of branding, as it identifies specific market characteristics that the organisation or institution proposes to serve. For example, successful distance learning institutions target middle-aged (who have probably realised the significance of further qualifications in their employment environments), working, (with a capacity to pay for the materials) entry-level professionals (who are still to achieve self-actualisation). In branding their institutions, they would use words such as ‘young’, ‘dynamic’ and ‘ambitious’ as these terms match the values of this group of young people.

2.5 Student recruitment and student choice

In an increasingly marketised higher education environment, the notions of student recruitment and choice have become central planks. As universities seek to break-even financially and even make a profit, securing income from student fees, either through government subsidies or

through direct fee payments, has become a central strategic goal for institutional viability. Fee increases have become the nemesis in many educational systems. They are criticised for widening inequality in higher education as poor students are muscled out of participation or forced into less prestigious institutions and courses, which charge lower fees. Either way, poor students remain the losers, as they are unable to access the most value-creating institutions. There is a broad raft of strategic recruitment processes that have been developed in the wake of the growing marketisation, including marketing to specific segmented groups based on highly specific strategies designed to meet the needs of those segmented groups.

On the other hand, student choice has become arguably one of the fastest-growing areas of research in the marketised higher education environment. Choice research, especially in the more developed world (Hemsley-Brown and Foskett, 2001), has identified specific areas that currently define the field. These include the context of choice, the choosers and their characteristics, the choice process itself and the choice influencers.

2.6 Internationalisation

There are many reasons why the field of internationalisation can be looked at as a separate discipline, independent of the idea of marketisation. However, the study argue along the lines defined by Knight and de Wit (2018), that internationalisation is a deliberate process of integrating international dimensions with the entire university programme. It is that, intentionality, which speaks to the objectives of marketisation. The intention is to bring to bear on the values and processes of universities, the eschewed values of successful international universities, most of which are in the west. Thus, it represents a silent call for strengthening the stranglehold of the western canons across universities in the rest of the world. The league tables unapologetically show that the most successful universities are located in the global north, especially in America and the United Kingdom. Therefore, those on the margins of the south, and especially those with a post-colonial history, are enticed to form partnerships with the western universities and in the process cement their dominance in the academy.

Key strategies used to internationalise have tended to include strengthening the recruitment of international students, students and staff exchange programmes, study-abroad programmes, the establishment of offshore campuses, and exporting entire university brands to regions with stable political environments, promising economies and with demand for higher education far exceeding supply. It looked at this way; internationalisation is a subtle strategy for strengthening the hegemony of the western canon and for imprinting the values of those institutions on the vulnerable institutions of the global south and post-colonial states.

The above thus constitutes what we believe to be the key areas around which marketisation in higher education has developed. The subsequent section now provides an overview of the contributions in this book. Using this framework, it is hoped, in the concluding chapter of this book, to be able to assess the growth and complexity in each of these areas, including what may be omissions.

3. An overview of the book

The book highlights a selection of 14 chapters. In the first chapter, the editors provide a broad overview of the idea of marketisation in the African context. We identify and critically discusses a conceptual field of six ideas, which define the field of marketisation. These include markets,

marketing, customer satisfaction, student recruitment and student choice, and internationalisation.

In Chapter 2, Sunday Olaleye, Dandison Ukpadi and Emmanuel Mogaji present an understanding of the market through an analysis of the Nigerian Higher Education System, followed by description of the private and public universities in Nigeria. The demand attributes of the market dynamics are also discussed, specifically, from the standpoints of student and parent decisions based on the fees, student satisfaction, experience and identity of the providers. Likewise, the supply attributes of the market, highlighting the role of the Universities are presented. Supply affected by the location, fees, service quality and completion is presented. The chapter concludes with implications on brand identity, marketing communications, and improving the student learning experience. The chapter contributes to and broadens the knowledge of higher education in Nigeria, explicitly highlighting the market dynamics caused by the demand and supply of higher education. Likewise, it offers practical implications for administrators, managers and researchers with an interest in higher education marketing.

In Chapter 3, Oluseyi Ajayi, Babatunde Abina and Azeez Lawal explore the role of governments in the marketisation of higher education. This chapter takes a holistic look at educational policy in Africa and why it has not achieved its objectives of making Africa a 'destination' among the comity of nations. The chapter itemises the key challenges and offers recommendations to reposition Africa in the global community.

In Chapter 4, Taiwo Soetan discusses the challenges faced by universities in Africa and examines the roles of governments and private organisations in resolving these challenges. The chapter addresses the challenges that higher education institutions in Africa face, the slow but positive changes taking place in these institutions, and the roles and responsibilities of African governments, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the many business corporations that are operating in Africa. These establishments face challenges that will fast track and enhance the quality and competitiveness of Africa's higher education institutions in becoming global solution providers. This will increase their marketing capacity in an increasingly global competitive field of higher education.

In Chapter 5, Adam Sirajudeen, Thomas Wayne and Emmanuel Mogaji discuss the interesting perspective of Islamic education as a significant market in the African higher education system. The chapter examines the establishment, administration and survival strategies of Private Islamic universities in a multi-religious society. An attempt is made to conduct a historical overview of Islamic universities, with emphasis on how their vision and mission, as well as day-to-day administration, are synchronised to survive the challenges of a multi-religious society like Nigeria. The chapter identifies a range of challenges that these universities face, including funding, curriculum content, integration of Islamic ideals and practices, and students' enrolment.

