

ENHANCING STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY AS A CATALYST FOR SUCCESS IN COMPUTER-BASED TESTING: POLICY INSIGHTS FROM AL-HIKMAH UNIVERSITY

BY

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Abstract

In this paper, the author investigates Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin policies framework and how the digital assessment practices, student development, and global engagement are influenced by the institutional policies in the context of the Nigerian higher education. Based on the recent Nigerian academic literature and institution practices, the research examines the major policy aspects such as quality assurance, integration and computer-based testing (CBT) and information and communication technology (ICT), entrepreneurship education, moral education, and inclusive education, and research and international cooperation. The discussion reveals how Al-Hikmah University has been able to control the institutional development and at the same time maintained the academic standards with organized quality assurance measures and staff development. The paper also illustrates that the ICT and CBT policies of the university extend past the provision of infrastructures to focus on the readiness of the students, their digital confidence, and transparency in assessments. Besides, institutionalisation of entrepreneurship and vocational education is more of a practical response to the problem of graduate unemployment and is national development-focused. Moral education, as well as the inclusion of the concept in the policies of universities, emphasizes the promise of the comprehensive development of students, who are not only academically competent but also ethically sound. Research development and international collaboration is also found in the study as the key policy tools in achieving the enhancement of the institutional visibility, sharing of knowledge, and capacity building of the staff and students. In general, the paper shows that the policy orientation in Al-Hikmah University is a rational and context-related model of the governance of a private university in Nigeria. The results have provided viable lessons to policymakers and university leaders who want sustainable, value-based methods of developing the higher education system.

Keywords: Students' Self-Efficacy, Success, Catalyst, Policy Insights Computer-Based Testing

Introduction

High rate of adoption of computer-based testing (CBT) in assessment practices within universities of Nigeria is a very important paradigm shift in determining student learning in Nigeria. This shift has been necessitated by institutional factors like the necessity to increase the efficiency of the examination, minimize malpractices, enhance the processing of results, and keep pace with the best practices in the area of digital education across the globe. Although the technological and infrastructural conditions of CBT have received much consideration, very little focus has been given to the psychological and behavioural issues which intermediaries the participation of students in computer-mediated assessments. Student self-efficacy is one of these determinants that have proved critical in the success of computer-based testing environment. Self-efficacy means the belief of a person on the ability to plan and execute activities necessary to accomplish the specified performance results. In the academic environment, self-efficacy has been empirically associated with motivation, persistence, engagement of the mind and academic success. The self-efficacy in the context of CBT is not limited to mastery over the subject but also to the skills of using digital interfaces and coping in computer-mediated settings, time management, and overcoming problems with technology. Nigerian research has also established that with higher scores on computer self-efficacy, students experienced lower test anxiety and higher engagement in tasks and better performance outcomes on CBT test (Balogun and Olanrewaju, 2021; Afolayan, Yusuf, and Adebayo, 2022).

Regardless of the fact that CBT is widely used in Nigerian universities, the level of digital competence and confidence among students can be characterized by high differences. The differences in the information and communication technologies exposure, the disparities in the background of the secondary schooling and the socio-economic disparities still affect the readiness of the students to computer-based exams. Studies have shown that less technologically exposed students are more prone to computer anxiety and performance inhibition despite their otherwise sufficient academic performance (Lawal and Ibrahim, 2021; Adeyemi and Akindele, 2023).

