

State of Higher Education in Libya: A Game Change Administrative Approach

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Mohammed Eshteivi Ahmouda Shafter

Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Azzaytuna University, Tarhuna, Libya

Cheptoo Ruth

ICCR Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education

Kenya Regional Institute of Education, Mysore, Karnataka, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0490-1696>

Abstract

Education in Libya, particularly higher education, has evolved with a myriad of challenges to the government, faculties, departments, teachers, students, and society at large. The growth in the expansion of universities and growth in the enrolment is commendable though still faced with shortcomings. Higher education is the level of education that can play a tremendous role in changing the face of education in a nation and bringing economic development into a nation. Libya H.E is the potential in changing the Nation to a twenty-first-century viable country. This paper discusses the education system in Libya, Higher education in Libya, higher education as a game-changer in Libya, and strategies to enhance Libyan higher education as a game-changer.

Keywords: Higher education, The game-changer, Competency-based curriculum, Competency, Libya.

Introduction

Libya is a country in North Africa, enjoys educational growth advancement, just like all other developing countries. The country got its independence in 1951, since then the education system has experienced changes both at the basic education level and higher education (H.E). The H.E in Libya student population stands at 270000, where the Arabic language is the main official mode of communication in the education system. Benghazi University (established in 1955) was the first-ever H.E institution, but since then, the country has more than ten public universities. Education in Libya is free to the H.E level. This aspect has greatly boosted the literate level of Libyan citizens. Though these remarkable changes in education, the educational program still suffers from a limited curriculum, a lack of qualified teachers, and a marked leaning to learn by rote rather than by reasoning. These factors ought to be eradicated if the H.E in Libya would improve the economic standards to the global heights.

The Education System in Libya

Like other developing nations, Libya views its education as a viable path to human and technological progress. The system is divided into elementary and university education. The elementary level consists of six years, three years in junior school, and three years in high school, where it specializes in Arts and sciences. The university education emphasizes on the student specialization. All the admissions to the universities are based on the higher pass mark at the secondary school national level examination.

Consonant with other countries, degrees are awarded at bachelors, masters, and doctorate levels. Libyan universities contain three major methods. These systems are Arts, Science, Technology, and Medicine. Graduation from a Faculty of Arts takes four years, Science takes five years, and Medicine takes intervening five and seven years (El-Hawat (2003).

Higher Education in Libya

Higher education in developed countries is directly associated with the job market real situation. Its value is highly looked upon to stir the economic and social development in the country. In Libya, during Italian rule, the country had no institution for higher education. The first institution in Benghazi was installed after independence. The faculties of Arts and Education were the first to be established, later on, faculties of science, agriculture, commerce, and economics, law and medicine were established in Tripoli with the intervention of UNESCO between 1955-1969. During the Gadaffi regime, more than eleven universities and over sixty technical and vocational institutions were established. Though these developments in university physical growth Global Competitiveness Report 2003–2004, which ranks national education systems, placed Libya 108th out of 148 countries providing higher education. Libyan higher education (LHE) falls in the bottom third of the countries surveyed.

The H.E sector has objectives and policies which are noble and viable to the development of the human resource in Libya. According to the Libya organization of policies and strategies (2016), the H.E should provide competitive education programs that uphold the development of skills that links quality education outputs to the labor market's needs—providing a stimulating environment for learning and scientific research including the development of infrastructure, regulations, administration, services, and information, where it should achieve international quality and accreditation standards in all academic programs and areas at universities. The Development of scientific production, supporting research programs, and encouraging creativity, innovation, and excellence in specific areas that serve local and international levels with attention

on the Arabic language, values, and ethics of the Arab Islamic civilization. Ultimately it should strive to strengthen the bridges of communication with the community and developing local, regional, and international partnerships.

Despite these objectives, it is unfortunate that the universities have no clear path in the how (implementation) of its mandate to fulfill the role to bring the change in the country. This has greatly seen the sector being continuously challenged and not attain their goals.

