Inter-Play Of Institutional Mindset And Knowledge Management In Human Capital Development: A Critique Of Ivory Tower Syndrome And Disengagement In Cameroon

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Abstract: Recent debates on workforce development in knowledge-producing organisations cannot undermine the effect of mindset and knowledge culture of Universities gripped by ivory tower syndrome and spirit of disengagement. While acknowledging invaluable contributions of Cameroon Universities to labor market supply, the paper advances that mental dependence on ethnocentric epistemologies and delivery modes are responsible for employability crisis and knowledge deployment. The paper assesses the state of institutional mindset and knowledge management practices as determinants of human capital development within the BMD system, an indigenous knowledge framework. Analysis reveals that current state of disengagement has failed to embrace homegrown training values in bridging labor demand-supply gaps. A critique of training strategies reports policy gaps that thwart politico-academic ambitions of purported change-minded Universities to indigenize a workforce that can foster creativity and innovation. It submits that the epistemological dilemma in human capital development can best be resolved through the deconstruction of prevailing mindset and ivory tower syndrome through meaningful community engagement. Discussion advocates behaviour change as capable of bridging between exogenous and homegrown knowledge packages in creating useful organizational knowledge packages in competence building. Despite threatening global values, the paper proposes a demand-driven framework in churning out creative, flexible and resilient human capital capable of responsive knowledge deployment in any work situation.

Keywords: Disengagement, human capital development, ivory tower syndrome, institutional mindset, knowledge management

1. Introduction

Human Capital is a critical asset in the knowledge economy, and the fate of this capital at times depends on the inter-play of University mindset and its knowledge management culture and capacity. To [31] knowledge is the most important strategic asset in organizations, and an important resource for achieving sustainable competitive advantages. Today, growing debates on the knowledge economy highlight the role of human capital in knowledge management and the dependence of prosperity of organisations and nations on their capacity to manipulate knowledge. Despite the importance of human capital, it should be noted that its relevance depends of human capital development strategies. At the centre of knowledge management are knowledge production institutions in different categories. Among these facilities, Universities have been singled out as endowed with sophisticated knowledge infrastructures that can be creatively used to manipulate knowledge packages for human capital enhancement. One thing needful is that human capital processed through higher education production machinery should be responsive enough to emerging labor market challenges. Against expectations, it should be noted that the knowledge-generating capacity of most Universities in Africa has been affected by the ivory tower syndrome and ensuring spirit of apathy and disengagement. The ivory tower represents a space or a phase for noble people who are supported by its protection and comfort in the production of knowledge in a pure and neutral way and monopolized by the University [1]. Due to growing criticism of disengagement, University professors and students are streaming out of their institutions to directly tackle pressing community problems [15]. This is an opportunity since

University business cannot be isolated from community realities, and stakeholders in the bid to decolonize knowledge and dismantle the ivory tower syndrome require behavioral patterns that can effectively harness human capital. Moreover, traditional institutions having the primary task of conservation and transmission of knowledge have changed into institutions where knowledge is not only created but also put into practical utilization [15]. Despite external factors, emerging debates on knowledge management has recognized cognitive variables such as creativity, invention, innovation and mindset as capable of producing a resilient and optimistic human capital base. In the knowledge economy, manipulation of simple and complex knowledge uses ideas and requires maximizing human potential [38]. Therefore, the use of cognitive resources in problem-solving, and the agents' high mental functions such as learning, perceptions, memory and imagery are critical in knowledge management. This gives enough reason for developing human capital on an indigenous platform, where knowledge is generated, and produced in a utilitarian context. To [2] individuals generate, retain and use knowledge and skill, and the knowledge is enhanced through social capital in order to generate institutionalized knowledge possessed by an organization. This identifies University Institutions in Cameroon as capable of using available knowledge framework to create knowledge producers for necessary deployment within a context of labor market uncertainty. This draws from the observation that higher education contributes to economic development through the creation and dissemination of knowledge [2], and the development of human capital is highly productive to overall economic growth. Although, formal and informal knowledge structures contribute to knowledge management

and human capital enhancement, the role of the University as a higher institution of learning is critical in attitude change and skills upgrading. In this business, there is no time for any man to withdraw into some ivory tower and proclaim the right to hold himself aloof from the problems and the agonies of his society [35]. Thus, transcending the ivory tower into meaningful community engagement with societal realities is indispensable. Although many factors affecting human capital development have been identified, interaction of knowledge management strategies and institutional mindsets have been perceived as lodged in the ivory tower with properties that are regressive to human capital development. While efforts are being made to render conventional teaching and research relevant in Cameroon Universities, the paper argues that the institutions are gripped by the ivory tower syndrome with truncated attempts at deploying homegrown approaches to effective human capital development.

