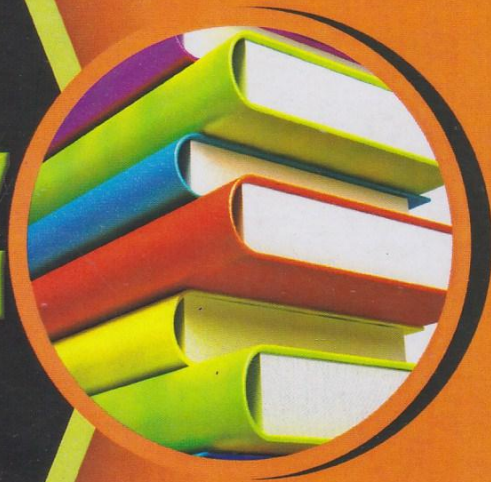


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MANAGING TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: NIGERIA'S IMPERATIVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Tertiary Education goal in itself is not only to provide a better life to its recipients but also its impact on economic development is far reaching. Hence, managing makes it an instrument of change for national development which fosters the worth and development for each individual's sake and for the society in general. This paper examines how management of tertiary institution for functional education is crucial to the resolution of the complex challenges of societal development that face Nigeria. While the ability to access and apply scientific knowledge and technologies will remain a problem to Nigeria, the best way to resolve this problem is effective/efficient management of human and material resources available for use in our tertiary education system in order to produce sensitive and committed intellectuals, technologists, scholars, writers, dramatists, artists, musicians, critics etc. to drive the engine of Nigeria's economic development. Conclusion was drawn and recommendations made such as improved funding to education, restructuring the goals of tertiary education to meet the present reality demands of the Nigerian environment as well as a re-orientation of the perception of Nigerians toward the purpose of tertiary education in the context of economic development.

Key Words: Managing, Tertiary Education and Economic Development

Introduction

Managing as a verb is a word derived from the noun, management. It is defined as the act or skill of dealing with people or situations in a successful way (Hornby 2005). Obi (2003) describes management as a strategy, innovation, initiating about change, creative problem solving and decision making, actively seeking out alternatives and opportunities, reformulating goals and priorities, redeploying resources, negotiating, resolving conflicts dynamics or active leadership, diplomacy, statesmanship and high degree of risk taking and entrepreneurship.

Management can therefore be viewed as an interactional process involving a sequence of co-ordinated events such as planning, organizing, coordinating and leading in order to achieve set goals using available resources. Managing education in higher institution involves the process of organic efforts in the co-ordination of human, material and intangible resources and liabilities for the realization of both expressed and unintended goals of national education (Nwadiani 2012).

Economic development is defined by Inyang in Ezeuwa (2014) as a change in the

economic growth whereby the benefits of the growth are shared among the populace in such a way that the obstacles to the development are reduced to the barest minimum or if possible totally eliminated Wilcox in Ezeuwa (2014) stated that

Economic development calls for a new attitude fundamentally different from those that prevail in a traditional society whereby each household produces mainly for itself. Economic development requires; an indigenous base for growth process, absence or reduction of market imperfections that lead to factor immobility and inhibit sectorial expansion and development, structural change from a traditional agricultural society to modern industrial economy involving a radical transformation of existing institutions. (p.13-18)

Economic development generally refers to the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy which include development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy, and other initiatives. These requirements cannot be met where there is a poorly managed higher institution. Economic development differs from economic growth. Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavour with the aims of enhancing economic and social well being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in gross domestic products (GDP), (Wikipedia, 2012). Economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development (Amartya, 2011). The scope of economic development includes the process and policies by which nations improve the economic, political and social well being of its people.

The hope has been that educated people in Nigeria will be equipped with the philosophy of the nation using education as a tool. Tertiary educations according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) are to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments, acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society with both mental/physical abilities and competences for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society.

Tertiary education should therefore assist the society to achieve National Development, but the present situation on ground in the education sector has fallen short of expectation because of the seemingly nagging situations bedeviling educational management in Nigeria – corruption, academic fraud and inadequate funding. The performance of Nigeria's tertiary education sector is discussed in CBN (2015) report. However, it is important to observe that managing the sector suffers chiefly from poor funding and lack of clear focus. The budgetary allocation to education has been quite low compared with other sectors. For instance between 2013-2016, the Federal Government allocation to education ranges between 6.0 and 10.9 percent of recurrent and 2.8 to 3.2 percent of capital expenditure (CBN 2016). So low is allocation to education that the CBN does not report it as an independent statistic in its annual statistical bulletins; allocation to education is often lumped under social and community service. What actually goes to support teaching/learning may indeed be much lower because the Ministries, Boards and Commissions as supporting agencies whose functions are either irrelevant or duplicated get a good chunk of education fund. Within the tertiary institution itself, supporting staff and overhead cost take turns. What remains for teaching and learning may be too small to motivate research.