Libya H.E is facing a challenge regarding the poor curricula and teaching methods. Many of the teaching staff members in universities and institutes in Libya mainly depend on summaries rather than curricula and references, which may be expensive despite the book subsidy policy adopted by some universities and institutes and coupled with their poor English level. English as a language is a need to read main references related to the academic subjects addressed by the teaching staff members. There has also led to deficiencies in the activation of educational activities and student services and an inability to meet students' needs. Congress (2017) indicates a high rate of poor quality of education in Arab countries. The study attributed the causes of poor curriculum design and inadequate professional teaching staff. The professions had no sufficient competencies, such as critical thinking and problem-solving. There is a lack of educational planning that achieves integration between the primary and secondary education outcomes and the higher education outcomes and higher institutes and universities' needs of basic knowledge that students should have before going to university. The rampant cheating in secondary school exams, following in a high rate of admissions to universities and college where a large proportion of cheating students are unable to pass the introductory courses at the university level, resulting in problems such as overcrowding in classrooms in early years. Students' evaluation is based on theory exams, resulting in students' poor ability to deal with the practical reality in their majors after graduation. This has also contributed to the spread of methodology courses offered in most cases by graduates who teach students how to pass exams rather than teaching curricula. These have resulted

in poor integration between the higher education sector's outcomes and the labor market and the lack of a national economic and development plan through which can benefit from the university education outcomes, both by encouraging medium and micro enterprises and employing these outcomes in public bodies. Evidently, In a report published by EACEA in 2012, the summarized major challenges for HE in Libya as; Meeting the increased requirements for quality change in HE, Raising the quality of HE graduates and their abilities to take personal career initiatives, Accreditation and quality assurance of HE organizations and programs, increasing the use of IT in HE institutions and Strengthening scientific research in HE issues. Amid all these challenges, the Libyan H.E can play a vital role as a game-changer in the realization of development in the country (LOOPS, 2016).

Higher Education as a Game-Changer

The entire teaching and learning in the H.E institutions are depended on the expertise of the lecturers. For instance, the classes will compose of large numbers of students as oppose to the secondary school classes while the curriculum management and design will be at the teachers' exposition. This gives the lecturers the whole mandate to decide on what to be interpreted as being guided by departmental requirements. The teaching methods and methodology lie in teachers' understanding. These give autonomy to the faculties and the departments on what to teach. The discrepancy comes due to the missing link from the secondary education transition link to university education, which depicts the need for change in the curriculum.

In Libya, policy statements indicate the school's aims and goals. For instance, the curriculum must cover all the activities in a school designed to promote the moral, cultural, intellectual, and physical development of students and must prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life and society. Secondly, it should build knowledge and skills which enable children to understand a wide range of concepts and apply this inappropriate understanding ways. Thirdly, it should develop positive attitudes to learning in an environment which will preserve self-esteem and

confidence. As the world advances, the attitudes for the continued motivation in learning should be established and enhanced. Also, be able to develop as wide a variety as possible of all curriculum skills and knowledge necessary for everyday life. Lastly, develop a positive attitude to physical activity through participation in activities that promote confidence and self-esteem. Work in partnership with parents and the community to enable children to gain the maximum benefits from their environment.

The whole point of the educational goals in Libya calls for a holistic curriculum that develops a whole round individual to the global standards. The nations currently are thinking of the ways to fit its citizens in the global society. The applicability of the knowledge in the real world of task needs is emphasized. For the curriculum to be applicable, the learning should be majorly practical and learner-centered. The learner centeredness would mean the change in the teaching methods, teaching content, pedagogy, and evaluative approaches. Teachers ought to be updated in new methods to use on teaching-learning as per the needs of the learners. This fact is supported by a study by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006), which found that much of the Higher education learning is dominated by teacher centeredness. The student-centered approach should be encouraged where the learner takes on more responsibility for managing their learning; this would require a fundamental change in the way that university teaching is regarded as they suggest that students are given comments on their work, not grades, that they are allowed to resubmit work, that they understand their learning goals and are provided with documented information on assessment criteria, that they are given opportunities for reflection, provided with timely feedback and corrective advice.