1.1. Universities as Knowledge banks and production organisations

Higher education refers to a class of educational institutions that are among the apex in the educational system of a country, and supersedes all others in the educational hierarchy of a nation [8]. Although many African societies have survived since time immemorial on indigenous knowledge values, African Universities as compared to indigenous learning systems are still grappling with people-centre knowledge as a framework for human capital development. These Universities as producers and exchange agents of knowledge appear to have shown timid, fragmented and desperate endeavors towards the production of meaningful knowledge packages that can generate relevant solutions to African labor market demands. The shift inside Universities toward more economic activities in the sense of knowledge production and commercialization is called the 'third mission' of Universities [14], and has competitive edges on human capital development through community engagement. Although dialectical forces of oppression and resistance continue to manifest, the development of coalitions regularly shake the ivory tower and holds the doors open to marginalized knowledge values [36]. It is therefore possible for Universities to explore and embrace homegrown knowledge values in workforce preparation. In search of culture-fit knowledge, activists have nurtured protests against addictive knowledge consumption and slavery in order to attain a reasonable degree of equity in knowledge management despite forces of resistance and oppression [36]. Today, the problem of knowledge management has at times been attributed to influences from global knowledge pressure, which at times is not sensitive enough to embrace diversities. This means that the creation and dissemination of knowledge remains hanging in the ivory tower, and such untested knowledge packages are void of ecological validity, and cannot be effectively deployed to resolve community problems. With the present drive, there is great interest in indigenizing human capital development in order to respond to local realities and tame the ivory tower syndrome. This revisits the traditional status of higher education in post-independent Africa as an effervescent hot bed of work aimed at re-appropriating knowledge and history [18]. In addition, the willingness to manage knowledge is influenced by cultural dynamics of a given context [32], and knowledge for competence development should equally draw from local realities. In this respect, University education was

considered a national think-tanker for all purpose of development and a solution to knowledge and skilled human power in managing and directing the economy [31]. As "knowledge banks" Universities have since then gained prominence as undisputable knowledge factories, and assert their authorities and responsibility for developing high level manpower capable for the labor market. Furthermore, knowledge resides in human capital and justifies its edges on performance and productivity. This applies to performance at all levels of national life, and expresses a need to invest in indigenous resources to develop a capable and willing workforce. Such a lofty and ambitious task can only be achieved if higher education promotes a growth mindset and appropriate indigenous knowledge values to transform Cameroon into a knowledge-based society. Although human resource endowment has remained almost untapped, human capital development has been given considerable attention in policy strategy. Higher education strategies advocate homegrown knowledge framework as capable of enhancing employability of young University graduates. Despite available policy instruments, success in upskilling the right human capital base depends on the power of institutional culture and mindsets of knowledge-generating institutions. This intention has long been expressed by the Cameroon Government through the University Reforms (1993), the Law on the Orientation of Education (2001) and the adoption of the Bachelor-Masters-Doctorate (BMD) system. The later strives to resuscitate indigenous knowledge values in its provision and as a first step, Universities have to transform their knowledge production machinery to churn out competent human capital. Presently, many opinions hold that Universities need a change of mindsets and must descend the ivory tower towards a more meaningful engagement with societal realities to build an effective and efficient human capital base. To [15] it is necessary to dismantle the image of the remote ivory tower and replaced it with that of an engaged and dynamic community of learners, and doers closely associated with institutions of higher education. This implies the interaction and filtering of explicit and tacit knowledge values essential in building relevant competence. In a bid to mainstream labor market competence, Cameroon higher education in 2007 adopted the Bachelor-Masters-Doctorate (BMD) system, a market-led reform which was perceived inter-alia as an indigenous knowledge framework capable of indigenizing human capital development. This was no doubt hailed in academic and political circles as an optimistic venture for building knowledge packages that can respond to graduates' labor market needs. In Cameroon, the missing link appeared evident, and proposing alternative paradigms became imperative. Among others, it was designed to facilitate effective transition of graduates from the University to work life. This was in agreement with one of the challenges of exposing the fundamental flaws in approaches to diversity [38]. The new system epitomized a framework for knowledge management, institutional mindsets analysis and mental reconstruction as key factors in effective human capacity enhancement. Consequent to apparent endogenous knowledge management deadlock, and employability crisis, the widening gap between University intent and employability demands appear outrageous. It is clear that high quality human capital depends on appropriate knowledge management strategies and mindsets of University institutions with a key link to societal realities.

1.2. Orientation of the study

The article discusses a range of concepts and theoretical underpinnings that provide the basis for the analysis of human capital development as a resultant of institutional mindset and knowledge management within the context of the ivory tower syndrome and disengagement in Cameroon. Although human thinking and actions have customarily been perceived as critical determinants of knowledge production and consumption, analysis witnesses a deliberate shift from individual to institutional mindsets. Despite the prevalence of ethnocentric dictates, the paper submits that knowledge management and fix mindset are capable of moderating human capital development in University organisations. It advances that the acquired wealth of nations is derived from the acquired abilities and this means education, experience, skills and health, and in investment in form of education and is critical. It argues that although human capital development depends on knowledge manipulation, the manipulation of knowledge to bring extra benefits depends on human capital ability and the later should be given enough attention. The paper discusses human capital development from the perspective of indigenous knowledge and mindset of Universities on an ivory tower. In this critique, the analysis needs to employ a degree of caution such that the process of dismantling the colonial and Eurocentric education with the "pedagogy of big lies", should not become a new form of fundamentalism [34]. A critique of institutional mindsets and knowledge management implies an assessment of the relevance of indigenization strategy in human capital upskilling, and this is the goal of the current study on the provisions and delivery modes of the BMND system. The core question is whether the adoption of foreign or local and integration of both epistemologies has achieved the intended goal of the framework. This implies University mindset and knowledge management strategies as basis for engagement in human capital development and demystification of the ivory tower syndrome.