The institutional policy structures are influential in the experiences of computer-based testing by students. ICT training policies, student orientation policies, mock examination policies, technical support policies and examination management policies can either empower or undermine self-efficacy of students. There is an indication that in the context of higher education in Nigeria, where institutions have well-organized CBT preparation programmes and favourable policy climates, institutions are less likely to experience student anxiety and more likely to have higher levels of assessment credibility (Bello & Sulaiman, 2024). In turn, a relationship between institutional policy and student self-efficacy proves to be a significant field of scholarly research. This is especially needed at Al-Hikmah University where CBT has emerged as the prevailing method of assessment to assess the degree to which institutional policies contribute to or limit the self-efficacy of the students. Being a private university, which functions on a heterogeneous social-economic background, the institution has to juggle between technological innovation, and inclusive support systems, which will ensure learners with different degrees of digital preparedness. The analysis of CBT in terms of self-efficacy and policy gives a chance to stop the technical analysis of the assessment systems and to consider the student success more comprehensively. The paper will thus examine student self-efficacy as a driver of success in a computer-based testing with particular focus on policy implications of Al-Hikmah University. Placing self-efficacy in the context of a policy-focused effort, the study will add to the expanding range of Nigerian research that supports the notion that psychologically relevant and policy-based practices to the implementation of educational technologies should be applied. This is necessary in order to enhance the quality of assessment, foster fairness, and the validity of computer-based testing in higher education in Nigeria. Student Self-Efficacy: Theoretical Enlargement and Nigeria contextualization.

Concept of Student Self-Efficacy

Student self-efficacy has continued to be one of the main psychological constructs in the modern research in the field of education, especially in explaining the variation in academic performance that is evident among learners possessing similar cognitive abilities (Yusuf, Afolabi & Olabisi, 2023).. In addition to confidence, self-efficacy is an indication of the strong beliefs of the students on their ability to organize, manage, and perform the necessary steps to successfully complete given academic assignments. Such beliefs affect how the learners tackle learning scenarios, the ambitions they have, the strain that they exert themselves, how they respond emotionally to problems and how they continue to work despite being in difficulties. Student self-efficacy has been a growing focus of scholarship in the Nigerian educational setting, particularly in the shift to technology-mediated instruction and assessment of schools and examination agencies. Empirical findings of the recent studies conducted in Nigeria indicate a consistent pattern that the students with the high efficacy beliefs tend to be more academically engaged, resilient in the situation of pressure, and possess better learning outcomes than the students with low efficacy beliefs (Adeyemo & Ogunyemi, 2021). This highlights self-efficacy not as a personal characteristic, but as a fundamental psychological resource, which intermediates teaching, assessment forms and educational changes. Self-efficacy is deeply grounded in the Social Cognitive Theory introduced by Bandura and this theory holds that learning is the result of a dynamic interaction between individual factors, behavior patterns and environmental outcome. In this sense, students are not passive receivers of the instruction but active factors who interpret experiences and control their learning behaviours respectively. Thus, self-efficacy influences cognitive judgments of tasks, emotional reactions, and behavioral decisions of students.

Another important aspect of self-efficacy is that it is task and context-specific. It is stressed by Nigerian scholars that students can show high self-efficacy in the traditional paper-and-pencil test settings and at the same time low self-

efficacy under the computer-based testing (CBT) conditions because of low digital exposure or test anxiety (Sadiq and Lawal, 2022). Such a difference is especially pertinent within the context of Nigeria, whereby differences in technological accessibility within areas and school types still influence academic experiences of learners. Self-efficacy is high and adapted learning behaviours like sustained effort, strategic studying, self-regulation, and help-seeking. On the other hand, the low self-efficacy students tend to evade the hard work, develop more anxiety, and lose motivation when faced with a challenge (Akinwale and Olatunji, 2020). These processes contribute to the reasons why self-efficacy is coming to be regarded as a key indicator of academic achievement in particular in tasks of high stakes and technological mediation. According to Bandura, the four main sources with the help of which self-efficacy beliefs are formed have been empirically verified in the environment of Nigerian schools.

Mastery Experiences: Experiences of mastery represent the strongest source of self-efficacy. In the Nigerian classroom, repetitive performance in academic tasks like solving mathematics problems, passing continuous assessment, and passing mock exam performance strengthens the idea of students that they are competent in academics. Research carried out in public high schools in South-West and North-Central Nigeria shows that an organized practice experience, specifically, CBT simulations, affect the academic and computer self-efficacy of students in a positive way (Ogunleye and Babatunde, 2021).

