Impact of General Agreement on Trade in Services on Education in Nigeria

Dr. Oyetakin Akinrotimi Iyiomo Department of Educational Management Faculty of Education Adekunle ajasin University Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

Oladimeji, Morruf Sanjo

Department of Economics Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education Noforija-Epe, Lagos Nigeria

Abstract

The paper examines the impact of General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on Education. The study therefore was designed to investigate the extent to which the agreement associated with GATS influenced the composition and direction of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings. It is therefore impressive to empirically examine the extent to which GATS predictors has affected education in Nigeria. In attempt to construct an empirical model used for this study, six sectors- Education, Tourism, Health Services, Financial, Business and Telecommunication were considered as operational for the model. Major sectors of GATS agreements that were signed and those not incorporated into agreements was used in the analysis. A sample size of 461 respondents were cut across six major activities in Education Sector, Tourism and Travel sector, Business sector, Financial sector, Transport sector, and Communication sector. The instrument used was a self constructed questionnaire titled: General Agreement in Trade and Services on Education Questionnaire (GATSEQ). Before administration, the questionnaire was validated and found reliable at r = 0.85. It was however discovered that the case of Unemployment, both the Business and Education are significant with coefficient alternating in GATS influences affected the activities of business and education as the control sectors. It is therefore recommended that the quality of education will be improve through foreign providers and excess national capacity thereby increasing income generation capacity of Nigeria.

Keywords: Real income, Multi-lateral System, Trans-national capital, market access, national treatment

Introduction

Nigeria has been a member of General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) since 1947, Nigeria like most other developing countries who are members of these international institutions failed to account for appreciable effects of the Multilateral Trading System (Otokiti, 1995). This inadequacy was evident from the ineffectiveness of the principles on which the treaty was based. Available evidence also shows insignificant improvement in the standard of living of member countries, in term of full employment and steady growth in volume of real income, developmental expansion of world trade, production and ensuring the full use of global resource and distribution.

According to Bjarnason in Vic (2006), the discussion and rhetoric surrounding developments in trade in education services globally has tended to be quite polarised. The anti-trade faction stridently puts forward the argument that education should not be considered a commodity and therefore should not be considered a service which can be traded. While the pro-trade faction argues that education has been actively traded across the world for decades, if not centuries, and questions the concern with formalising what has become general practice. The reality, if there is one, lies somewhere in between and will differ depending upon one's context. Vic, Weterheijen and Wende (2008) looked into how GATS affect steering in higher education? They said that the issue has been explored and studied by scholars, but has the issue been approached systematically? In general, GATS and its impact were discussed either on the national level or globally.

In the words of Larsen and Vincent-Lancrin (2003), until recently, it was incongruous to refer to international student mobility as international trade in educational services. Today in some OECD countries, there are clearly commercial motives as well as the usual cultural and political rationales behind policies to internationalise higher education. The inclusion of "educational services" in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations now under way in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has raised awareness of the trends and issues relating to international trade in educational services in higher and, more broadly, post-secondary education. Sauve (2002);OECD (2002),Observed that the Agreement may accelerate or orient the development of international trade in educational services in Modes 1 and 3, it has little direct influence on trade in educational services lie in host-country visa and immigration policies, but these do not fall within the scope of the Agreement. Nor does the quality of educational services, which is one of the major brakes on the expansion of trade. However, Ziguras (2002) argues that GATS neither puts pressure on governments to fund public and private institutions equally, nor prevents them from implementing policies and regulatory measures to steer private sectors in order to achieve particular social and cultural objectives. Similarly, each country is free to decide nationally to what extent it will publicly finance higher education for its own citizens.

Furthermore, the issues at stake in the GATS negotiations remain very limited: most commitments merely confirm the status quo and most requests for market opening concern educational services in the private sector. Knight (2003) said that The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) was initiated in 2001 as a joint initiative between the (Association of Commonwealth University ACU and Universities UK (the inter-university body for the United Kingdom). It was established to provide universities and policy makers worldwide with an ongoing intelligence service tracking the global developments of a wide range of activities in an increasingly 'borderless' higher education terrain. The notion of 'borderless' used in this context is not simply that of geography, but includes the ever more permeable boundaries around higher education (e.g. corporate education, further education and continuing professional development). Location of delivery is another border that is shifting rapidly, with developments in online provision, franchising of courses and ever- increasing private provision available to learners.

