

VALUE EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC RETURNS

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Abstract

Value is a word that cuts across all fields of human thinking because it connotes what is desirable, something useful, a cherished quality, something that brings satisfaction and can improve one's way of life. Value can also influence choice and alternatives in the action of a human being. This axiology, with these positive characteristics, must have a link with those aspects of education which improve the individual, the society and as a result bring about economic growth and development. This paper attempts to link the philosophical aspects of objective, subjective and hierarchical values of education with their usefulness to education as they affect the social and private returns in economic terms. It examines the extent to which the educational system in Nigeria has used value education to the benefit of her citizenry. The implications of the social- demands and manpower development requirements strategies applied for economic development in Nigeria form the focus of this discussion. The paper concludes by recommending alternatives to improvement in value education for socio-economic development.

Introduction

The term value is viewed differently by different fields of thought. The direct dictionary meaning depicts value as the estimate of worth in terms of money, as the rate in terms of usefulness, importance, evaluation, and esteem (Webster, 1985). Philosophically, value is the quality of a thing which makes it desirable, desired, useful or an object of interest (Angeles, 1981:310). Wokocha (1995) points out that values are standards of conduct, efficiency or worth that the society endorses, maintains and transmits to future generations. Value is the driving force that puts meaning to any human actions and beliefs.

In practical terms, value is appreciated differently by different people. This is why there are different types of values. For example, in examining the objective values of truth, honesty and goodness, human beings react in specific ways to show the extent they value these virtues. Some people do not believe in telling the truth, life is more comfortable for them to thrive in lying. In some communities stealing is applauded, while in others it is taken as an abomination. Goodness cannot be ignored as not being valuable because the good is useful to everybody. Such things like water, sunshine, the air we breathe, health, are appreciated by all. Kneller (1971) confirms that it is the human being that makes everything valuable. Things become valueless when they are not appreciated. But subjective values are appreciated at all times by all peoples. Honest and charitable people are always welcomed wherever they exist. Hierarchical values take care of the human needs of survival, procreation, love, security, hunger and friendship. The philosophical idealist fixes hierarchical values as spiritual and material while the realists take it as rational and empirical. The philosophical pragmatist does not believe in hierarchical values. The introduction leads to such questions as:

What is the link between the existence of these desired and useful aspects of life and education?

What are the economic returns first to the individuals and then to the society?

Need for Educational Expansion

Education is a fire which ignites an individual's potentials. The cherished values of the society must form the basis of a people's education (Okoh, 2003:86). Psacharapoulos (1987:93) notes that within traditional societies education is concerned with the transmission of received knowledge, the maintenance of broad societal consensus and the perpetuation of existing patterns of social differentiation. Furthermore, the functions continue to create a balance towards the utilization of educational institutions as agencies in the selection and allocation of individuals and groups to various economic roles and positions within the social structure. Thus, 'education becomes an independent variable in the process of social change and as structural differentiation increases, it emerges as a quasi-autonomous institution that can both facilitate or even impede the development process.

The expansion of education since the 1980s has found sufficient reason in the economic transformation of society through development aimed at modernization. Quantitative educational growth has been associated with the monetization of local economies (Enaohwo, 1990; Psacharapoulos, 1987). This is why economics of education among other studies in education concerns itself with the private and social returns to educational investment and uses as indicators to economic contribution to development of the desired aspect of life.

Educational expansion follows economic change and acts as a catalyst for further economic expansion. Okeke (1997:93) has also noted that the changing demands of the environment, the growing disenchantment with the status quo, the preferred wants and needs of the society, new ideas, experiences and expectations have evolved change and innovation. Furthermore, in cost benefit terms, private and social rates of return vary according to the type of education. In many societies, limited mobility opportunities combined with the domination of the modern employment sector by government agencies places premium on the possession of educational qualifications for job access. Psacharapoulos (1987:97) refers to

this as Ratchet Effect. The consequences of this effect are: replacing the less qualified by the more qualified; having mass unemployment among primary school leavers; and increasing employment problems for secondary and tertiary school level graduates. For value education, there is need for labour market adjustment in relation to policies.