Vicarious Experiences: Learners also form a personal efficacy when they watch those students who perform well due to their endurance. Peer modeling is important in Nigerian schools, particularly when the classes are big in size and there is a minimal teacher-learner interaction. A study by Musa and Abdullahi (2022) proves that by seeing students of similar ability achieve academic activities, students become more confident in their ability to achieve and thus get more motivated and better engaged.

Social Persuasion: Social persuasion is encouraged by teachers, parents, and school authorities through encouragement, feedback and verbal reinforcement. The studies in Nigeria highlight that teacher feedbacks, relationships with mentors, and positive school leadership all have a positive impact on the academic self-efficacy of students (Adebayo and Salami, 2023). Scholars, however, warn that social persuasion works best in combination with actual skill development and unrealistic praise without support in the form of instruction may be only limited or even short-lived.

Physiological States and Affective States

Self-efficacy beliefs are also determined by the way students interpret stress, anxiety, and emotional arousal. In Nigeria, where the examination stakes are great, like in the case of WAEC, NECO and JAMB especially in CBT formats, the issue of test anxiety is a major problem. It has been empirically indicated that students who view physiological arousal as evidence of excitement or preparedness to learn better than those who view it as evidence of incapity (Lawal and Sadiq, 2021). Stress management and familiarization with exams interventions have thus been found to promote self-efficacy and performance. An increasing literature on the Nigerian population supports the nature of the association between student self-efficacy and academic performance. As Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2021) discovered, academic self-efficacy was a strong predictor of achievement among senior secondary school students even when it was adjusted by intelligence and socioeconomic background. On the same note, a research carried out in the Katsina State indicated that self-efficacy, in addition to personality characteristics, had a significant impact on the performance of students in English language (Yusuf et al., 2023). At the tertiary level, the research indicates that undergraduates who have a higher scholastic and computer self-efficacy show a greater commitment to online study systems and improved academic outcomes (Ibrahim and Mohammed, 2022). All these findings are indicative of the idea that self-efficacy is a psychological mediator between teaching situations and learning performance in Nigerian education.

Assessment of Self-Efficacy Measurement and Practical in Nigerian Schools

Self-efficacy in Nigerian studies is usually assessed with domain specific measures, as in academic self-efficacy and computer self-efficacy scales. Researchers stress the need to adapt and validate these tools to the local circumstances

and reflect the local realities, language diversity, and assessment system (Olatoye and Aremu, 2020). It has been suggested that task-level measurement is especially appropriate to use in CBT settings. Measuring the confidence of students when using discrete skills, like mastering how to navigate the interface of a test or time management, or reviewing answers, gives actionable information in designing interventions. Mixed-method techniques consisting of quantitative scales and interviews in qualitative techniques contribute to the knowledge base by showing how students perceive feedback, peer comparison, and anxiety in their particular institutional settings.

Student Self-Efficacy Determinants

There are various contextual variables that influence the contextual development of self-efficacy in the Nigerian students. Availability of learning materials, being exposed to technology, instructional styles by teachers as well as being in an institution most importantly are all factors that contribute to the key elements. Students in schools with frequent ICT exposure and conducive learning climates are always reported to have high self-efficacy compared to students in under-resourced settings (Ogunleye and Babatunde, 2021). Moreover, educational policies with orientation programmes, mock examination and responsive technical support minimize the uncertainty and anxiety, consequently leading to mastery experiences and a strong self-efficacy belief.

