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Tertiary Education and Human Capital Development: Implication on the National Development

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Abstract

This study examines tertiary education and human capital development: its implication on the national development. A commendable tertiary education will bring about rare, valuable and un-substitutable human capital which will apparently move the economy forward. Having a dwindling growth implies that sustainable development cannot take place if the human capital (skilled person) required to bring about progressive change in the nation is not available. The study employed the ex post facto survey research design. The sample size used in the study was 200 academic staff of Lagos State University selected randomly from four faculties. The hypotheses and data collected were analyzed using the Person product moment correlation coefficient. Two hypotheses were tested and the results showed that tertiary education has a positive and significant relationship with national development and that tertiary education has a positive, strong and significant relationship with human capital development. It concluded by advancing that Nigerian government most especially Lagos State government must bridge the gap that exists between crises saturated university system and the students' who will become the economy developers. Also, it is pertinent for Lagos state government and Nigerian government at large to focus on how to develop and utilize maximally the capacities and

capabilities of its valuable assets which are its human resource. Tertiary education must be adequately funded and equipped with the modern learning technologies so the students' can compete in this globalizing world and government needs to take drastic measures to reduce the level of brain-drain in the country.

Keywords: Education, Human Capital, Economy, Development, Policy

Introduction

It is generally accepted that education of the people especially at the tertiary level is a great leap towards achieving robust human capital development for an economy that seeks competitive advantage in this globalizing world. This implies that sustainable development cannot take place if the human capital (skilled person) required to bringing about progressive change in the economy is not available. The history of higher education in Nigeria is actually the history of Yaba Higher College in Lagos in 1932, which gave birth to University College, Ibadan in 1948 (Akinlua, 2007). Precisely, at the end of world war II when Elliot Commission was set up to report on the facilities of the existing centres of higher education in British West Africa and to make recommendations regarding future university development in Nigeria. The setting up of the commission marked a new era in the history of higher education in West Africa (Bakare, 2006). On the basis of this background, this study is undertaken to critically examine the effect of tertiary education on human capital development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian economy has been stunned by several economic and social problems with illiteracy being top of the list. This is pathetic for a country that is blessed with enormous human and material resources. On this problem, education has been seen as a mechanism that can eradicate this nuisance. For several decades, United Nations has placed great emphasis on primary and, more recently, tertiary education (Odeleye, 2012).

However, the educational sector in Nigeria is bedeviled with bottlenecks. This is attributed to the fact that attention given to education by the Nigerian governments (both past and present) is low. Even many years after independence, it is stunning to know that the adult illiteracy rate is still at 74% (Dauda, 2009) and the gross enrollment rate is also low.

The above mentioned problems constitute the basis for this research work which aims at examining the effect of tertiary education and human capital development on national development.

Literature Review

1 Education- Webster dictionary defines education as the process of educating or teaching. it further explained that, to educate means, to develop knowledge, skill, or character of the person. thus, education was defined as the means to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of a student. it is also described as the formal process by society to deliberately transmit its accumulated knowledge, skills, habits, customs and values from one generation to the next. Education can then be described as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competence and the cultural norms of a society by people and to transmit this life to

the coming generations so as to enhance perpetual development of the society (Haralambos and Heald, 2006).

Education is regarded, globally, as a potent instrument for introducing and sustaining social change in human societies, as well as shaping its destiny. Apart from serving as a vehicle for enhancing upward social and economic mobility, education is regarded as a key to social reconstruction (Ukeje, 1995), and an instrument for conserving, transmitting and renewing culture (Erder, 1966).

Education imparts knowledge, teaches skills, and instills attitudes to the recipients. Imparting knowledge means putting across facts, current thinking, theories, principles or laws; teaching skills is imparting practical skills, comprehension and ability to see implications or solve problems; instilling attitudes include inculcating tolerance, open-mindedness, scientific detachment and healthy skepticism (Langer, 1977). These are requisites for social integration, performance of productive tasks, and for effecting national development (FRN, 2004).

To educate the mind is to liberate it from the shackles of fear, prejudice, ignorance, superstition etc, and to develop a free, independent and responsible citizenry. Knowledge, attitude, skills and aspiration changes through education constitute blocks for human capacity building. Education is, however, loathed in primitive societies where it is believed that learning brings disobedience and heresy into the world. Education is a life-long socialization/interaction process (Schaefer, 2007) through which social norms, values and cultures are learned, shared and transmitted from generation to generation.

2 Importance of Education - Many perceive education as an instrument for self-reliance, social reconstruction and economic development. the increasing demand for education and the resultant expansion in enrolments have quite serious impact on the future development of education in the poor countries (Uwaifo and Uddin, 2009). countries that are poor would become rich if they can invest heavily in education.

3 Human Capital Development

According to Son (2010:2) "human capital refers to the ability and efficiency of people to transform raw materials and capital into goods and services, and the consensus is that these skills can be learned through educational system". Furthermore, human capital development is seen as a process of increasing human knowledge, enhance skills in vocational and technical education for increased output and encourage creativity of trainees through systematic, sustainable and strategic way (Enyekit et al., 2011).