2. Conceptual development

The section examines the main concepts and theoretical underpinnings underlying discussion in the present study. This is accompanied by relevant literature, which provides a firm foundation on which analysis of projected propositions of the paper. The primary concepts of interest are human capital development, knowledge management, institutional mindset, ivory tower syndrome and disengagement.

2.1. Human capital

It would be recalled that before the advent of human capital theories, traditional factors of production consisted of physical capital, labor, land and management, but these factors failed to adequately explain economic growth in certain instances. This is why the acquired wealth of nations is derived from the acquired abilities and this means education, experience, skills and health. Consequently, human capital theory emphasizes the benefits of education and training as a form of investment in human resources. At the same time human capital development depends on knowledge management, while manipulation of knowledge management in turn depends on human capital ability. Human capital has been defined in terms of investment in knowledge and skills acquired through education and training, which brings about extra benefits such as income and status in order to meet up with the cost of spending. To

[2] human capital constitutes a key element of the market worth of an organisation and consists of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in the institution. The current paper discusses human capital development from the perspective of indigenous knowledge and skills acquired through education and training. It assumes a fit between such knowledge values and survival strategies of local people

2.2. Human capital development

Strategies in human capital development are locked up in knowledge management strategies and institutional mindsets that are charged with the necessary transformation. This employability strategy involves processes that relate to training, education and other professional initiatives designed to increase levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an individual for necessary performance [20]. It requires the deployment of indigenous knowledge values in preparing creative competences that will respond appropriately to a diverse and threatening labor market. In this process, human capital development is a way to fulfill the potential of people by enlarging their capabilities through empowerment to participate actively in their own development [38]. This orientation stands to encourage people to identify their felt needs through projects and activities, and mainstream knowledge and skills that will satisfactorily respond to their demands and desires. As a driving force in economic development, higher education is an important form of human capital investment. Despite availability of structures, it should be noted that effective human capital development can only take place when the training institution is having a designer mindset, and where knowledge values are properly harnessed and disseminated according to labor market requirements.

2.3. Ivory tower syndrome

The idea of the ivory tower at its inception has been very useful in theorizing in view of practical applications. Moreover, it has been used as a symbol of nobility and designation of an environment of intellectual pursuit disengaged with local realities. This depicts a dichotomy between operations in the upper tier of the tower as opposed to day-to-day realities of ordinary living at the lower tier. [1] defined ivory tower as a socially constructed metaphor used to accuse science of keeping itself away from the everyday life; practical, real and concrete things in society. In the academia, there is interest on intellectual ivory tower (University), which is a place or atmosphere where people are happily cut off from the rest of the world due to scientific or intellectual pursuit. In general terms, the concept of ivory tower is used in a derogatory manner when referring to Universities, insinuating a separation from reality and practical concerns of the world. Furthermore, the tower is increasingly being pictured as a pathological place, a site from which only bad art and science could be produced by badly motivated people and having bad consequences [35]. This constitutes a form of abnormality suggesting that actors of the tower have statistically deviated from the realities of the society, thereby cultivating the ivory tower syndrome. The syndrome is a pathology associated with reverence or ineptitude to transfer knowledge produced at that ivory tower to solve societal problems. In-context, the syndrome holds that knowledge can be created and given to people on the other side for deployment in problem-solving. This is at variance with the spirit of co-production through genuine

experiential paradigms that promote engagement. This implies that the ivory tower metaphor separates theory, which is held at the top of the tower, from practice, which happens below the tower [1]. In demystifying the ivory tower syndrome, community engagement is essential in transmitting to students the "craft" knowledge of a profession through non-classroom projects, internships, case studies, and community-based projects [4]. In the process, scientists require inputs from local people and communities and this requires a high degree of genuine participation. Although the new pedagogy must engage in critical and diverse epistemic questioning of all knowledge while placing local context at the center (Savor, 2018), this is at variance with institutional practices in Cameroon since structures and processes have been gripped by the syndrome of the oppressive tower.

2.4. Institutional mindset

If human capital formation implies the need to construct institutions that permit and genuinely encourage participation [39], the role of University mindset becomes critical in the present discourse. Mindsets are sets of values, attitudes and beliefs about an object that are held by people, individuals and organisations. Fixed and growth mindsets have generally been identified. According to [6] a fixed mindset assumes that character, intelligence, and creative ability are static givens which cannot be changed in any meaningful way. By contrast, growth mindset has been defined by [34] as a malleable quantity that can be increased with effort and learning where challenges or setbacks are perceived as opportunities. Growth mindset allows knowledge managers to transcend momentary setbacks and focus on long-term goals. Individuals and institutions exhibiting growth mindsets would see themselves as capable of developing their abilities over time in knowledge management and human capital development. The concept of collective mindset is relevant considering that university institutions are groups with cultural values and collective minds. To [28] collective mindsets are important elements of cognitive and normative institutions, providing the cultural repertoire of how to perceive problems and how to solve them. Therefore, when university institutions embrace a growth mindset, their employees report feelings far more empowered and committed to examine issues in a progressive manner. This position holds that a mindset enables varsity institutions to sift information through cognitive filters or knowledge structures and deploy them in the process of producing human capital.