These aspects fulfill the necessity of education to the function ability of the learner in outer society beyond the classroom. The connection and ability of the learners to skillful at the job market will entirely bring the need for education to be changed, especially at a higher level. The involvement of parental support will see the important role of the whole stake holders at the education. Society advances due to the graduate who will bring creativity and innovativeness into the community.

Strategies to Enhance Higher Education as a Game-changer

Libyan Higher education, as it is currently facing diverse challenges in its implementation. The challenges the educational programs in Libya suffer from include; limited and changeable curricula, a lack of qualified teachers (especially Libyan teachers), and a strong tendency to learn by rote rather than by reasoning, a characteristic of Arab education in general. These factors derail the curriculum from its value and actualization of the intended goals.

The Libyan curriculum ought to adopt a global way of implementation by incorporating the global language as a medium of instruction. Many students who get scholarships to oversee the country faces difficulties in the use of the English language. The use of English in H.E would increase the chances of more access to broader information by the learners. As observed by the World Bank Report (2006), it states a lack of diverse language has degraded the ability of students to flourish in the world arena as UNIGOV (2016) study observed that Libyan H.E has the potential to promote aspects such as; social mobility, economic growth, social cohesion, democratization, and innovation. These factors can be properly incorporated into the H.E system, either initiation of programs on acceptance of diverse culture. Whereby the student exchange programs can be used. Programs that involve community while promoting the societal awareness of the important role of H.E. Institution of H.E are set within the community and on this reason should initiate ways to which they solve the societal issues as it strife to emphasize the enhancement of employability level of graduates at the available market. Achievement of human development growth majorly is based on the involvement of all the entire active stakeholders to give direction and clarity of the market trends and needs. UNIGOV (2016) further indicate techniques that can facilitate the improvement in H.E in Libya. These include the use of continuous professional development for university faculty staff incorporated within the use of technology while adapting the curriculum to the international standards and linking them to the needs of the national economy and societal needs.

Secondly, the curriculum should adopt the essence of competency in the curriculum. Competency is the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that human force should have and establish to facilitate the ability to function appropriately at the job market. Competencies that other nations like Kenya emphasis in the curriculum include problem-solving and critical thinking, innovation and creativity, communication and collaboration, self-efficacy, learning to learn, citizenship, and digital literacy. Theses competencies can be incorporated into the curriculum. Competent individuals will possess the skills to perform on the tasks. The adoption of these inquiry approaches of teaching will demand the implementers' to improve on the teaching-learning methodology and adopt diverse learning platforms to bring the modernized teaching-learning methodology in the classrooms. The whole Libya H.E needs an overhaul to rethink to place its scale in the international competitive arena. This can be achieved if Libya considers implementing the call in Africa counties were in 2016 in meeting at Addis Ababa urged the governments to use at least 1% of the gross domestic product in improving research in H.E institutions under new Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025. The strategy urges countries to boost postgraduate and doctoral education, encourage international research cooperation, and expand centers for excellence and institutional links. CESA 16-25 goal is to produce efficient human resources that are adapted to Africa's core values that will enhance innovation creativity and entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

Libyan Higher education is a potential tool in the advancement and change agent into the education system. As discussed, the change in the curriculum will enhance the abilities of the graduates. The competency should be emphasized in the curriculum. Besides, the world is moving towards the global competitiveness for progress in all the nations.

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Author Details

Mohammed Eshteivi Ahmouda Shafter, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Azzaytuna University, Tarhuna, Libya

Cheptoo Ruth, ICCR Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, Kenya Regional Institute of Education, Mysore, Karnataka, India. **Email ID:** cheptoo.ruth44@gmail.com.