In rural communities where subsistent economy exists, educational expansion has made it possible for curriculum reforms to be carried out to meet the needs of the society. Normally the rural communities are agrarian. Reforms have to be carried out in terms of the curriculum to engender a commitment to life on land, lower the migration rate and impart knowledge of agriculture to facilitate rural economic development. Urban unemployment could also be reduced through the introduction of vocational education to meet the needs of the urban labour market. Research findings by Hawley et al (1979) show that the propensity of rural individuals to migrate to the towns undoubtedly increases with the level of formal education. Where the educated form a tiny proportion of the total group of migrants, they may be better qualified to fill up the positions of the non-migrants.

Value Education and Economic Returns

Education fosters the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant^ practical and comprehensive, while interest and ability should determine individual's direction in education (NPE, 1998:5-6)

In Nigeria, value education is seen in the social demand for education as a consumption because it yields what is desirable to the society. Educational expansion is associated with occupational opportunities and the demand for educated manpower tends to keep pace with increase in the effort to supply it through education. This can be seen in the increase in the enrolment at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The figures of new private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria is escalating daily and it is difficult for one to get the numerical strength for statistical purposes. At the tertiary level, where the hierarchical needs are most meaningful, students population as at 3997 was recorded at about 250,000 (Oboegbulem, 2001).

Research Findings

It is generally asserted that insofar as economic development is facilitated by a framework that provides an orderly process of power, the expansion of schooling should be a stimulant to development. Research on what education actually does to people to make them more productive has centred principally on the socio-psychological research of McClelland and Winter (1969) and Inkeles and Holsinger (1974) which suggests that education may operate through a transportation of values and attitudes that have direct implications for development. McClelland has attempted to show that historically, periods of development have been associated with a rise in achievement among populations. The argument is that the rise in the need for achievement can be obtained through education, thereby stimulating economic development. Inkeles and Holsinger assert that individual modernity scores are raised through experience in modern situation and the level of formal education everywhere is the strongest predictor of such scores. Their work implies that a principal contribution of education to development lies in its ability to transform individual attitudes and values from the traditional towards the modern to enhance the rate of structural modernization in a society and plausible rate of economic development.

Lockheed et al (1980) has found out that education is associated with substantial gains in the efficiency and productivity of farmers. Schooling in their study was regarded as an accelerator in the rural development process. Its role without the existence of modernizing elements.

Angaye (1997 : 63 - 73) in his research on education and family, job and general life satisfaction in Nigeria agrees with economists of education that education is both an investment and a consumption. The investment aspect enhances future output, economic growth and higher life earnings, while the consumption factor depicts education-pursued purely for its own sake as a means of developing the individual's knowledge, personality and enjoyment of the fuller life permitted by education. His findings confirms the following values brought about by education The higher the level of education, the more satisfying the family life. The more educated derive more job satisfaction than the less educated.

The attainment of the good life or general life satisfaction does not depend on individual's level of education.

Life value or perceived important things in life are dependent on individual's level of education.

These findings point to the economic returns of value education. In addition, the market forces influence education especially at the tertiary level where skilled manpower is produced. Furthermore, education is viewed and accepted as a socio-economic activity which brings about development and changes the ways of living and contributes to economic growth (Ebong, 2003) .

A pilot study in the form of an interview was carried out on three groups of teachers doing Sandwich programme at the University of Port Harcourt Faculty of Education. They were teachers of primary and secondary,

technical schools, numbering 406 with National Certificate in Education The interview was conducted by the writer to find out why students preferred to cheat in examinations by paying their teachers to collaborate instead of studying hard to pass their examinations.