2.5. Knowledge management

According to [19] knowledge is information that is extracted, filtered or formatted in one way or the other for different purposes. It comprises a set of beliefs which informs decisions by agents to take actions that consume the agent's scarce resources [5]. Knowledge has been understood from the perspective of explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formal and systematic values that are rule-based application with appropriate procedures, while tacit knowledge is personal and context-specific information derived from experience. Knowledge Management is a concept that involves identification and analysis of required knowledge, and the subsequent planning and control of actions to develop knowledge assets to fulfill organizational objectives [19]. This also involves that systematic process of acquiring, organizing, and sharing tacit and explicit knowledge [31]. Sharing knowledge implies that it has to be used in problem solving ventures, and this has implications on knowledge strategies and mindsets of Universities in solving the problems of workforce preparation. Knowledge management is open to multiple epistemologies, which give access to alternative types of knowledge values with challenges and opportunities for knowledge management [5]. In this respect, capacity building in higher education helps to create conditions that enable people to derive maximum benefits through skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable people make things happen [31]. This justifies the very existence of Universities, and the realization of the traditional mission of teaching, research and support to development. In University institutions, knowledge production and dissemination cannot be effective without a realistic knowledge management framework that is sensitive enough to pull in both explicit and homegrown knowledge values. Although dominant exogenous impositions are prevalent, [37] cautioned that local knowledge is essential for empowerment because it represents successful ways in which people have dealt with their environment and increased their sense of independence and self-reliance. This has implications on co-management of knowledge by knowledge production institutions and communities that are end-users at the lower tier of the ivory tower.

2.6. The homegrown knowledge framework

The services of Cameroon Universities to the society, particularly in manpower supply have been appreciated, notwithstanding a popular outcry with regards to syndrome of the ivory tower and practice of disengagement. Recounting the important contributions of Universities to life, the ivory tower appears a pure myth that has grown up only in recent time, since the ivory tower was not a place but a phase and a moment in the making of knowledge and virtue [35]. The only problem is that the ivory tower has failed to protect necessary engagement with societal realities as originally intended. Nonetheless, the spirit of engagement is gradually resurfacing with alternative knowledge management frameworks in workforce preparation. Customarily, politico-academic discourses in Cameroon emphasize intellectual, mental and epistemological independence as critical factors in knowledge management and human capital development. Generally in African University community, the widespread call for decolonization of knowledge is long overdue [35] and many institutions are making frantic efforts to integrate homegrown knowledge values into mainstream knowledge flow. More so, this is in consonance with cultural realities that cannot be divorced from routine adaptability strategies of the people. In this respect, [15] intimated that a growing number of academics see community-engaged teaching and research as a pathway to higher quality teaching and research. It should be noted that from colonization to globalization, thinking and acting West has not severed the people from historic knowledge roots that have survived the people over time. This recognition necessitates a gradual shift from consumers of Western knowledge through adopters to producers of knowledge and technology. This requires a designer mindset and the creation of a unique workforce with behavioral dispositions capable of knowledge entrepreneurship, and indigenous science and technology. This is a major challenge to University mindsets

in Cameroon, which have historically been groomed along ethnocentric paradigms. Anyway, recognition of the present status expresses a need for paradigm shift towards mindset reconstruction and problem-solving knowledge through the re-appropriation of historic knowledge values. Despite this awareness, local scholars and professionals still face the daunting task of connecting their expertise to the hybrid cultural character of their communities [25], thereby nurturing the ivory tower syndrome and spirit of disengagement in University training. This is a crucial challenge to creativity and innovation in higher education production machinery particularly with regard to sustainable development drives. To [36] the challenge has called for an intimate connection between student and community, and the increased diversity of labor market demands has instigated the establishment of interdisciplinary programmes and diversity within University curriculum. The year 2007 was critical and is ever green in Cameroon higher education history, and marked another turning point with the introduction of the Bachelor-Masters-Doctorate (BMD) system by the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP). This was an Anglo Saxon academic system adopted in French dominated academic culture in Centre African region. The new University system was caricatured along French colonial legacy to foster knowledge and skills for graduates' unemployment challenges, yesterday in the public sector, and today in a private sector dominated by a survival economy. Curriculum innovations were effected with accompanying modus operandi aimed at facilitating Universities to descend from the ivory tower. It advocated a theory-to-practice experience and responsive knowledge generation capacity for young university graduates at risk of unemployment and underemployment. The advent of BMD was due to a series of fragmented endeavors with previous higher education initiatives that run short of meaningful community engagement. Furthermore, the BMD was instituted against a backdrop of pressure from internationalization of higher education, although resources were key challenges in its implementation. Despite the odds, going native implied an integrative perception of man and his culture, and in promoting employability in-context. As designed by MINESUP [21], the BMD aimed at generating knowledge and skills capable of responding to the complexities of the changing socio-cultural, economic and political context of the nation considering the following: 1) Development through contribution to national economic growth and the promotion of employment for graduates. 2) Social, cultural and human development through the training of a new generation of executives with appropriate citizenship training apt enough to respond to the challenges of the millennium according to National and Central African sub regional plans, and 3) Promotion of research training as a support factor in development in partnership with the economic and social milieu. The provisions reflected national character, and expressed a dire need for contributions from indigenous knowledge, local expertise and resources for Universities institutions. Moreover, it required a change in mindset and culture of operations of University institutions. It should be recalled that the new system was mandated to ensure professional training by creating a new generation of comprehensive, flexible certificates with potentials embedded in knowledge and know-how capable of adapting to the changing local and global environment [21]. Logically, such a holistic option