Computer-Based Testing (CBT) in Nigerian Schools

Computer-Based Testing (CBT) is described as administering, marking and handling tests using digital and computer-based technology instead of the conventional paper and pencil system. CBT methods normally entail the utilisation of networked computers, specialised software and automated scoring systems to administer tests in a controlled setting. In Nigeria, the engagement of CBT is a major departure in the culture of assessment since there is a necessity to have efficiency, credibility, and consistency with international best practices in educational assessment. CBT has become so dominant in Nigeria that one can closely attribute this situation to the move by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) to grant total recognition to CBT when conducting the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in 2013. Many universities, poly-techniques and colleges of learning have ever since adopted CBT in the internal assessment system. Scholars in Nigeria are more likely to envelop CBT as a strategic solution to some of the long-standing problems within the education sector, including examination malpractice, slow turnaround time, and ineffective administration (Oladipo & Adebayo, 2020; Afolabi and Ajayi, 2023). Various practical and policy decisions have underpinned the increasing use of CBT in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. First, CBT makes the examination process more efficient and faster. Automated marking allows quick processing of marks, so the delays so characteristic of manual grading systems are reduced (Olatunji and Adebayo, 2022). Second, CBT improves transparency and credibility of assessment. CBT minimises examiner bias and possibilities of manipulating score by minimising human involvement in the process of marking and utilisation of standardised algorithms. This has rendered it especially appealing in a situation where the societal belief in examination procedures has never been very solid (Ogunlade & Aremu, 2021). Third, CBT is scalable. Nigerian universities tend to be faced with large populations of students and CBT enables the large populations of candidates to be tested in a limited period of time through multiple sessions and randomisation of questions. Lastly, CBT implementation brings Nigerian higher education to the standards of global digital learning, evaluation and quality assurance, which serves to support the country's involvement in the global knowledge economy (Balogun, 2024).

Also, the growth of CBT in Nigeria requires a conscious focus on the policy of psychological preparation of students. By creating assessment systems in which scaffolding of practice, formative feedback, and increasing tasks of difficulty are possible, students are able to add mastery experiences. The normalization of success through peer-led demonstrations and mentorship programmes, combined with the promotion of vicarious learning, and the reinforcement of credibility of social persuasion through empathetic invigilation and effective communication, all contribute to increasing the persuasiveness of the message. To ensure that self-efficacy gaps do not mirror more socioeconomic inequalities, equity-oriented policies entail accessing devices, having good connectivity, and incorporating inclusive test design.

The Benefits of Computer-Based Testing

The delivery of immediate or timely outcomes is considered as one of the most obvious benefits of CBT. This does not only alleviate the anxiety of the students due to waiting long queues but increases confidence in the equity of the examination system (Oladipo and Adebayo, 2020). CBT has also been depicted to minimize examination malpractice. Collusion and impersonation opportunities are greatly limited because of randomised question banks, time controls, and secure logins that are far more restrictive than traditional tests (Olatunji and Adebayo, 2022). Also, CBT promotes flexibility in assessment formulation. The examiners are able to use multiple-choice items, matching, scenario-based case construction, and a simulation that will enable the more thorough testing of the cognitive ability of the students. Notably, CBT yields a lot of data that can be analysed by the institutions to determine performance trends, gaps in the curriculum, and policy implications in enhancing teaching and learning (Afolabi and Ajayi, 2023).

