MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CHALLENGE TO QUALITY

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Abstract

Manpower training and development is a good strategy for optimizing economic development because it increases the productivity of employees, improves their quality and mates for personal growth and development. Quality tertiary education is a prerequisite for successful training for economic development. Qualitative tertiary education has the essential function of training people for particular occupations. Therefore, our educational planners, should orient teachers in our tertiary institution undertake curricular reforms which should gear towards manufacturing and agricultural sectors and focus more attention on enhancing quality education at higher institution for economic development in Nigeria.

Key Words: Management, Higher Education, Economics Development and Challenge to Quality

The poor state of Education in Nigeria is aptly captured in the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). Findings from an ongoing educational sector analysis confirm the poor state of managing higher education in
Nigeria. The National literacy rate is currently 57 percent. About 49 percent of the teaching force is unqualified. There are acute shortage of infrastructure and facilities at higher education level, hence, the 2013, 4 months industrial action between the federal government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Access to higher education is inhibited by gender issues, quota system, federal character and socio cultural beliefs and practices, among others (Ojerinde 2011). Wide disparities persists in the educational standards/qulity and learning achievements.

According to the Nigerian Millenium Development goal 2005 report, the literacy level in the country has steadily and gradually detonated, especially within the 15-24 years group and this invariably have a negative effect on the country's Economic development. Meanwhile the educational system in Nigeria is guided by the broad national objectives articulated in the National policy on Education. The first and perhaps the greatest challenge facing higher education in the realization of its objectives is inadequate funding and ineffective management of the available-funds to provide the "necessary things of Education" which will assist in the realization of quality products from higher education. As society changes and gets more dynamic, so does its demands on the educational system. Higher education, however, when properly managed must be able to produce the kind of citizens with the appropriate skills, essential knowledge and positive values that will increasingly make life meaningful to them and the society in general.

The function of higher education in to create human beings who are integrated and therefore intelligent. We may take degrees and be mechanically efficient without being intelligent. Sharma (2003) posits that intelligence is not mere information; it is not derived from books nor does it consist of clever self - defensive responses and aggressive assertion. An effective managed higher institution imbued in its recipient intelligence. Intelligence is the capacity to perceive the essential, the what is; and to awaken innate capacities Higher education should help us to discover lasting values so that we do not merely cling to formulas or repeat slogans; it should help us to break down our national and social barriers instead of emphasizing them, for they breed antagonism between man and man. Unfortunately, the present higher education system in Nigeria is making us subservient, mechanical and deeply thoughtless; though it awakens us intellectually, inwardly it leaves us incomplete, stultified and uncreative. This is a concern for quality in Higher education.

The Concept of Quality

Quality is one of the most widely used and spoken concepts in formal education circle, but very little regard to its meaning has been reached. Freeland (1991) cited in Umoh (2010) assert that many stakeholders in education see this concept as
ambiguous and elusive, thereby making the understanding of its meaning difficult to arrive at. This is essentially true in education as compared to industry where clearly definable products with quantifiable qualities exists. The "product" of education is intangible and the customer very difficult to identify (Etuk, 2006). The difficulty attempting to establish consensus or definite quality in education sector is aptly captured in the word of Aina (1994), "quality" is a most illusive notion. Virtually everybody recognizes it when it is seen but scarcely, anyone can specify its components or features with any degree of precision or confidence. But intuitively and at times empirically, scholars seem to know what they are talking about, they regard quality education as having essential knowledge, inculcating positive values and mastering useful skills that will increasingly make life meaningful to an individual and his society. It is a process that will produce the kind of citizens needed by a country at any given time. From these definitions, quality education touches on the educational structure itself, the curriculum content and implementation, methods and teachers as well as the management of these resources to achieve the educational goals/aims,

There is, however, a basic philosophy which seems to underlie the concept, and that is, that quality education should bring "functionality" and "relevance" to societal needs. Qualitative education demands a curriculum that reflects the needs of the society and fulfill educational objectives in terms of contents. Relating the curriculum with the needs, problems and aspiration of the nation is a wide route to reach functional, qualitative and relevant education. A country that needs rapid economic growth or which has experienced economic downturn requires emphasis on higher vocational education (Ogwazo, 1995). This will enable the product of the school system to be self employed in different fields and vocation that will strengthen their economic base and reduce unemployment. The- schools' auricular should emphasise production of goods and essential services, science and technology, food production, processing and preservation, utilization of national resources like gas, crude oil and minerals to promote foreign exchange earnings in Nigeria. Inadequate quality in tertiary education is the most crucial factor in Nigerian economic growth. Education with a large content of skills formation is more likely to foster economic growth compared with the kind of education that has a classical content. The masses will bear the brunt as a result of investment in a kind of education that retards economic growth. There is need to emphasize technical and science education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Higher Education should provide experts and specialists in various fields who will stay and work for the benefit of the nation. Produce people who will make responsible citizens and have a better commitment to the development of the nation; and help to provide the needed manpower in all sectors of the economy (National Policy on Education, 2004).
Management of Higher Education for Quality and Economic Development in Nigeria