had to re-consider the appropriation of the people's wisdom within the mental frames of Universities. Furthermore, quality and professionalism had to be improved by diversifying professional training considering the job market and needs of the economy by reinforcing relationship with the necessary socio-professional settings [21]. From the spirit of the initiative, activities that could link Universities to communities included student volunteer programmes, service-learning, applied research and policy development, joint projects with external groups, and socially responsible institutional policies [15]. Transition from the University to work life was projected as a major preoccupation, implying changes in attitudes and behaviors towards contingent knowledge requirements as a basis for human capital investment. From the foregoing logic, institutional mindsets, exploration of local pathways and integration into mainstream academic life became an optimistic option in relevant human capital development within the new framework.

3. A critique of ivory tower syndrome in workforce development

In critiquing various forms of oppression in the academy, professors and others run the risk of being labeled "political" by detractors, but mainstream policies, practices, teaching strategies, and scholarship are riddled with political content [36]. This is evident with the present assessment, which is designed to shed light on hidden mindsets and biases in knowledge management and workforce preparation. While the policy for transformation of higher education was clearly in place, the actual transformation of the BMD as a relevant indigenous knowledge framework remained questionable. In its early years, [18] lamented that "Whereas in Europe, the reform still gives rise to controversy…most African states have taken steps in its adoption and are already in an advanced stage of its implementation" [18]. Such impulsive behaviors borne out of desperation, feelings of uncertainty to satisfy knowledge management and workforce preparation are usually void of critical thinking, conceptualization and effective decision making. Despite the system's drive to profoundly reform the educational system, [10] intimated that it was instead instituted more as an outlet for the long term University crisis since the 90s. As an instrument to serve politicians and power-seeking intellectuals, it became a psychological propaganda machinery to raise expectations, raise hopes and win public confidence for political and administrative gains. In addition, it became an image-making venture to feign knowledge independence despite its ineptitude to effectively crawl and stand in its infancy. Perceived as a responsive self-generating human capital development strategy, the system suddenly ran short of the vigor and rigor that it had at its inception. This raised pertinent questions pertaining to engagement with the realities of the community and employability of graduates. The market-led reform was characterized by multiplicity of teaching units and courses but for effective implementation, thus "an old wine in a new sheath." Faced with a choice dilemma, the ivory tower syndrome fuelled crisis of social relevance, confusion and reinforced white collar dispositions in graduates. This supports the thesis of [29] that the people of Africa have gone through a cultural and psychological crisis and have accepted the European thesis that the responsibility of economic backwardness lies in the generic backwardness of the black Africa race as compared to the

innate superiority of the "whites". To this effect harboring the system in a tower appeared to have alienated learners from experiential learning and knowledge designed for the beneficiary communities. The ivory tower is a place that actors should move beyond and get out of it into the streets, civic reality and connect with real life and real values [34]. Unfortunately this has been very timid in the process of implementing the BMD system in Cameroonian Universities. In terms of methodology, a demand-driven strategy was widely advocated to catalyze indigenous knowledge but the spirit of the system has not been imbibed, while lectures still remain a dominant approach in building competence. In such a context, knowledge is perceived as a monopoly of Universities and delivered by Professors who see themselves as all-knowing truth-tellers [11] while little room is allowed for critical thinking, and attempts at serious questioning rationalized away [34]. All time learning in "Amphi theatres" reinforced the psychological barrier between the perception of white collar and blue collar jobs [12] with dire consequences on creative and innovative abilities of learners. In this respect, [10] expressed regrets that that the appropriation of Cameroon BMD was hastily done against the background of contradictory and fragmented speed with inadequate resources. After 11 years of BMD adoption, the state of institutional mindset and knowledge management has raised skepticisms on its capacity to harness human capital for the Cameroon turbulent labor market. This is because the curriculum of African Universities continues to favor and reproduce Eurocentric knowledge and worldviews while other knowledge and worldviews are ignored, sidelined and/or devalued [33]. Although many factors have been blamed on this quagmire, knowledge-generating personalities as drivers of human capital development often find themselves in some type of hypnotic entrapment, confusion, destitution and desperation.