Problems of CBT in the Nigeria

Although CBT implementation in Nigeria has many advantages, there are still difficulties associated with the implementation process. One of the significant issues that have been frequently raised in the literature of Nigeria is poor infrastructure. Irregular power supply and poor internet connectivity usually interrupt examination sessions, especially in universities and institutions that are not situated in major urban centres (Ogunlade & Aremu, 2021). The other major problem is the digital divide. Rural or low-income students often find themselves in universities without much exposure to computers and thus they are disadvantaged when undertaking the CBT exams. Research has demonstrated the performance of computer literacy and previous digital exposure to play a significant role in the performance of students and their confidence in CBT settings (Balogun, 2024). Technical failures including system crashes, login errors, or server overload when taking high-stakes exams are other factors, which cause student anxiety and scepticism of CBT reliability. Besides, the differences in institutional policies and standards of CBT implementation introduce discrepancies in the experiences of students in Nigerian universities (Afolabi and Ajayi, 2023). Nigerian studies in the recent past offer empirical and theoretical research concerning adoption to CBT. Oladipo and Adebayo (2020) discovered that CBT improves the credibility of examination and administrative efficiency but highlighted that it needs a strong ICT infrastructure. According to Ogunlade and Aremu (2021), computer literacy of students is a significant predictor of CBT performance, which supports the importance of organised digital training programmes. On the same note, Olatunji and Adebayo (2022) noted that CBT minimizes malpractice in exams, but the technical issues that persist may compromise the confidence of the students in the system. Afolabi and Ajayi (2023) highlighted the importance of well-defined institutional policies in promoting equity, accessibility, and predictability in the process of implementing CBT. In more recent research, Balogun (2024) showed that, in CBT, computer self-efficacy is a moderating factor in test anxiety, which revealed the psychological aspect of using digital assessment in higher education in Nigeria. The key to CBT is to maximise the benefits and this is only achieved by focusing on capacity building by carrying out regular orientation programmes that empower the students with computer literacy and digital confidence. Infrastructure such as access to good electricity, internet access, and fully equipped CBT centres is important. No less significant is the necessity of the inclusive policies to enhance the needs of the disadvantaged and help students, such that the CBT does not contribute to the further inequality in the education. Ongoing review and assessment of CBT practices will help institutions to understand the gaps in operations, tackle the emerging challenges, and enhance the general validity and efficiency of digital assessment systems in Nigeria.

Al-Hikmah University and Quality Assurance on CBT Policy

Quality assurance is still one of the pillars of the policy structure of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. Since its beginning, the institution has sought calculated measures that would strike a balance between growth and education standards. The main policies are focused on the regular review of the curriculum, adherence to the National

Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation standards, and the constant professional growth of academic and non-academic employees. These are in line with national requirements of the private universities working in the highly competitive environment of higher education in Nigeria. The development of Al-Hikmah University as a small student body at its birth to more than 13,000 students has been done without sharp erosion of the academic standards. The same growth trend is not only indicative of a deliberate policy move to institutionalise internal quality assurance units to keep a watch on teaching effectiveness, assessment credibility and relevancy of the programmes. As noted by Yusuf (2025), these internal mechanisms are necessary in the case of the legitimacy and public trust in the education system of the country in terms of the private university. The empirical research findings of the Nigerian higher education are supportive of the idea that strong quality assurance policies are positively correlated with graduate employability, reputation of institutions, and stakeholder trust (Adewale and Ojo, 2021; Nwankwo, 2023). Focusing on ensuring quality assurance, Al-Hikmah University increases the level of credibility of its degrees and places its graduates in the most favourable positions in both domestic and international labour markets.

In a reaction to the digitalization of evaluation practices in the Nigerian universities, the Al-Hikmah University has made massive investments in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. The policies of different institutions encourage the incorporation of e-learning platforms, digital libraries, ICT literacy programmes and computer-based testing (CBT) at various faculties. These are policies which conform to national and international trends of assessment systems which are technology-driven. Studies on the Nigerian background show that institutional ICT policies and computer self-efficacy of learners have a great bearing on the performance of students in CBT settings. Balogun (2021) and Ajayi and Salami (2022) state that positive ICT policies minimize the test anxiety, increase fairness, and enhance efficiency upon assessment. The focus on digital preparedness of Al-Hikmah University reflects the awareness of the university that the effectiveness of CBT should not be reduced to the provision of hardware but also to the training, orientation, and the clarity of the policies. The effectiveness of such policies can be seen in the increased transparency of assessment, acceleration of processing of results, and increased confidence of students in online settings. With the growing usage of CBT in internal and external exams as a method of assessment in higher learning institutions in Nigeria, the ICT-focused policies of Al-Hikmah place its students in a competitive stance in a technological-reliant economy of the globe. Entrepreneurship education has a strategic place in the policy of Al-Hikmah University especially in the Abdulraheem Oladimeji Centre of Entrepreneurial and Vocational Studies (AOCEVS). The program is consistent with the national policy proposals on how universities should tackle graduate unemployment by training innovative and independent graduates as opposed to job-seekers. Compulsory entrepreneurship and vocational classes open students to the realities of practical skills in business planning, financial literacy, innovation management, and vocational competency. Nigerian researchers also maintain that entrepreneurship education makes graduates more flexible and robust in the unstable labour market in Nigeria (Olawale and Garba, 2020; Eze and Mohammed, 2023). The policy approach taken by Al-Hikmah University is a pragmatic reaction to the socio-economic conditions in Nigeria where formal jobs are still scarce. The university is helping the country achieve its development objectives and economic empowerment of its youngsters through institutionalisation of entrepreneurship education.