Every functional higher education system must strive to harness its human and non-human material resources towards the realization of its goals and objectives. In Nigeria, the need to refocus on resource management for effective instruction at the tertiary education level has become inevitable. This is because the process of national education goal realization at the tertiary education level has been encumbered with a lot of management problems (Ocho, 2005 and Okoh, 2002). More importantly, tertiary education is to create needed manpower to drive the economy of the nation. Its contribution to overall economic development cannot be over emphasized. The amount of success achieved at the tertiary education level, in terms of quality and quality of instruction, to a large extent, determines the strength and foundation of the overall national economy. The fact that these resources are in short supply either in quantity or quality or both, the need for prudent management becomes imperative. This is the major reason resource management issues as they affect tertiary institution are very crucial to the realization of quality education at the tertiary.

Higher Education is expected to create the needed manpower resource with enhanced skills which can lead to technological innovation and productivity, and growth within the economy. Viewed generally, Edame (2004) posits that higher education is aimed at producing men and women who possess both culture and expert knowledge in all dimensions. The rationality behind investment in human resource development using higher education as a tool is based on three main arguments; first, that the new generation must be given the appropriate parts of knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations. Second, the new generation should be taught how the existing knowledge can be used to develop new products: reduce new processes and production methods and improve the efficiency of organizations in business, government and social services. Third, that people must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches. Endogenous economic growth theory posits that higher education constitute the bedrock of producing the prime-mover of economic development. It emphasizes the importance of human resource as a major content of overall capital formation process in the economy.

It is widely recognized that higher education is an investment both for the individual undertaking it and for the society that devotes its scarce resources to it. As an investment, there is returns both to the individual and the society. It is believed that this form enhanced contribution made by those who have received the education and hence the economic growth that it leads to. The general expectation of higher education as highlighted in the National Policy on Education (2004) include among others: provide experts and specialists in various fields who will stay and work for the benefit of the...
nation; produce people who will make responsible citizens and have better commitment to the development of the nation; and help to provide the needed manpower in all the sectors of the economy. The human capital theory emphasizes how higher education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive skills possessed by the workforce.

The modernization theory is very explicit on the impact of quality education on economic development of the society. The theory focuses on how higher education transforms an individual’s value, belief and behaviour. Exposure to modernizing institutions such as schools, inculcates modern values and attitudes. These attitudes include openness to new idea, independence from traditional authority, willingness to plan and calculate future exigencies and a growing sense of personal and social efficacy. These normative and attitudinal changes continue throughout the life cycle, permanently altering an individual's relationship to the social structure. The greater the number of people exposed to quality higher education, the greater the level of individual modernity attained by the society. Once a critical segment of the population changes in this way, the pace of society modernization and economic development quickens thus, quality higher education through its effects on individual values and benefits, sets into motion the necessary building blocks for a more productive work force and for sustained economic growth.

The resultant effect of economic development through education are numerous, and they include unity and co-operation. It raises the level of national unity, national consciousness and gives a sense of oneness, common citizenship and a common purpose. When we get quality higher education, Nigerian can solve other problems such as crime and unemployment that exist in our society. Through quality education, the ignorant become learned, the cowardly become valiant, the crooked become the better fruit of the mountains and the woods become sweet and delicious, savage nations become civilized and have universal influence (Ojerinde 2011).

Other benefits of quality higher education include poverty reduction, food security, enhanced economic, social development and the sustainability in capacity building. It brings about literacy which accelerates the process of a general enlightenment in the society, plays a vital in the socialization, occupational preparation and the development of self worth. It brings about social changes in attitude, motivation and incentives which lead to technological change, invention and limitation.