Bjarnason in Vic (2006) identified the major stakeholder in the education sector and these includes, Academics, Students, Unions-of both academics and students, Governments, Departments of Trade, Education sector representatives, Institutional leaders. Indeed, the whole notion of having a national perspective on the GATS is incredibly problematic as these stakeholders are not likely to easily converge in agreement on a trade policy. Robertson and Dale (2003) in his paper titled the implication of GATS for Education System in the North and South said that if we wanted to meet the Millennium Goals in Education, where would we start? Our own view, which we do not confine to the developing countries alone but believe also applies to the developed countries, is that we need to conceptualise education as a global public good with the potential to contribute to the development agenda, rather than a narrow, instrumental agenda that serves the needs of trans-national capital. These two quite different agendas, which we outline below have quite different implications to the North and the South and will not be realised through GATS.

The Trade Agenda	The Development Agenda	
Driven by desire to maximize access to markets in	Driven by need for provision of education as national	
education	investment and public good	
Single (global) logic of Rationality	Multiple (local) logics of Appropriateness	
Economic Constitutionalism	Political constitutionalism	
Constitutionalism as market transparency	Constitutionalism as democratic accountability	
Cross national relations are Rules driven	Cross-national relations are code of practice driven	
Tied to freeing trade politics of procedure	Open to different and changing circumstances politics of bargaining	
Establishment of legal institutions and rules to	Creation of Liberal democratic political structures	
order private economic exchange		
Quality Assurance as information for single	Quality Assurance as serving multiple purposes/audiences	
purpose audience		
QA through minimal (single) criterion	QA through multiple criteria	

 Table 1: Two Agendas for Education

Source: Adopted from Robertson and Dale (2003)

Assessing GATS Commitments in the Education Sector

The sectoral coverage of the many specific commitments on market access and national treatment that prevail in the GATS is limited. Industrialised countries have found it easier or more economically beneficial than the majority of developing countries to submit relatively extensive schedules. The commitments of one third of WTO Members (all developing countries) were confined to 20 or fewer of the 161 services sectors defined during the Uruguay Round. Another one-third scheduled between 20 and 60 sectors and the remaining Members included up to about 130 sectors. However the composition of the latter group is not uniform: it not only comprises virtually all OECD Members but also several developing and even a few least developed countries (Gambia, Lesotho, Sierra Leone).

The majority of country schedules also list a variety of measures that continue to restrict market access or national treatment. Only 25% of all service activities for high-income countries have no limitations on market access or national treatment. In the case of developing countries "free access" commitments were made, on average, for only 15% of the service sector. Moreover, where binding commitments have been made subject to limitations these are often less liberal than the *status quo*. Education services rank alongside the least committed of all sectors subject to GATS coverage, Unbound (no) commitments are concentrated in mode 4. Most countries that have scheduled education under the GATS have chosen to schedule services such as adult training or language tuition. However, despite the GATS carve-out clause described above a number of WTO Members, including developing and least developed countries, have scheduled commitments in basic primary and secondary education services under the GATS.

Developing Country Concerns about Education Services under the GATS

Notwithstanding misplaced and, at times, exaggerated criticisms of the GATS and its *modus operandi* there are several issues which warrant genuine concern. The main basis for these apprehensions is the weak nature of the current GATS text which creates ambiguities in the interpretation of its key provisions. The root of the problem for social sectors, such as education, is the lack of clarity about the scope of the GATS and the interpretation of Article I: 3 for publicly provided services. What do the exclusion clause for governmental services and the conditions of "non-commercial" and "not in competition with other suppliers" mean? For example, government provided education services in many developing countries include fees. If Article I:3 is interpreted narrowly, then this would classify such services as being provided on a commercial basis and thus falling within the scope of the GATS and negotiation of market access and national treatment commitments. A similar uncertainty regarding Article I:3 concerns the co-existence of public and private suppliers.