3.1. Psychopathogical experiences

Assessing human capital development on an ivory tower might be a difficult experience drawing in a lot of mental imbalances loaded with mental, emotional and behavioral deviations. This is explained by the fact that expressing unhealthy perceptions transgresses academic norms of "objectivity" into unpleasant emotions, such as pain, anger, frustration, compassion, joy, and hope [35]. At the dawn of independence higher education stood at the heart of all hopes of emancipation since the academia was perceived as a key instrument for gaining independence and for promoting African cultures and identities [18]. Aspirations were raised and expectations went high amongst stakeholders of higher education. Today, efforts to cameroonize higher education in certain instances as knowledge based institutions have instead met with resistance, creating feelings of skepticism and despair. Psychological distress has been created by anti-indigenous knowledge forces that discourage people from making use of their traditional knowledge in development [24]. This concurs with the view that colonial education and knowledge systems have instead promoted and imposed Eurocentric worldviews, erasing and subjugating indigenous memories and knowledge, while exogenous curriculum continue to degrade and dehumanize Africans [24]. In this light apathy, low drive and morale of actors of knowledge-producing institutions are characterized by the acceptance and promotion of consumerist mindsets, and consequent

addiction to foreign knowledge values and slavery. Despite theoretical orientation, BMD in practice has unconsciously devalued traditional African way of life with what [25] perceived as the superimposition of alien cultural fragments on indigenous systems. This is a direct threat to the discovery and growth of indigenous survival strategies for scientific validation, and summarized [29] as "education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment". Cultural attitude towards knowledge facilities have also constituted a factor in identity loss for African intellectuals and this is due to inadequate knowledge-generating infrastructures and real intellectual censorship [27]. Although education is the transmission of cultural values, unfavorable attitudes towards endogenous knowledge in higher education is regrettable, and this lacuna renders programs irrelevant and cosmetic [27]. It is clear that the tyranny of global knowledge flow cannot be isolated from mainstream dehumanizing mechanisms in human capital development in University institutions. [22] observed that cultural globalization contributes to the erosion of people's languages and culture with daunting effects on undocumented endogenous knowledge. Considering the ineptitude of Cameroon Universities to effectively indigenize human capital, Western values continue to be imbibed by students trained by Western-minded Professors as duplicators of knowledge. This is why [26] lamented that cultural emasculation has denied Africa both the capacity to generate, disseminate and adapt knowledge in an orderly and progressive manner and the establishment of a knowledge order that would have evolved systematically. Knowledge generated through collectivist modes are instead pigeonholed into "scientific boxes" and consequently stereotyped as primitive, backward, retrogressive and unreliable [12], [24], [25]. Consequently, this promotes western knowledge hegemony and superiority complex that is typical with Universities and professors craving for Western recognition, partnership and support. Eurocentrism in higher education has contributed to the maintenance of structural imbalances and deeply embedded inequalities since academia have denied African students the opportunity to liberate their minds and reach their dreams and aspirations [30]. In knowledge management debates, cultural globalization contributes to the erosion of people's culture engendering negative attitudes towards all things indigenous, such as traditional practices relating to health, education and agriculture [22]. This is expressed in the mindsets and behaviors of higher institutions addicted to Western academic culture. Institutional science is dominated by book based learning, which is detached from societal realities and taught in the context of a Eurocentric paradigm since majority of professors and researchers are foreign trained and tend to perpetrate the legacies of "scientific values". Apart from loss of identity, intellectual prowess and feelings of adequacy, such master-servant relationship promotes morale and psychological damage on knowledge recipients. Unfortunately, lukewarm attempts to reconcile global and local self particularly for those craving for "global identity" usually results to deep rooted personality crisis such as confusion, desperation, self-negation and guilt. Furthermore, lack of assertiveness reinforces feelings of self-doubt, inferiority complex and psychological dependence, rendering the African continent more vulnerable to forces of domination and exploitation [12].

This is the status of institutional mindset and human capital development with regard to uncritical Western intellectual journey. Appraising Africa's sorry state, [24] maintained that the collapse of self-esteem and efficacy has caused the continent to degenerate into a dependency syndrome as a helpless receptacle of both pity and charity from the West, and the emerging nations. From the foregoing analysis it is evident that the problem of the top and lower tier of the tower is more or less a psychological dichotomy resulting from mindset, and the ineptitude to inform theory with practice through engagement. Recognizing that the ivory tower is highly associated the University and academic knowledge produced to improve welfare of society [33], it is necessary to reflect on a systematic process of deconstruction through meaningful engagement with the society.

4. Descending the ivory tower

There are growing evidences that Universities today are mobilizing their human energies and expertise, while unconsciously rejecting ivory tower model to combat poverty, improve public health and restore the environment [15]. The issues raised herein appear anxiety-provoking, and Cameroon University institutions require an alternative view in training future workforce. To [1] actors need to climb down the ivory tower and worry about practical things that work and are useful to the community. Descending the ivory tower is not an art of eradicating existing knowledge values and human capital priming culture, but a process of deconstructing regressive properties that are counter-productive to workforce development. This decolonization project must lead to an academia that challenges the Western discourses and misconceptions that see the African continent as not more than backwardness, misery, starvation, and savagery [30]. The need to bridge knowledge cultures is not negotiable in global knowledge business, implying the critical role of knowledge management and institutional mindsets in streamlining responsive human capital and deployment. This calls for higher education to "mediate between local knowledge, which is highly contextualized and specific, and expert knowledge that is formalized, abstracted and refers to general laws to bridge the gap between these two cognitive frameworks" [15]. Despite the deep intellectual malaise in Cameroon higher education, the one thing needful is the understanding that traditional way of knowing is deeply rooted in institutional and individual mindsets, and harnessing individual mindsets will lead to a collective mindset. But it should be noted that changing positions is subject to tension of dissonance due to complex cognitive difficulties drawn from issues relating to perception, thinking, reasoning and attitudes towards endogenous knowledge. This justifies the explanation of [7] that issues of knowledge emphasizes much on cognitive constructivism, which places prime importance on the individual's role in the knowledge acquisition process. Considering knowledge as a schema with related networks, change strategies can only be examined within a cognitive constructivist framework [11]. This is a critical consideration and should be recognized in human capital enhancement. Despite the drive for self-reliance, [30] intimated that the movement to dismantle Eurocentric hegemony and decolonize higher education has been maintained only by a small number of progressive academics when it comes to knowledge generation, teaching, learning and research. This