Education as an agent of economic development was realized since the 1950s and early 1960s through the initiative of economist like Schultz (1961), Denison (1962) and Becker (1961) all in Etuk (2006). In Nigeria the link between higher education
was pointed out in the Ashby Commission Report in 1960. Set up in 1959 to plan for the development of higher education in Nigeria between 1960 and 1980 (20 years), the Ashby commission Report, titled "investment in education". Urged the nation to budget more for education because education is an investment in manpower development. Much of the optimism regarding the contribution of education to societal development is based in part, on the belief in the human capital theory, which represents the contribution of economists to development strategies.

The human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal quality 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 requirement must be met:

1. There must be improvements and greater efficiency of technology because higher technology results in greater production.

2. Human resources must be utilized to employ the technology. Human resources are the active factors of production while the machinery are the inactive factors. Without human resources, the machinery alone would not produce and there would be no technology. 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. It is skilled labour. It is entrepreneurial labour.

In effect, the human capital theorists maintain that an investment in education, is an investment in the productivity of members of the population. From the late 1950s till the 1980s in Nigeria, educational planning and national development strategies were dominated by the human capital theory; and numerous studies were made to adduce the evidence that levels of education and levels of economic development of nations of the world were consistently related. In one of such studies, Harbison (1973) documented the consistent pattern of the positive correlation between schooling and economic development by showing that school enrolment ratios were considerably lower for the less advanced nations of the world than for the advanced countries.

Higher 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; the more educated a person, the more his earnings in paid employment. Hence education helps to increase the productivity of individuals which inturn increases the gross national product (GNP) of a nation; helps to put people into vocational areas of their choices which can make them self reliant and contributing member of society; it inculcates the knowledge of good citizenship and engendered peaceful coexistence and stability for sustained national
economic development; it helps members of society to attain self fulfilment and to be contributing members of society, leading to the development of the society.

Implications of Quality for Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Academics in tertiary institutions have a three-part mandate of teaching, research and service to community (Banjo 1998). It is evident that most academics in tertiary institutions are not teachers. It is common for students (particularly freshers) to be total "look I am not here to teach you, I am a lecturer". There is need to formally instill the principles of teaching in all academics, including doctors in medical schools, lawyers in law schools, engineers in universities and polytechnics and even lecturers in College of Education. Quality touches on the educational structure itself, the curriculum content and implementation methods and teachers.

Quality demands that the curriculum must reflect the basic needs of the society and fulfill educational objectives in terms of contents. Relating the curriculum with the needs, problems and aspirations of the nation is a route to functional, qualitative and relevant education.

To achieve these, teachers need to do more than ordinary classroom teaching. The choice of right methods and approaches, the active involvement of students; development of practical skills and ability to translate the Country's needs and aspiration into subject contents as essential ingredient in providing quality educations. These, teachers must therefore be highly qualified and competent, the necessary things of education should be provided alongside conducive research and learning environment for quality education to emerge and be sustained.

It is clear that, in order to create economic development, we need to shift away from the current undue attention paid to the service sector, to the disadvantage of the manufacturing and agricultural sectors (Obanya 1995). This shift has very strong implications for curricular reforms at the tertiary level. There is also unnecessary duplication of courses in existing tertiary institutions, there is need for rationalization of courses. Knowledge product ion and dissemination - research and teaching need to be promoted for quality output.

To promote scholarship, tertiary institution should build capacity for research and teaching activities at an international standard in identified areas that are crucial for national economic and social advancement. Research fund have be competed for from a regulatory body of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund). This is where the issue of performance indicators comes in. Performance indicator policy should be used to determined the funding of research in higher education. For our awareness Etuk (2004) suggest the disbursement of 40% of research grant mechanically to all tertiary
institutions, and the remaining 60% to be competed for, using the performance indicator instrument. This will ensure quality and relevance of research output.

In order to cultivate and promote value orientation in the products of tertiary institutions, the institutions must be perceived 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 if the product of the institutions must possess quality. Management is a necessary support to academics. The institution should devise and initiate management for all categories of managers including senior administrative staff, departmental heads, Provost, Rectors and Vice-Chancellors.

**Conclusion**

Looking at higher education investment and growth rates, it is evident that the educational achievements of a nation's work force is a significant factor in improving the quality of labour as a factor of production and hence promoting economic growth. Higher education though not a homogeneous factor in economic growth, is a very strong factor in promoting growth. For higher education to bring about economic growth, it must be qualitative and functional to meet the needs of the individual and society. Quality education is advocated in this paper as a means of curbing unemployment among educated members of the Nigerian society in order to promote economic development.

**References**