Under the GATS exclusion clause the two are not to be in competition with each other if the service is to be defined as being provided in the exercise of governmental authority. In the case of education services in developing countries, fields such as medicine are often provided by governments at subsidised rates alongside private medical training institutions. Do these meet the criteria under Article I:3? Fears that national sovereignty over social service provision could be undermined in developing countries by the GATS could be justified to the extent that Article I:3 lacks transparency.

Even if there is a tacit understanding among Members as to which sectors are covered by Article I:3 the eligibility of such sectors could at some stage be challenged in the WTO, although the threat to Members will always be limited by the flexibility involved in scheduling commitments. The main issue to be resolved in all such cases is how to separate public and private participation under the GATS and development of objective criteria for this purpose. .(World Trade Organization WTO, 2001).

A related issue concerns the implication of GATS for the provision of subsidies in the education sector. Subsidy provision for education services plays an important role in addressing poverty alleviation, equity, social and distributional objectives in developing countries. Current GATS provisions for subsidies do not prohibit their use, also allowing them to be inscribed as limitations in the commitment schedules. The interpretation of Article I:3 and any disciplines that develop from discussions on subsidy provision could affect the use of subsidies in the future. As a result, developing countries may need to defend against this possibility by retaining the right to use subsidies in their current commitments on national treatment.

There is also confusion over the interpretation of Article VI on domestic regulation. Under this, Members have to regulate those services in which they have listed a commitment in a reasonable, objective and impartial manner. Article VI also requires countries to establish transparent domestic regulations that do not constitute unnecessary trade barriers. However, the meaning of the terms "impartial", "objective", "reasonable" and "unnecessary trade barriers" are not clarified anywhere in the GATS.(World Trade Organization, 2001).

Finally, there is reason to believe that the GATS will not address the export interests in the education sector of many developing countries in one area: mode 4. At present movement of natural persons is the mode in which Members have made the most restrictive commitments.

Moreover, the limited commitments that have been made in mode 4 are subject to numerous market access and national treatment conditions, including (but not limited to) quantitative restrictions on entry, economic needs tests, licensing and certification. The GATS therefore, as it currently stands, offers developing countries little potential to export labour-based education services in which they may have comparative advantage.

Implications of Liberalising Education Services for Developing Countries

Developing countries need to be prepared to address the issues discussed above in future education service negotiations and to shape provisions in line with their own interests. It is therefore, important for developing countries to assess the potential costs and benefits of liberalising education services. Such an understanding will enable developing countries to improve their negotiating tactics under the GATS and to take necessary domestic measures to offset any potentially adverse consequences.

Developing countries are both important exporters and importers of education services. Exports are mainly in the form of mode 2 and mode 4, although some of the more advanced developing countries in Asia and Latin America are also beginning to enter into electronic delivery of mode 1 education services. Imports of education services are mainly in the form of mode 2 and increasingly via mode 3. There has been growing foreign (often developed country) involvement and collaboration in higher education services in developing countries over recent years.

There are benefits and costs for developing countries associated both with export promotion and import liberalisation of education services under each mode of supply.

	Examples	Potential Benefits	Potential Costs
Mode 1	Distance	Cater for remote segments	Absence of IT => cost inefficient
	Learning	Learning Skills upgrade	
Mode 2	Students studying abroad	X: foreign exchange M: overcome domestic shortage	Dual market structures Crowding out of local population
Mode 3	Satellite campuses	Additional resources Reduced burden on government	Opportunity cost of pubic investment needed to attract FDI 'Internal brain drain'
Mode 4	Teachers working abroad temporarily	X: remittances and transfers M: overcome domestic shortages of labour	Brain drain if outflows permanent Loss of public resources invested in training

Table 2: The Costs and Benefits of Education Services Liberalisation for Developing Countries: Equity Versus Efficiency

X: Exporting Countries M: Importing Countries

Mode 1 Imports of education services through, for example, virtual education institutions could enable foreign education providers to cater for remote segments of the population at low cost. However, given the absence of information and communications technology infrastructure in many developing countries mode 1 imports may not be cost-effective for exporting and importing countries.