Question 1. How many of you are headmasters /headmistresses of schools? - 118

Question 2: How many are principals or vice principals ? - 102

The remaining 186 were classroom teachers who could be called upon for school duties by the school head (headmaster or mistress or principal). The school heads were separated from the rest of the students and the following questions put to them were answered as follows.

Questions	Yes	%	No	%
1. Has any examination malpractice been reported in your school?	208	94.5	12	5.5
2. Type of malpractice -				
copying from pupils/students	208	94.5	12	5.5
teacher collecting money to answer questions for students.	184	83.6	36	16.4
Examination officials paid by school head so that they do not enforce examination rules and regulations.	40	18.2	180	81.8
3. Why does the malpractices occur?				
Parents want their children and wards to pass their examinations.	184	83.6	36	16.4
Teachers are not well paid, so this gives them the opportunity to earn extra money.	184	83.6	36	16.4
Students/pupils like the easy way out and do not				
Attend classes	215	97.7	5	2.3
Students/pupils do not take their homework seriously	215	97.7	5	2.3
Students /pupils absent themselves from tests.	215	97.7	5	2.3

The 186 classroom teachers agreed totally with numbers 2 and 3 questions. The 406 teachers were asked to suggest strategies that would help to stop the malpractice. Among their suggestions were :

Providing teaching equipment to the schools.

Furnishing the classrooms with chairs, tables and blackboard.

Reducing the number of students in each class.

v4- .. paying the, teachers as at when due.

Making sure parents-teachers association take the academic welfare of their children and wards seriously.

The implication of these replies bothers on the fact that the students who cannot face working hard for success will not have the good attitude at work in employment. The value of the dignity of labour should be made practical by not aiding students to pass examinations as described in the study. The productivity values derived from punctuality, covering of the-syllabus by the teachers, attendance and participation in school activities by both staff students and pupils, constant progress evaluation should be encouraged to make economic growth in the school environment and in the community feasible.

Conclusion

The provision of literacy, numeracy and general education forming the basic ability in learning is vital in bringing about change and innovation. Generally, the burden of socio-economic development rests squarely on the educational system as the research report highlighted shows. The educators, associates and mentors should not rest on their oars until they can map out and monitor ways of providing adequate resources for the provision of value education.

At the primary school level, the pupils are not only responsible for knowing how to read and write, they should spend time also in school learning about the objective values and the subjective values such as truth, honesty, charity, etc. At the secondary school level, subjective values have to be stressed as many of them would branch off into vocational ventures. It is stipulated in the National Policy on Education as one of the specific goals that secondary education shall raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under the broad national goal and live as good citizens (NPE, 1998 :16 - 17). The hierarchical needs are more pronounced after graduation from tertiary institutions when the market forces determine the earning profile of the individual and the responsibility of raising a family makes one to seek good life.

The different research reports cited glaringly show that value education brings about social returns for the individual and economic returns for both the individual in terms of earnings and improvement of life. The pilot study using interview as a tool needs to be carried out as a study with more schools involving teachers and students to add more knowledge on value education. In addition to the teachers suggestions for improvement, it would be necessary that the

Commissioners for Education put the examination officers in check to make them accountable for their actions. Students/pupils should be morally bound to know that there is greater honour in passing examinations through their own effort than in cheating because they become very wanting when they get into employment.

Sometimes it is questionable whether highly specialized forms of vocational and technical training represent an efficient form of investment unless they are closely geared to on-the-job experience and actual labour market conditions. It would be more meaningful to the individuals and the society as a whole if the processes go hand in hand with the existence of highly efficient non-formal educational structure as provided by functional literacy and skill acquisition programmes.

However, as cost-benefit, the effect of massive public subsidization of education at the secondary and tertiary levels may enhance private rates of returns and stimulate increasing demands. The school status should not be judged by its academic performance only. The productivity indicators of hard work, punctuality, discipline, honesty, diligence are some of the economic values that may form a useful evaluation index for economic returns. Formal schooling is only complimentary in imparting vocational skills. Education which is more functional to societal needs Would go a long way to encourage value education.

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