Samia Chasi focuses attention, in Chapter 6, on partnerships for student and staff mobility across universities. The chapter is divided into three main parts. Firstly, it conceptualises the terrain, providing an overview of the public higher education sector in South Africa and concentrating on issues relevant to higher education internationalisation in the context of national priorities such as transformation and decolonisation. The discussion includes a critical engagement with partnerships in the north-south context, highlighting the need that southern institutions have for more equal and balanced partnerships with their northern counterparts.

Secondly, the chapter addresses opportunities for partnerships with South African universities, with specific reference to the identified challenges. Taking the need for more balanced partnerships as well as South Africa's transformation agenda into account, this discussion focuses on practical examples. It shows how international partnerships can be more responsive to local needs, particularly regarding student and staff mobility, research collaboration and capacity building. Finally, the chapter considers practical implications and offers hands-on recommendations to institutions looking for South African partners.

In Chapter 7, Otilia Chiramba and Felix Maringe explore the extent to which universities create value for refugee students in higher education. Based on research for a doctoral thesis, the chapter identifies critical areas where universities fail to provide value for refugee students. In so doing, the authors argue, universities are complicit in widening opportunity gaps and in reinforcing disadvantage amongst the already disadvantaged.

Lovisa Nghipandulwa, Elina Amadhila and Ezekiel Kwembeya focus on marketing higher education through work readiness programmes in Chapter 8. The chapter, based on data from Namibia, explores several dimensions of this relationship including the marketing of graduate skills, marketing employability, and includes an analysis of several human demographic characteristics in the Namibian higher education markets.

In Chapter 9, Savdeep Vasudeva and Emmanuel Mogaji provide insight into how African universities are positioning themselves through their vision and mission statement. The chapter analyses the statements of top-ranking universities across Africa according to the Times Higher Education World Rankings, as an indication of their reputation and competition with other universities around the world. These top universities are positioned at the forefront to highlight the vision of African universities. The chapter contributes to the mission statement literature in the following three ways. Firstly, it provides qualitative insight into the vision and mission of African universities, extending knowledge about research on higher education in Africa. Secondly, it extends a theoretical understanding of the content and structure of vision and mission statements, which is relevant to researchers and practitioners. Thirdly, it provides managerial implications for university managers and administrators who need to revisit their strategic objectives or create new ones.

Temitope Farinloye, Ogechi Adeola and Emmanuel Mogaji focus, in Chapter 10, on how Nigerian universities position themselves in the increasingly competitive higher education market. The chapter aims to provide a holistic view of the higher education market in Nigeria by explicitly focusing on the universities. The chapter achieves this by, firstly, providing an insight into the ownership structure of Nigerian universities, identifying the role of the government, and private individuals and organisations in developing the higher education landscape of Nigeria. Secondly, the chapter discusses the heritage of Nigerian universities, highlighting development across eight different generations to the present. Thirdly, the chapter presents the structures in place for teaching and learning, based on the programmes being offered by the universities, an emphasis on the curriculum and meeting the human resources demands for the country. Fourthly, the brand identities of the universities are explored to understand better how universities in Nigeria are being branded with a named identity and the different approach adopted by the public and private universities. Lastly, the chapter explores the location and distribution of universities across the geopolitical zones of the country. It also seeks to identify the government's efforts to distribute universities across the country evenly and those of private individuals making investments to attract prospective students. The chapter

produces a typology of Nigerian universities in terms of their brand strengths and the potential value they create for society.

In Chapter 11, Ruth Kiraka, Felix Maringe, Watiri Kanyutu and Emmanuel Mogaji discuss the role of league tables and ranking systems. They argue that these strategies remove the focus from what matters for universities in Africa. The chapter identifies that more relevant measures of African university performance need to be developed around how universities grapple with poverty, inequality, corruption and governance issues. Criteria for developing measurement instruments for ranking African universities need to focus on these concerns.

In Chapter 12, John Boateng focuses on a customer perspective of the factors that contribute to effective marketing in higher education institutions in Ghana. Based on empirical research, the chapter identifies several factors that contribute to effective higher education marketing, including quality of service rendered, customer satisfaction and levels of staff expertise and competency. The chapter also reveals that needs and process-based motivation that play an essential role in reducing resistance to change and engendering employee support for the new market change process and strategy.

In Chapter 13, Elizabeth Ndofirepi, Temitope Farinloye and Emmanuel Mogaji focus on the idea of the marketing mix in an increasingly heterogeneous African higher education system. The chapter uses Ivy's (2001) 7Ps framework to underpin this analysis. A discussion of a wide range of challenges that universities face across the 7Ps marketing framework follows.

Lo Mbaye focuses on the challenges and opportunities for marketing Muslim Universities in Chapter 14. The chapter recognises that the rise of Muslim institutions of higher learning in the 21st century represents a significant change and challenge to traditional Muslim education. Although these institutions play an essential role in educating Muslims about their faith and providing them with crucial life skills, several important questions remain regarding the pedagogical vision of these institutions. This study examines these questions by analysing the processes and the discourse through which marketing model institutions have evolved in the 21st century.

The book concludes with a reflection on the contributions across this book. In the final chapter it was argued that, while the research covered in this book adequately represents the conceptual field of marketisation as discussed in Chapter 1, there does not seem to be a corresponding focus on the real challenges of the African continent. The chapter calls for a more context-specific marketisation of higher education to address the challenges of, for example, poverty, inequality, unemployment, corruption and climate change. Marketisation that ignores these typically African issues is not likely to serve the real needs of the continent but rather to pander to agendas of other global spaces.

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