There is also a risk that virtual learning could channel government expenditures away from basic education services and lead to a concentration of technologies which address the needs of an affluent few.

Mode 2 trade in education services also has mixed implications. It may assist importing developing countries to overcome shortages of capital and labour. It may also enable exporting developing countries to improve their national education systems by generating foreign exchange and resources for investment. However, it may create or aggravate two-tier structures in education systems which crowd out the local population by creating a higher quality, expensive segment that caters to wealthy nationals and foreigners and a lower quality, resource-constrained section catering for the poor.

Furthermore, mode 3 investments in education services can benefit developing countries by generating foreign capital for investment in education systems (reducing the burden on government resources) and generating opportunities for domestic employment. However, these gains may be offset by the initial public investments that may be required to attract foreign investment. Internal brain-drain could also occur as better-quality education practitioners flow from the public education segment to the foreign segment which offers better pay and working conditions.

Finally for mode 4 trade, from the exporting country's perspective, increased mobility of education practitioners could generate remittances and transfers back to the source country, promote exchange of knowledge and help upgrade skills and standards. For the importing country, movement of education personnel could provide an important means to overcome domestic shortages of labour and contain cost (wage) pressures. If these outflows are permanent, however, they may lead to shortages of trained education personnel in the exporting country and loss of public resources invested in their (often subsidised) training. More generally, developing countries which promote exports of education services may be affected by higher prices domestically as demand for the country's education services increases (United Nation, 2002).

Any rise in domestic prices of education services could have a negative impact on the poor unless effective policies are in place to redistribute the income and balance of payments gains from exports to the affected groups in society.

Nigeria participation in international organizations is aimed at achieving higher level economic development through balance of payment, foreign exchange, employment generation and maximization of participation in services sectors. To attain these, Nigeria has gone through several internal developmental strategies, structuring and plans mechanism which were incorporated with active participation of many international bodies and organization. This cumulated into decision to ratify the GATS agreements. Unfortunately, some of these GATS agreements were signed while others are yet to be signed, as a result of this partial contractual relationship, this study investigates a comparative analysis of gain and reasons emanating from signing of GATS agreements and the effect of this on development objectives of favourable balance of payment.

Years	Public administration	Education	Health	Private non-profit organization	Other services	Broadcasting
1985	1,501.70	339.5	88.9	2.6	469	105.3
1986	1,575.30	356.2	93.3	2.8	514.4	110.9
1987	1,646.50	372.2	97.5	2.9	566.2	118.9
1988	2,019.80	456.6	119.6	3.6	607.4	127.6
1989	2,248.80	508.4	133.2	4	657.8	136.8
1990	2,487.50	562.4	147.3	4.4	735.9	159.3
1991	2,969.30	671.3	175.9	5.2	844.4	196.9
1992	7,646.20	1,728.70	452.9	13.4	1,036.20	227.4
1993	11,132.10	2,516.70	659.3	19.6	1,738.00	277.2
1994	12,896.30	2,915.60	763.8	22.7	4,304.40	285.6
1995	14,901.20	3,368.90	882.5	26.2	9,157.90	304.4
1996	15,345.80	3,469.40	908.9	26.9	13,574.30	337
1997	16,619.40	3,757.30	984.3	181.9	16,849.80	387.6
1998	27,244.30	6,159.40	1,613.50	47.8	22,737.10	447.7
1999	31,264.80	7,068.40	1,851.70	54.9	32,804.20	519.3
2000	27,244.30	6,159.40	1,613.50	47.8	41,341.60	599
2001	62,811.30	14,200.40	3,719.90	131.1	52,065.20	771.5
2002	74,181.50	15,317.50	4,856.30	171.9	66,464.90	911.7
2003	74,181.50	16,395.00	5,342.50	195.1	78,546.90	1,110.20
2004	#######	22,842.84	5,984.00	149.98	99,684.90	1,469.00
2005	#######	26,042.50	6,822.20	154.48	#######	1,742.22
2006	#######	29,689.90	7777.8	158.8	#######	2,153.50
2007	#######	33356.6	8,738.40	163.6	#######	2,675.20
2008	#######	36,896.80	9,250.70	168.5	#######	3,155.50