Human capital development means increasing requisite skills, capacities and capabilities through strategic and systematic ways for the development of the individual and onward transmission to the society.

4 Overview of the Nigerian National Policies on Education

The Nigerian policy on education has gone through many stages. Aladekomo (2004) lamented that the lack of policy coherence was a matter of great concern. In 1981, Nigeria launched the national policy on education. Its main focus was on self-realization, individual and national efficiency, national unity with the objective of achieving social, cultural, economic, political,

scientific and technological development. It was structured into three stages as follows: stage one was 6 years of primary school education; stage two was 5 to 7 years of post-primary school education for secondary, teacher training college and sixth form; stage three was 4 to 6 yrs of tertiary education in college of education or polytechnic or university.

In response to the various criticisms, the objectives of the policy were broadened in 1985, to include free primary education among others (Uwaifo and Uddin, 2009). The 6-3-3-4 system which broken the period of education into four stages emerged. It comprised; the first 6 years of primary school education for children of ages 6 to 11 years, the second stage of 3 years of junior secondary school, the third stage of 3 years of senior secondary school education and the fourth stage of a minimum of 4 years of tertiary education. Uwaifo and Uddin (2009) described it as a system of education which was job-oriented as it placed premium on manual activities, technical proficiency, and respect for dignity of labour and economic efficiency.

In 2004, nigerian education policy was redefined to adopt education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Education goals were then defined in terms of its relevance to the need of the individual as well as in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment, realities of the modern world and rapid social changes (Alaba, 2010). Emphasis was placed on skill acquisition. The policy on education proposed a priority of place for religion and moral instructions for the moral and spiritual well-being of individuals but directed that no child should be forced to accept any religious instruction which was contrary to the wishes of the parents (Fgn, 2004).

The nigeria's education reform of 2006 shifted focus to entrepreneurship and skill training and realignment of curricula to meet emerging need of a global economy and knowledge society (Kazeem and Ige, 2012). The reform introduced the 9-3-4 system of education which was referred to as the universal basic education (ube). The four stages were compressed to three, with the first two stages of the former policy merged to one during which education was made compulsory. The first 9 years was referred to as basic and compulsory education (primary and junior secondary), the next 3 years was for the senior secondary school and the last was the four years in the tertiary institutions. Its curricula were drawn up to address education for all (efa) programme of the millennium development goals (mdgs). The scheme targeted total eradication of illiteracy by the year 2010 and increase in adult literacy rate from 57% to 70% by 2003 (Kazeem and Ige, 2012).

There had been the debate on educational standards in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1974) argued that the standards in education have not declined. Whereas Ukeje (1995) on his part held the view that the standard had indeed declined significantly. Deterioration in the standard of education and lack of specific training in the areas of relevance to the development of the economy was identified as some of the factors responsible for urban violence. It was also argued that, deterioration in the standard of education had caused the breakdown of social values in the traditional structures which had in the past kept Nigerians together. Alaba (2010) argued that, the quality of education determines the quality of the products of its education system and by extension the quality and quantity, pace and level of its development.

5 Impact of Government Educational Policy on National Development

Education in Nigeria is more of a public enterprise that has witnessed government complete and dynamic intervention and active participation (Ibrahim, 2006). It is the view of the formulated education policy in Nigeria to use education as a vehicle in achieving national development. Education being an instrument of change, in Nigeria education policy has been a product of evolution through series of historical developments.

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria was launched in 1977. The orientation of the policy is geared towards self-realization, individual and national efficiency, national unity etc. aimed at achieving social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological development. In 1985, the objectives of the policy were broadened to include free primary education among others. As noted by Kusamotu (2007), this policy has been reviewed from time to time. Until 1984, the structure of Nigeria education system was 6 years of primary schools, 5 to 7 years of post primary schools (Secondary, Teacher Training College and sixth form) and 4 to 6 yrs of tertiary education (College of education, polytechnics, College of Technology and University education). From 1985, the structure that emanated can be classified thus, pre-primary or kindergarten education (2 to 3 yrs), for the children of ages 3 to 5 years the primary school which is of 6 years period for children of ages 6 to 11 yrs, the post primary education which is of 6 years duration but divided into two halves (3 years of Junior Secondary School and 3 years of Senior Secondary School) and the 4 to 6 of tertiary education level. This is called the 6-3-3-4 system (Kusamotu, 2007).

An inquiry into the fiscal operations and developments of Nigeria revealed that federal government expenditure on education is categorized under the social and community services sector. The implication is that education is an impure public good (Omovo, 2006).

The importance of education is reminiscent in its role as a means of understanding, controlling, altering and redesigning of human environment (CBN, 2010). Education also improves health, productivity and access to paid employment (Okolocha and Ile, 2005). Education has a link with economic development. As once remarked by Okoroma (2002: 14) "If you see any economy that is not doing well, find out what is spent on education". Onipede (2003); Salami (1992) have all revealed that increase in national income and per capita income is a function of education and that differences among nations can better be explained by differences in the endowments of human, rather than physical capital. This underscores the reason why the 'Asian Tigers' in the past three decades allocated between 25-35% of their annual budgets to their education sector (Salami, 1992).