is pathetic and expresses the need for more actors to join hands in the movement of the indigenous knowledge advocacy as a pathway to quality and relevance in human capital enhancement. In traditional higher education the knowledge crisis has been translated into behaviors implying a high degree of cognitive restructuring to shape knowledge-production behaviors in effective training. The primary step is to recognize the existence of a problem since Universities and actors are often characterized by denial and blind resistance to innovations. To [7] it is customary for individuals to encounter new information, notice discrepancies between their existing knowledge and new ideas, and reorganize their knowledge structures to accommodate new information. Although this is at times difficult to change due to institutional personality cult, recognition is an entry point to restructuring internal processes in shaping institutional mindsets that are highly influential to desired cognitive-behavior modification. The question of how individuals come to perceive, know, remember, and learn in knowledge business [7] is also a psychological business, and cannot be dissociated from the realities of the African personality. This emanates from the understanding that "African ways of knowing not only reflect the African worldview but they also define the African personhood" [4]. In freeing historic survival information from bondage, the Cameroon intellectual has been caught in total identity crisis fraught with regressive patterns. It is therefore possible to note that the lack of fundamental epistemological and curriculum change in the higher education sector was not accident, but for maintenance of whiteness, hegemonic institutional cultures, and the Eurocentric curriculum [24]. This reflects same on the outcome of investment, a workforce estranged from local realities that will do nothing but perpetuate and promote the culture of disengagement. A new attitude towards training approaches is consequential to mental liberation, and the facilitation of indigenous solutions to emerging human capital development needs. Understanding global and local attitudes toward the valuation of explicit and tacit knowledge is at times intricate because most researchers have been estranged from the lifestyle of the context in question. Anyway, a large body of psychological research targets attitudes and attitude change as impediments to change [36], and this is an entry point towards the assessment of knowledge attitudes in higher education institutions. Therefore, in order to build responsive competence Universities should draw from good practices to test and develop responsive models generated from the survival strategies of the people. In this process, students do not only gain experience using tools and techniques, but also learn about concepts not easily transmitted in the classroom [4]. This is how engagement with the community can deconstruct the ivory tower syndrome, and co-produce useful knowledge packages in the process of empowering University graduates for the labor market.

5. Mindset reconstruction

Illuminating psychological factors affecting mental and behavioral change towards local knowledge in education and training, and in creating awareness for necessary acceptance is very essential. This is because African higher education must be fundamentally transformed in order to rewrite histories, reassert the dignity of the oppressed, and refocus on knowledge production for the sake of the present and the

future [30]. Embracing indigenuity in human capital development encounters a lot of psychological barriers, drawing in mental reconstruction since cultural lenses are mental frames endowed with a reservoir of people's knowledge. Of critical importance is institutional mindset that is harnessed by the culture of operations of a given organization, which at times becomes regressive. It should be recalled that collective mindsets are important elements of cognitive and normative institutions, providing cultural repertoire of how to perceive and solve problems and any institutional analysis relies on assumptions about the underlying knowledge stocks in a given culture at work [26]. This is how approaches to competence development are framed and realized by University mindsets. Universities need to adjust towards meaningful exploration and discovery, and this requires a cooperate personality characterized by indigenous values that are motivating and innovative with a recommendable level of self-efficacy. This implies institutional agency, its human resource base with its own character conditioned by institutional culture. In this respect, "those who run educational programmes along the western models they have adopted are seldom tolerant of change, stimulation, provocation and competing prospects at any level" [26]. It is evident that uncritical resistance drawn from cognitive make-up becomes a key factor and demands purposive orientation towards the appropriation of relevant knowledge in workforce development. Institutional analysis therefore relies on assumptions about the underlying knowledge stocks in a given culture at work, and the collectively acknowledged rules in place [28].. Despite the multiplicity of knowledge promoters, the Professor is a main driver and influential, and expected to possess a growth mindset as per legitimate and expert powers in enhancing human capital. Consequently, a change in individual mindset will engender changes in varsity mindset to produce a creative workforce. Recognizing a new perspective and shifting from the orthodox perspective of "filling empty vessels" to work integrated learning as per the spirit of the BMD system appears a positive mental step. The role of professors should be redefined as capacity builders in a process informed and managed by the communities in which they work [9], and not necessarily teachers or lecturers. This will eradicate power differentials in the upper (professors) and lower (students and communities) tiers of the tower, which have become sources of psychological barriers moderating mutual trust and confidence among knowledge producers, consumers and human capital builders. As a community of practice Universities need to resource, validate and disseminate indigenous knowledge, and in this process, a growth mindset is indispensable. This will facilitate the realization of various community engagement and social responsibility programmes and policies in institutions of higher education and also elevate the institutions' public service missions [15]. Therefore, a change in mindset from the present fix to a designer mindset is essential in moderating destructive exogenous forces and integrating invaluable homegrown values in competence building. There is no doubt that Universities at times prescribe new readings and other materials, but the question is about the academics' attitudes to the readings, and to the new ways of thinking [30]. The personalities of some University Professors who manipulate knowledge in training human capital constitute a source of barrier, and this requires attention. The creation of alternative mindsets requires a shift from "education of