Nwadiani (2012) in the findings of his seminal research showed that using indices such as intellectual and knowledge power; skills development, economic potentials, global worth,

self determination and creativity, most consumers' expectation of Nigeria's tertiary education fall below expectation with low relevance manifestation. Presently, there are other indicators to prove that Nigeria's tertiary education system is poorly managed these include infrastructural decay, high wastages; unemployable graduates, sortable grades, cultism and indiscipline, poor quality of graduates, deficient and overloaded curriculum. Education has increasingly become a private good in the purview of public policy curriculum. At the tertiary level the cost of education is growing very fast. Tertiary education in Nigeria is depreciating quite fast. Nigeria's education sector has regrettably become the certificate factory where the highest bidder gets the best. Nations, communities and individuals develop at the pace of their level of education. For Nigeria to change, advance and progress, the necessary instrument is education. As a people, we cannot reach our maximum potential without a properly managed educational system. A well managed education will enhance the potentials of individuals to be able to live and survive; both the body and mind must be nurtured from birth to death. A properly managed education is the food for the mind. One cannot afford to mismanage or postpone the supply of this food to the future. The mismanagement of the supply of education may just mean that the mind will either be undernourished or malnourished. To become a strong, virile and self reliant economy, the citizens must receive functional education in line with their socio-economic, cultural and political realities.

Nyerere 1988 in Ojerinde (2011) puts it, "So development is for man and of man. The same is true of education; its purpose is the liberation of man from restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. Education has to increase man physical and mental freedom to increase his control over himself, his own life and the environment in which he lives". In a way, education legitimately establishes a solid base on which we can achieve positive changes in all spheres of human endeavours be it socio-economic, political or cultural aspects of national life. This is so because over the years, education has been an effective instrument of change and innovation and that is why the Federal Republic of Nigeria in its National policy on Education (2004) sees it as an instrument par excellence for effecting National Development.

Managing Tertiary Education for Economic Development

Nigeria's levels of Education include primary, secondary and tertiary. According to Hornby (2005) tertiary means third in order, rank or importance. Nigeria's tertiary education goals includes:

- (i) To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- (ii) To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- (iii) To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment;
- (iv) To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful member of the society;
- (v) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- (vi) Forge and cement National Unity; and
- (vii) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The Nigerian tertiary educational institutions shall pursue the above goals through: teaching; research and development; staff development programmes; generation and dissemination of knowledge; students-industrial work experience scheme (SIWES); Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies, inter-institutional co-operation; dedicated services to community through extra-mural and extension services etc (FRN 2004:36).

Tertiary education essentially promotes human and society's development it contributes to the advancement of social policy, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policies

for economic development. through its ability to deliver appropriate programme of study and research, it promotes the acquisition of attitudes and skills amongst the citizenry and this engenders individual and society prosperity thus, Amadi (2011) posits "If knowledge is the electricity of the new international economy, then institutions of higher education are the power sources on which a new development process must rely". When managers of tertiary institutions are able to identify the hard and soft skills required by the market and the technical expertise to address the country's problems, the increased human capital, through education can accelerate technological growth and boost science, technology and innovation dissemination for societal development.

Education cannot be effectively managed in such a way that the knowledge, quality of skills, attitudes and capacities that enable our sons and daughters to become the conscious subjects of their growth and the active, responsible participants in the systematic process of economic development unless the managers of tertiary education have clear focus on what education would or should do in future lives of every citizen. The objectives of education at this level need to be repositioned and tailored to individual and collective needs with overall national goals of economic efficiency for development in perspective. The country, Nigeria is endowed with numerous highly priced minerals together with petroleum. With all these gifts of nature, one wonders why the country is poor. According to Alozie (2004), the reason is quite obvious to keen observers of human affairs. The most vital natural resources – the human capital is underdeveloped or appropriately stated, underdeveloped and untapped for national, economic and social development. The development and tapping of this human capital is usually done through education.