This motto of Al-Hikmah University, Learning for Wisdom and Morality, is not just symbolic because it is incorporated in its institutional policies. The university is mindful of promoting moral education, ethical behavior and inclusion across the teaching, governance and student life. These are policies that are guided by the Islamic values but are also open to students of different religions, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. According to Oladimeji Talibu (2022), holistic development (through integration of intellectual competence with character development) is supported by value-based education policy in faith-based Nigerian universities. Such policies would be like a balancing force in a national context where an issue of moral decline and social responsibility as a counterpoint to the purely utilitarian approach to education. The effect of the policies of Al-Hikmah on moral and inclusiveness policies is manifested in the form of disciplined campus culture, moral consciousness among learners as well as the graduation of socially responsible and academically competent graduates. This is consistent with the

larger Nigerian education aims such as education about citizenship and reformation of morals (Okeke & Sadiq, 2021).

The other important dimension of the policy orientation of Al-Hikmah University is research and internationalisation. The university facilitates research, industry affiliation, staff exchange programmes, and international linkages of academics through the Centre of Research, Industry Linkage and International Cooperation (CRIIC). These policies are an indication of the increasing appreciation of the need to make research visible and global within the context of higher learning institutions in Nigeria as critical antecedents of institutional relevance. In their view, Nigerian researchers say the policies of the international cooperation promote the output of research, the capacity building of the staff, and the exposure of students to the best practices of the world (Adekunle & Hassan, 2020; Bello & Yusuf, 2024). Through connections, both with the local industries and international organizations, Al-Hikmah University makes knowledge transfer and innovation stronger. The resulting effect of the same is the enhancement of culture in research, high output in publications, and exposure of the institution beyond Nigeria. These policies enable students and staff members to have a global exposure, network professionally and exchange ideas. In general, the policy framework of the Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, demonstrates a well-consistent and a contextually adequate approach to management of higher education in Nigeria. Focusing on the aspects of quality assurance, ICT integration, entrepreneurship education, moral development, and international cooperation, the university reveals how the role of the private faith-based institution could be significant in the national educational and socio-economic development. These policy implications can serve as useful lessons to policy makers, university administrators and scholars who want to get a sustainable model of advancing higher education in Nigeria.

Policy Recommendations on CBT in Al-Hikmah University

Enhancing Internal Quality Assurance Systems - Al-Hikmah University must also institutionalise and occasionally reinforce its internal quality assurance systems as a means of maintaining academic standards due to increasing student enrolment. The cycles of curriculum review, the increased evaluation of the teaching process by peers, and the constant monitoring of the learning outcomes are to be formalised in all faculties. Moreover, there should be the growth of continuous professional development programmes of academic personnel and the focus on recent pedagogical techniques and integrity of assessments. These steps will help to make sure that the institutional development will be in accordance with the academic excellence and the standards of NUC.

Ensuring further Integration of ICT and CBT Readiness - The university can also consolidate its IT policies by enhancing the CBT infrastructure, enhancing the reliability of systems, and making digital literacy programmes mandatory to students and employees. Academic schedules should have regular CBT orientation and mock tests, especially among first-year students to alleviate test anxiety and increase computer self-efficacy. It is also advisable to invest continuously in the area of ICT maintenance and cybersecurity to protect the credibility of assessment and data integrity.