Table 3: The contribution of Nigeria's Services Sector to the Economy % Share of Value Added by Economic Activity

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin (2008)

Table 4: The contribution of Nigeria's Services Sector to the Economy Share of Value Added by Economic Activity

Years	Communication	Financial	Business services (not health or educ.)	Education	Hotel & restaurants(Tourism)	Transportat ionnn
1985	186	2699.7	202.3	339.5	474.2	3730.4
1986	191.8	3309.5	227.2	356.2	488.8	4014.5
1987	201.7	3886.6	251.1	372.2	490.4	3906.9
1988	215.7	5002.9	286	456.6	494.8	4084.2
1989	219.5	7317.9	317	508.4	522.4	4722.4
1990	247.9	11642.4	362.2	562.4	552.3	5438.8
1991	252.3	12979.8	425.4	671.3	593.3	6059.9
1992	323.3	15125	525.8	1,728.70	756.4	9011.4
1993	446	16276.5	628.9	2,516.70	1,217.10	15008.5
1994	452.2	12554.5	846.1	2,915.60	1,988.60	23024.6
1995	525.7	203977	1,009.00	3,368.90	2,711.50	50315
1996						
	605.8	27751.7	1,347.40	3,469.40	3,326.70	65520.6
1997	684.6	30022.5	1,505.30	3,757.30	4,285.70	75678.3
1998	743.3	35698.1	1,777.30	6,159.40	4,865.10	96098.2
1999	814.1	39390	2,230.90	7,068.40	5,790.70	118501.8
2000	1039.2	43774.9	2,687.60	6,159.40	6,455.30	129092.1
2001	1324.3	54367.7	3,206.50	14,200.40	8,018.70	144634.4
2002	2238.2	79418.2	3,789.50	15,317.50	9 .670.0	178755.8
2003	2833.4	81080.7	4,490.20	16,395.00	11,421.50	223971.3
2004	21609.5	102953.3	18,553.16	22,842.84	35,249.77	365778.6
2005	27869.28	130749.5	32,044.50	26,042.50	46,080.00	396430.6
2006	165524	296704.9	43,370.51	29,689.90	57,611.87	442722
2007	243551.1	340908.1	54,026.40	33356.6	72,839.40	473445.5
2008	261868.8	366059.1	60,938.80	36,896.80	89,373.30	503068.1

Source: Computed by the researcher from CBN Statistical Bulletin (2008)

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of government policies and associated process of GATS was expected to bring about developing countries, improvement in the level of manpower development, re-distribution of resources, effective marketing networks. However, studies have revealed significant analysis of holistic relationship between GATS and economic development. As a result, there is development of research on selective analysis of the predictors of GATS and economic development in many of the developing countries. This study is therefore another effort designed to investigate the extent to which the agreement associated with GATS influenced the composition and direction of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings.

This research work intends to fill all the above gaps, It is therefore impressive to empirically examine the extent to which GATS predictors has affected education in Nigeria.

Research Question

Do GATS influences affect the activities of business and education in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

GATS do not influence the activities of business and education in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

Relative to this study, both descriptive and explanatory research design were used because of its capacity to fully incorporate the related key variables of the research construct and indicators.

In all the six sectors, the researcher identified one thousand six hundred top level participant that were engaged in the study. See table 5 below.