Education is regarded as a major factor in National development; this is even more true in an information and electronic age as the 21st century. The relationship between education and human resource for economic development was vividly captured by Chukuka Okonjo and Frederick Harbison during their analysis of the problems of development. Okonjo states thus:

"...for it is this schooling and training that enables a skilled work force to be created. And without a skilled workforce, it is difficult to create those conditions, which lead a country to accumulate more, efficiently allocate its resources and encourage the growth of productivity" (Okonjo 2000; 14-18)

Frederick Harbison stated that:

... Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else. (Harbison 1973; 23-46)

Production firms are therefore relied upon as the major source of development impetus. However, the role of human resource in economic development are not debatable. Apart from the roles that labour and human capital can play, economic development also requires cutting-edge entrepreneurship, good managers and efficient technologist. Material resources would remain sterile or underutilized without these other forms of human resources. Enhancing the peoples' capability through the process of equipping people with skills and knowledge that make them fit for employment in specific fields, depending on the depth and content of the acquired knowledge and skills enhanced economic efficiency for development. Economic theory stipulates a positive

relationship between economic efficiency and level of technological capabilities. Essia (2002) identifies technological capabilities as intelligence transformed into technical skills and knowledge that can generate creativity and enhance the management of technological progress. The learning process, which enhances technology accumulation, involves adaptation, commitment to goals and progression on the basis of past experiences. Technological capabilities increases the ability to make improvements or alterations? in production patterns, processes or systems or in designing and implementing policies and programmes. The aforementioned capabilities to direct these creative potentials for economic development, necessarily requires balanced tertiary education. By balanced education, we mean the education that deliberately seeks to develop the whole man through sufficient enlightenment and exposure to enable him discover and consciously develop his talent and creative abilities. Thus on one hand, education is a major “dividend of economic development” and on the other hand, education is the most important requirement for further economic development.

Effective management of tertiary institution that will provide balanced education can eliminate poverty. At the depth of poverty are ignorance, fear and lack of self-confidence. Education can greatly reduce these negative tendencies, good governance is also easier to achieve with an educated population. Education promotes evolution of the “Scientific Mentality” in a society. The “Scientific mentality” according to Essia (2004) does not just accept traditions and received wisdom. It questions beliefs; asking what is the evidence and how do we know what we believe? Once people begin to question traditional beliefs, change is inevitable. Indeed, a country is poor and unstable because its people lack technological knowledge and skills gotten through effective management of tertiary education.

Economic Development is evidenced as improvements in the economic system, especially improvement in the national income, leading to improved living conditions of a majority of citizens. It is improvement in the nation's economic system channeled into improved human life and improved sectors of the economy; Improved agriculture, improved education, improved health-care, improved industries, improved communication and even improved human relationship. It involves growth in the per capita income, elimination of poverty, wide scale employment of citizens and reduced inflation.

Nowadays education has come to be accepted almost without any doubt as an important and crucial agent of economic, social, political, technological and human development. Viewing education (schooling) as an agent of economic development was realized in Nigeria by Ashby Commission Report in 1960 set up in 1959 to plan for the development of tertiary education in Nigeria between 1960 and 1980 (20years). The Ashby Commission Report titled “Investment in education” urged the nation to budget more for education because education is an investment in manpower development. The human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary for improving the productive capacities of populations. It maintains that an educated population is a productive population. For any economic growth and development to occur, two requirements must be met.

1. There must be improvement and greater efficiency of technology because higher technology enhances greater production.
2. Human resource must be utilized to employ the technology. Human resource is the active factor of production while the machinery are the inactive factors. Without human resource, the machinery alone would not produce.

The skills and motivation for production possessed by human resources are imparted by means of education. The labour supplied by the educated is not an ordinary labour (Etuk 2006). Human capital theorists maintain that an investment in education is an investment in the productivity of members of the population. Numerous studies adduce the evidence that levels of education and levels of economic development of nations of the world were consistently related.

In one of the studies Harbison (1973) as cited in Etuk (2006) reports that there is a consistent pattern of a positive correlation between Schooling and economic development by showing that school enrollment ratios were considerably lower for the less advanced nations of the world than for the advanced countries.

Modernization theory focuses on how education transforms individual's value, belief and behaviour. Attending a functional school/training inculcates modern values and attitudes. These attitudes include openness to new ideas, independence from traditional authority, willingness to plan and calculate future exigencies and a growing sense of personal and social efficacy. According to modernization theorists, these normative and attitudinal changes, Continue throughout the lifecycle, permanently altering an individual's relationship to the social structure. The greater the number of people exposed to functional education, the greater the level of individual modernity attained by the society. Once a critical mass of the population changes in this way, the pace of society's modernization and economic development quickens. Thus, functional education through its effects on individual values and benefits, sets into motion the necessary building blocks for a more productive work force and for a sustained societal development.