In most developing countries, improving the widening access to education especially basic education is a cardinal objective of their governments. Education is seen as a right and responsibility to be guaranteed to all generations (Ubokobong, 1993), however, in Nigeria, elements of uncertainty have beclouded the sector in nominal and real terms. The schools suffer from over-crowding, poor sanitation, poor management, and poor intra-sectorial allocation. Other features are abandoned capital projects, inadequate funding, poor conditions of service etc. These most time led to closure of schools and strikes. The attendant and composite effects are poor quality of teaching and poor quality of products.

Education, as a key component of human capital formation is recognized as being vital in increasing the productive capacity of people. Education, especially at the higher level, contributes directly to economic growth by making individual workers more productive and leading to the

creation of knowledge, ideas, and technological innovation. The effect of education on technological innovation is direct following the Romer/Solow growth theory framework (Odeleye, 2012). An investment in education is beneficial to the society, both at micro and macro levels and affects the system both directly and indirectly effect. Education is basic to development and is also regarded as an instrument through which the society can be transformed. As a salient factor in transition programme, education equips human resources with the needed knowledge, skills and competencies, which would make them functional, and contribute to the all-round development of the nation. It does not only help to supply the essential human capital which is a necessary condition for sustainable economic growth but it is also a key to poverty reduction and a major vehicle for promoting equity, fairness and social justice (Todaro, 2007).

Statement of Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between tertiary education and national development.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between tertiary education and human capital development in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed the survey research design which is *ex post facto* in nature. The sample size was 200 academic staff of Lagos State University consisting of 50 respondents each from four faculties. Of the 200 questionnaires administered 180 (90%) were returned in usable condition.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

The study tested three hypotheses using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented below.

Hypothesis 1 There is no significant relationship between tertiary education and national development.

Correlations

		TERTIARY EDUCATION	NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TERTIARY EDUCATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.632**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Pearson Correlation	.632**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In hypothesis one, the result showed that there is a positive relationship between tertiary education and national development. ($r = .632, n = 180, p .000 < .0005$). This implies that tertiary

education has a positive and significant relationship with national development. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

The result of this finding is in line with the study of Bloom, Canning and Chan (2006) who found out that expanding tertiary education aids technological catch-up and help maximize economic output which positively affects national development. This presupposes that technological expansion that helps boost production capacities of a country is being aided by the level of the skilled human capital a country possesses.

Hypothesis 2 There is no significant relationship between tertiary education and human capital development in Nigeria.

Correlations

		TERTIARY EDUCATION	HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT
TERTIARY EDUCATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT	Pearson Correlation	.844**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In Hypothesis two, the result shows that there is a positive relationship between tertiary education and human capital development. ($r = .844, n = 180, p .000 < .005$). This implies that tertiary education has a positive, strong and significant relationship with human capital development. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

This study is in line with the findings of (Egibiremolen and Anaduaka, 2014). They found that human capital development is requisite in the achievement of viable economic growth in Nigeria. They posited further that, government and policy makers should make concerted and sincere efforts in building and developing human capacity through adequate educational funding across all levels. It is pertinent to note that a country that wants to achieve sustainable development must develop her human capital who is her greatest asset must boost its funding for the educational sector.

Recommendations

Based on its findings this study makes the following recommendations. Firstly, in the area of tertiary education and national development, the Nigerian government most especially the Lagos State government must bridge the gap that exists between the crisis saturated university system and the students' who will become the national developers, change exponents and development crusaders. Government needs to channel more resources to the capital intensive subdivision of education such as; building of classrooms and laboratories, purchase of teaching aids etc. as these will help in enhancing knowledge, increased productivity and by implication promoting

national growth and secondly, in the area of tertiary education and human capital development, it is pertinent for the Lagos state government and the Nigerian government at large to focus on how to develop and utilize maximally the capacities and capabilities of its valuable assets which are its human resource. Tertiary education must be adequately funded and equipped with the latest learning technologies so the students' can compete in this globalizing world. Human capital makes things happen effectively and efficiently in the society, so their development must not be taken with levity.

Conclusion

This study establishes that tertiary education is essential for the development of human capital that can transform an economy positively and helps the state or country compete in the midst of others. It noted that tertiary education goes a long way in determining the level of human capital development. There is an apparent inter-connectivity of tertiary education and national development of a country vis-à-vis human capital development. Also, well-balanced governmental policies help shape the position of the national and human capital development. Lagos State government on the one hand and the Nigerian government on the other hand must understand that a synergetic relationship exists between tertiary education and human capital development. And this relationship is mutually inter-penetrating and mutually reinforcing. When factors that enhance tertiary education are put in place, it benefits the humans and leads to increased productivity in the economy. Finally, Tertiary education is very significant for developing human resources of any nation (Fapohunda, 2012).

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