S/N	Sectors	Sample	%Distribution
1	Communication	325	20.31%
2	Tourism and Travel	258	16.13%
3	Financial	316	19.75%
4	Transport	235	14.69%
5	Business	229	14.31%
6	Education	237	14.81%
Total		1600	100%

Table 5: Sample Size Determination

Source: Field Work

Table 5 shows the list of sampling entities and properties used for analysis. In this result, it consists of participating sectors and agreements endorsed under of GATS relationship with Nigeria. The population of this work comprised of 12 sectors divided into 161 sub sectors. Out of these, six sectors and forty sub-sectors were purposefully selected. A number of people from each sector were determined by using the Minimum Returned Sample Size Table for continuous and categorical data (Bertlett, Kotrilik and Higgins ,2001). In addition, the structure of expected population was used for the selected number of officers working in the specific sectors of GATS categorization.

Instrumentation

The instrument used was a questionnaire titled: General Agreement in Trade and Services on Education Questionnaire (GATSEQ), and secondary source. The questionnaire responses were classified with the help of five –point Likert-Scale (Likert, 1961) which ranges from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. (5-'strongly agree' 4-'agree' 3-'undecided', 2-'disagree' 1-'strongly disagree') and another one ranges between 'very large extent' and 'very small extent'. (5- 'very large extent', 4- 'large extent', 3- 'undecided', 2-'small extent', 1- 'very small extent') to reflect the responses of the respondents, The questionnaire was divided into two parts, The first part deal with demographic profiles of respondents while the second part deal with questions relevant to the Personal interview used in order to have spot assessment on the issues in research questions and hypotheses.

The reliability or consistency of the instrument used was established by subjecting it to a pilot test through test-retest method with a reliability coefficient of 0.85.

Result

Hypothesis

GATS do not influence the activities of business and education in Nigeria.

The control variables Business (BUS), Education (ED)

Table 6: Dependent Variable: Balance of Payment, Time Frame; 1995 – 2008.

Variable	Coefficient	t-test
С	236976.7	1.23
BUS	181.24	9.37
EDU	335.81	11.11

R² : 0.99 Adj R²: 0.99 DW: 1.75 F- Stat.: 1401.42

Table 7: Dependent Variable: Share of Services in Gross Domestic Product (SSGDP), Time Frame; 1995 –2008

Variable	Coefficient	t-test
С	490128.6	0.17
BUS	539.44	1.89
EDU	-222.62	-0.50

R² : 0.41 Adj R²: 0.35 DW: 2.85 F- Stat.: 7.22

Table4.15: Dependent Variable: FED, Time Frame; 1955 – 2008.

Variable	Coefficient	t-test
С	4549.54	0.66
BUS	-1.22	-1.76
EDU	2.66	2.46

R² : 0.27 Adj R²: 0.20 DW: 2.53 F- Stat.: 3.92

The analysis runs through 1985 - 2008. Starting from Balance of Payment, the Business and Education have positive linkages with the Balance of Payment and are significant, only the Business is significant in the case of the Share of Service of Gross Domestic Product while for Foreign Exchange Disbursement, the two are significant. The case of Unemployment, both the Business and Education are significant with coefficient alternating in signs. In summary, of the four cases observed, an average of 0.55 coefficient of determination of recorded autocorrelation is not a major problem in these cases.

From the above, it could be seen that GATS influences affected the activities of business and education as the control sectors.

Conclusion and Discussion

This research work made use of both SPSS and E-View to empirically analyse the stated hypothesis, however the following contributions to knowledge are highlighted:

If the government can sign agreement concerning education, it will increase capacity of the Nigeria in term of physical capacity to meet a growing demand for higher education. By opening trade in education services, and thus enabling foreign providers' access to providing services in their country, there may be increased numbers of participants able to experience higher education.

By opening trade in education sector, Nigeria will have access to specialised knowledge and skills which may lacking in our higher institutions of learning, this will also lead to the development of human resource capacity. Also, it will bring about increase in competition among local higher education institutions and also minimize 'brain drain' in order to maintain a proportion of the skilled and knowledgeable people.

The quality of education will be improve through foreign providers and excess national capacity can be handled thereby increasing income generation capacity of Nigeria

The Strategic cultural, political, and economic or education alliances though, not mutually exclusive, but often reflect an alliance of institutions with a particular similarity (e.g. research focus, regional or language groupings).

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