extraversion" [26] to that of inclusion and socialization where knowledge is externalized and shared through a collective and collaborative effort [11]. In descending the ivory tower, mental reconstruction is an indirect strategy to break the existing psychological barrier in capacity building that exists between institutional and popular knowledge in Cameroon. Apart from testing and validating classroom learning, community engagement facilitates the discovery of alternative knowledge values that are capable of informing learning in the amphi-theatres. In this respect, experiential mindset strategies are best achieved through project learning, field visits, internship, community based interventions and action research projects. Anyway, it should be cautioned that indigenization is not limited to localization and requires flexible thinking and paradigms to draw from global forces and inform the caliber of human capital fit for the global knowledge economy. The Cameroon BMD system portrayed strong feelings towards the creation of job creators, implying generic employability for a flexible and optimistic workforce, and these expectations reside in attitudes and perceptions of learning actors. Creating producer mindset implies the need "to provide the opportunity and resources for social debate, discussion, and collaborative knowledge construction" [11]. This involves cognitive and behavioral dimensions of knowledge management and institutional mindset change, which are indispensable ingredients in creating reflective graduates as knowledge creators and problem-solvers in their contexts and beyond.

Conclusion

The appalling situation of trained people is exacerbated by the scarcity of culturally sensitive and contextually tuned human capacity to stark African realities (Nsamenang, 2005), and this is the main preoccupation of Cameroon Universities. In the current paper, the voices of struggle presented here are both analytical and emotional, and provide critical perspectives that embody the potential of an ivory tower (Stockdill & Danico, 2012). This tower, both lower and upper tiers are critical in mindset construction, knowledge management and workforce preparation, if properly harnessed. Within the context of internalization of higher education, the paper has expanded drivers of workforce preparation isolating indigenization of knowledge and mindset as core factors in in human capital development. To Savo (2018) a decolonized curriculum will place Africa in the center of teaching, learning and research and incorporate epistemic perspectives, knowledge, and thinking on an equal footing with the dominant Western canon. Western epistemology has over the years been presented as a universal monocultural science to the detriment of popular knowledge, and this has been dehumanizing and oppressive to the higher education sector. Problems of man power development are not just limited to infrastructures but the state of intellectual know-how and mindsets, and this is where the real problems of human capital development reside. Considering that "an important aspect of empowerment is the acknowledgement of people's local knowledge" (Fathali et al. 2001, p.94), solutions to Cameroon's accelerating human development crises can only come out of its own roots, and not from dominant Western stereotyped implanted interventions in Universities. This is the very essence of a people's life and power, a viable instrument for their own liberation and Universities should recognize such knowledge powers and give them a technical

and meaningful touch through situated interventions. This expresses well intentioned advocacy from the current state of disengagement to engagement while solving societal problems and building human capital. Moreover, higher education can boost its identity and preserve its image and corporate personality by changing from knowledge dependence and loyalty to a productive culture of self-reliance (Fomba, 2009). This responsibility lies in the hands of the community, lecturer and students because they are key actors of knowledge management and deployment in problem-solving processes. Considering that global and endogenous knowledge values often collide, producing a new generation of flexible graduates with a growth mindset sensitive enough to appropriate knowledge values is a priority. Since most job-relevant knowledge must be learned on demand (Fischer, 1999), a new approach to learning should be constructivist in style where knowledge is not simply transferred to learners, but constructed by learners within a socio-cultural matrix (Nsamenanag, 2005). One main feature of human capital development associated with knowledge and technology advancement is the spirit of scientific inquiry. An aggressive market and policy-driven research on different dimensions of situated knowledge to solve emerging diversity problems is indispensable in strategizing for human capital enhancement. Adjustment to change can only be demonstrated with a shift in emphasis from research of prestige to applied problem-oriented policy research that is likely to be used in policy formulation and execution (Sihna, 1986). University institutions need to abandon the slave mentality born out of ideologies and creeds for relevant explorations and discoveries in training for labor market demands. In this respect, higher education will no longer confine itself psychologically in a very narrow grove with a limited view of reality on labor market demands, and will no longer hang on the ivory tower and reinforce disengagement. As educators and scholars, professors have a profound opportunity and responsibility to speak out and to take action   against social injustice both outside and inside the academy (Stockdill & Danico, 2012). This depicts the present critique of mindset and theoretical knowledge flow from the ivory tower that does not respond appropriately to societal demands. This makes reflections on diversity approaches for creativity and innovation training imperative to develop local expertise. This is a daunting task and Savor (2018) advised that knowledge activists must continue with activism and critical engagement until University cultures and curriculum are fundamentally trans-formed and decolonized. This is challenging but achievable when institutions and individual actors develop designer mindsets, demystify the ivory tower syndrome through meaningful engagement.

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