Chapter 75

Innovations in Technology for Educational Marketing: Stakeholder Perceptions and Implications for Examinations System in Rwanda

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter highlights the importance of educational marketing through modern innovative technologies. It explores how teachers who mark Rwandan primary and secondary examinations perceive the Rwanda National Examinations Council and what the implications are for the effective management of the examinations system. The chapter highlights the Rwandan context in which before the 1994 genocide, the education system was characterized by nepotism, corruption, discrimination and victimization based on ethnicity, regionalism, and gender. Thus, after 1994, the task of the education system was to reverse the imbalance in favor of equity, transparency, accountability and responsiveness in public service. In terms of national examinations, this demanded, among other things, a vigorous marketing strategy through innovation and technology. In spite of the relative success, however, the chapter acknowledges challenges associated with post-conflict educational reconstruction focusing mainly on human resource capacity development and management, and highlights some lessons learned as Rwanda looks forward to the future.

ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

The Rwanda National Examinations Council (RNEC) referred to as the ‘Council’ throughout this chapter was established in 1998, and law No 19/2001 of 12.3.2001 outlines its major responsibilities as follows: (i) to be responsible for national examinations for primary and secondary school (ii) establish rules regulating the conduct of national primary and secondary school examinations (iii) uphold transparency and justice in examinations’
administration and other related issues (iv) award
certificates or diplomas to successful candidates
(v) place successful candidates in different sec-
ondary schools and higher education institutions.

The education system in Rwanda before 1994
had been guilty of discrimination, injustice and
sowing seeds of division based on ethnicity, sex,
regionalism (home background) and religion; and
this form of injustice was mainly implemented
through examinations (Rutaisire, 2007). Before
1994, entry to all government and assisted schools
and tertiary institutions was determined mainly
by “Ethnic and Regional” quotas. The results of
primary and secondary schools were never pub-
lished. Also, students’ personal identification files
known in French as ‘fiches signeletiques’ were
used to identify them as ‘Tutsi, Hutu or Twa.’ The
purpose was to identify individuals and, or groups
for discrimination and victimization (Rutaisire,
et al, 2004). Thus after 1994, there was urgent need
to redress this imbalance for purposes of promot-
ing national reconciliation and healing the nation.
This entailed reforming the examinations system
by considering performance standards which are
considered to be the obvious measures of outcome
(Gipps and Storbart (1993). As a result, ‘since its
establishment, the Rwanda National Examina-
tions Council has been improving transparency,
accountability and responsiveness in the Rwandan
public service’ (United Nations Public Service
Awards, 2009:174). The establishment of the
Council after the 1994 genocide was in line with
international best practice. For example, West et
al (2000) argue in favour of the importance of self
management because of the possibility it offers
eventually to increased control over policies and
resources and expanded scope for leadership. This
has implications for effective management of the
examinations system in Rwanda.

Management Structure

The recently revised law number 36/2007 of
02/09/2007 determines responsibilities, organi-
zation, functioning and powers of the Rwanda
National Examinations Council for primary and
secondary education. The law designates the
Council as an autonomous institution supervised
by the Ministry in charge of primary and secondary
education. The Council is composed of a Board
of Directors (policy making) which has full pow-
ers and responsibilities to take all decisions; and
an Executive Secretariat (management) which
runs day today affairs of the institution. The
responsibilities of the Board of Governors are
to: adopt the internal rules and regulations of the
Council which shall be approved by the Order of
the Minister in charge of primary and secondary
school; provide a strategic vision and programme
of action for the Council; consider and approve
the annual draft budget before it is transmitted to
relevant authorizes; monitor the performance of
the Council in accordance with the plan of action
and the budget; approve the activity and financial
reports of the previous year; offer advice to the
Council management and staff; participate in
determining an effective general policy relating
to primary and secondary examinations; institute
directives on how examinations are to be con-
ducted and on those relating to similar issues; and
take decisions on persons who act contrary to this
law and those who do not respect the directives
relating to examinations.

The Executive Secretariat (management) has
five professional units/departments namely: (i)
Preparation & Administration of Examinations
(test development); (ii) Orientation, Selection,
Training and Documentation; (iii) Planning and
Research (iv) ICT; and (v) Administration and
Finance. It is responsible for the management of
daily operations of the Council and has 69 mem-
bers of the professional staff. Its responsibilities
are to: coordinate and conduct all daily activities
of the Council; represent the Council in everyday
activities and take administrative decisions; es-
tablise relations and cooperate with other national
and international agencies carrying out similar
responsibilities; allocate successful candidates in