Improving Vocational Policy Results and Entrepreneurship - As the entrepreneurship education is already incorporated in the university curriculum, the policies need to be reinforced in the focus on experiential learning. This will involve widening its collaborations with local industries, financial institutions, and small-scale businesses to offer internship, mentorship, and incubation of start-ups to students. The Abdulraheem Oladimeji Centre of Entrepreneurial and Vocational Studies must be enabled to follow up on graduate start-ups and self-employment performances as a component of institutional performance assessment.

Maintaining Value-Driven and Inclusive Education - Al-Hikmah University must preserve and enhance its value-based education policy by implementing moral education, ethical behavior and inclusiveness as part of the teaching process, student management and campus life. The policies of encouraging inter-cultural dialogue, providing care to students and providing equal opportunities to learning materials must be constantly reconsidered. Enhancing the guidance and counselling facilities will also help in the moral, emotional and academic growth of the students.

Research - The university must strengthen its policies of research and internationalisation through the provision of organised research grants, publications incentives and mentoring of the early-career scholars. The Centre of Research, Industrial Linkage and International Cooperation must be keen on strategic collaborations that have concrete research delivery, staff exchange programmes and student mobility opportunities. Policies within the institutions are also to promote collaborative, interdisciplinary, and problem-solving research to solve the national and regional development problems. It is advisable that the Al-Hikmah University should have a strong policy monitoring and feedback system that enables students, staff, and other stakeholder to analyze institutional policies periodically. The policy should be revised, strategic planning, and resources allocation based on evidence produced through this feedback, which would facilitate responsiveness, transparency, and constant improvement. All these suggestions support the idea of policy consistency, sustainability, and topicality within the governance framework of Al-Hikmah University. After integrating quality assurance, ICT innovation, entrepreneurship, moral education, and research internationalisation in a single policy vision, the university has an opportunity to solidify another position as a model faith-based private university in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This review has shown that Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, has been a contextually relevant and intentional model of governance of a privately-owned university in the Nigerian higher education system. The institutional policies have demonstrated the ability to demonstrate that growth in access does not necessarily result in a decrease in academic standards when the institutions establish quality assurance mechanisms as established parts of the institutional practice. Its prolonged dedication to relevancy of the curriculum, growth of staff and adherence to accreditation standards highlights a larger perception that quality academic performance is an ongoing eventual process than a one-time acquisition. It is also important that the university has had a strategic adoption of information and communication technology especially in the field of computer-based testing. Through the congruency of ICT infrastructure with facilitative policies and student readiness, the Al-Hikmah University recognises the human aspect of digital transformation in which confidence, competence, and equity play the role that is just as significant as the technology itself. The use of such an approach represents a new best practice in Nigerian higher education where credibility in assessment and efficiency should go hand in hand with student well-being. The combination of business and ethical training is another way in which the institution is holistic in its policy orientation. With a socio-economic setting dominated by graduate unemployment and moral dilemmas, Al-Hikmah University puts its graduates in a better position to become not just skilled business people but also conscientious citizens due to its focus on self-sufficiency, development of character, and values that are inclusive in nature. This intellectualism and moral foundation balance have been one of the strengths of this institution. Lastly, the fact that the university pays attention to research development and collaboration with foreign countries is also a sign that the university realizes that it is a part of the global academic community. Al-Hikmah University promotes partnerships, sharing of knowledge, and applied research, which results in improving its relevance beyond the local scope and at the same time contribute national development interests. All in all, the Al-Hikmah University policy experience provides useful lessons to policy makers, university administrators, and scholars who aim to find sustainable ways of furthering higher education in Nigeria. Its model believes that with well-crafted policies and humanly taken measures, universities can achieve success in fostering competence, character, and confidence in students and at the same time survive in the very dynamic educational environment.

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