A tertiary educational system is the major institutional mechanism for building and advancing people's knowledge, skills and attitudes. Findings in educational sector point to the fact that a highly literate labour force promotes faster economic development and human capital formation. Using education as a tool is fundamental to socio-economic progress of any nation, it seek to improve the quality of life, which is the ultimate goal of economic development. Indeed one can rightly assert that improved human beings are the drivers of national development. There is a belief that functional education, especially at the tertiary level, promotes economic growth and is fundamentally the basic tenet of development strategy

How Management of Education Engenders Economic Development

- ② Management of tertiary education supplies the society with people who are skilled in all professions. High level man-power in Agriculture, medicine, education and all sectors of the economy help to give the society the needed boost.
- ② The more educated a person, the more his earnings in paid employment, therefore, education helps to increase the productivity of individuals and hence, increases the gross national product (GNP) of a nation.
- ② A properly managed education helps to put people into vocational areas of their choices. Tertiary education gives beneficiaries specific skills, which can make them self reliant and contributing members of the society.
- ② Tertiary education modernizes society. The educated adopt a life styles which have modernizing influences in the society to be contributing members of the society; help members of a society to attain self fulfillment leading to economic development of the society.
- ② Tertiary education is a social equalizer, it opens doors of opportunities to the masses, thus leading to economic development of the society.

Recommendations

With economic development assuming a comprehensive dimension in global context, the centrality of managing tertiary education effectively becomes more conspicuous as education is the only means of making the youths and adults who have direct and immediate bearing on our development process to be more functional, rational, participatory and productive. Managing of higher education should be seen as a viable instrument in which economic development can occur whether at personal, community or national level. Effective

management of higher education will engender in its recipients a means for mobilizing dormant resources of the nation to improve economy.

It is thus suggested that

- i. More funding be made available for the provision of “necessary things of education” in our tertiary institutions and government should encourage more private citizens to own universities and fund them.
- ii. Nigerians in general requires a re-orientation in their perception of the purpose of tertiary education in the context of economic development. The present practice whereby every child is pushed into higher institution cannot develop our nation economically. Let us face the realities boldly; some people, more correctly, many people are not higher education materials. It does not make them failures. It simply means that they can find their aptitudes and vocations elsewhere and still contribute to the growth of the nation.
- iii. The fund available for education at the tertiary levels should be properly managed by the educational managers, corrupt practices in the form of misappropriation and misapplication and or outright conversion of school funds for private use should be avoided.
- iv. The curriculum content of our tertiary education should insist on acquisition of knowledge and skills that will make its graduates creative, innovative and employers of labour instead of relying extensively on white collar jobs provided by the government.

Conclusion

This logic of economic efficiency promotes the argument for privatization of education in Nigeria and caused government to divert funds meant for education to other sectors with increasing returns on public investment. But this logic is not always good for national development. Education will certainly contribute more to Nigeria's economic development if the sector is seen as a public service that does not toe public inertia and whose services/increase returns to investment are not quantified using the laws of demands and supply: the entire sector should be restructured and redirected at achieving well defined development – oriented goals.

Re-structuring Nigeria's tertiary education is essential because existing expectations and curricular are largely drawn from colonial education. Academic programmes at tertiary levels is tailored to match either the British or American standards. But as Essia (2004) observes, the curriculum of colonial education was designed to inculcate basic literacy in reading and writing skills and to emphasize superiority of the colonizer's culture. It is sad to note that decades after independence, the objectives of colonial education are still pursued as if indeed such are the universal objectives of education. Foreign authors write principal textbooks used particularly at the tertiary level in Nigeria. Education still serves the colonial purposes. The entire education industry urgently need to be re-constructed using local content to enable it meet the needs of Nigeria's economic development. Realistic goals would need to be set for tertiary education and all its activities. The process of setting goals should flexibly respond to the changing needs of the society. It is not necessary to copy models elsewhere. The mechanism for determining educational goals should be wholly indigenous; when right goals are set and the strategies for achieving them are determined, the roles for each player in the education sector would be easy to assess. There is need to convene a functional National Education Summit in Nigeria not lip service where every Nigerian shall be encouraged to debate and contribute new ideas on how the sector should be re-organized and re-structured.

In order to cultivate and promote proper value orientation in the products of tertiary institutions, the institution, must be perceived and managed as centres of excellence. From the admission procedure through the rigorous academic work to graduation, the tradition of honesty, transparency and discipline must be maintained through effective management as it is a

necessary support to academics. Management of tertiary institutions for functional education is crucial to the resolution of the complex challenges of societal development that face Nigeria. While the ability to access and apply knowledge and technologies will remain a problem to Nigeria, the best way to resolve this problem is effective management of our tertiary institutions to produce sensitive and committed intellectuals, technologists, scholars, writers, dramatists, artists, musicians and critics to drive the engine of economic development.

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