

ACHIEVING HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA THROUGH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR NATION BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

Human capital development is something that must exist or happen for National development. In addition, human capital development teaches people how to utilize the power of diverse thinking styles (analytical and intuitive) so that they achieve holistic best practical solution. Human capital development and training and development are basically the same. Human capital development presupposes investments, activities and processes that produce vocational and technical education knowledge, skills, health or values that are embodied in people. It implies building an appropriate balance and critical mass of human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to be fully engaged and contribute to goals of an organization or a nation. This paper is geared to x-ray the meaning of human capital development in relation to nation building. The authors took a cursory look at the concept.. the areas of problems facing the application of human capital development in the country were touched in the paper. Also, possible recommendations were made therein.

Keywords; Human capital, development, vocational education.

INTRODUCTION

Human Capital

Various authorities have attempted to define human capital. There is need for us to look at the definition of Oxford Dictionary of Finance and banking; the concept is conveyed as the skills, general or specific, acquired by an individual in the cause of vocational and technical education training and the industrial work place after training. Human capital otherwise, human resources in vocational and technical education is an inevitable issue that need attention of both the government and spirited individuals. Human capital development is something that must exist or happen for National development. In addition, human capital development teaches people how to utilize the power of diverse thinking styles (analytical and intuitive) so that they achieve holistic best practical solution. Human capital development and training and development are basically the same. It takes human capital to organize and rationalize the contributions of other factors of production before a result oriented productive goal can be achieve in any industrial setting. Therefore human capital development is about supporting cum investing in human capital, coaching, training, internship and human capital management.

Fundamentally, it is that intangible factor of the production that brings human intellect, skills and competencies in the production and provision of goods and services. It is that human capability and productivity engendered through knowledge and skills acquired from vocational and technical education, training and experience and facilitated by an environment. Elements of human capital

would include knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation belonging to an enterprise or society and engaged in the development of that enterprise or society to fulfill its objectives. The concept of human capital was introduced.

Human capital development presupposes investments, activities and processes that produce vocational and technical education knowledge, skills, health or values that are embodied in people. It implies building an appropriate balance and critical mass of human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to be fully engaged and contribute to goals of an organization or a nation. Any effort to increase human knowledge, enhance skills, productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of individuals is an effort human capital development (Erhurua, 2007).

Human capital development as a process of increasing human knowledge, enhance skills in vocational and technical education for increase in productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of trainees should be systematic, sustainable and strategic. The process should be systematic to the extent that there should be a plan for which previous activities will provide support for upcoming activities while facilitating the attainment of set goals. The process should be sustainable since the product (human capital) must make desired and enduring impact on the organization or society. The process should be strategic to the extent that there are well-defined goals and targets whose attainments are time bound. It should be dynamic, responsive and result oriented; continually evolving and proactive to address emerging challenges. Akingbola further stated that there should therefore be an effective monitoring system to inform further necessary improvements in the process.

Concept of Vocational Education

Several views and opinions have been in the past years argued on the meaning and the place of vocational education both at the levels of primary, secondary and university respectively. These developments have created moves in the inclusion of some vocational subjects and courses in the curriculum of both pre-primary, post-primary and even tertiary institutions all with a view to achieve the needed employable skills in the development of the youths and the society at large. The term vocational and technical education is a comprehensive term referring to the educational process when it involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economy and social life. The broad educational goals of vocational and technical education distinguish it from “vocational training: which is directed to developing the particular skills and related knowledge required by a specific occupation or group of occupations UNESCO, (1978) in Anya and Neukar (2004).

Okoro (1993) used the term vocational education to refer to a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. Here, vocational education is seen as a precursor of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. Nevertheless, Okorie (2001) sees vocational education as that type of education, which develops the mental and physical qualities of people thereby increasing their skills, knowledge and attitudes required for utilizing the natural resources needed for economic development of the nation and for their own self-employment.

According to Enyekit and Enyenili (2007), vocational education includes preparation for employment in any occupation for which specialized education is required, for which there is a societal need, which can be most appropriately done in schools. It is concerned with the whole hierarchy of occupations from those requiring relatively short periods of specialized preparations such as clerks, typists to occupations requiring two or more of specialized such as inhalation therapist: thus it includes the whole spectrum of labour force from semi-skilled to technicians and paraprofessionals.

The definitions above exposed that vocational education have some peculiar characteristics and features that tend to enable or make a great landmarks in the development of the individual citizens in particular and the economy at large.

Vocational education is also ensured in the national policy on education (2004) include the followings:

1. Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, and advanced craft and technical levels
2. Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills for agricultural, commercial and economic development
3. Give trained and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically

In consonance to the above assertions and visions, vocational education will achieve the following:

1. Full employment for the youths
2. Technological advancement and economic development
3. International economic and political independent
4. Reduction of crime and social vices
5. Effective supervision and administration of vocational programmes and institutions by vocational experts.

Roles of Vocational and Technical Education for Human Capital Development

Vocational and technical education is a vehicle upon which the skills of workforce are built. Without effective implementation of vocational and technical education, we cannot hope for a future self-reliant graduate with the required skills and flexibility for sustainable human capital development in the global age. Vocational and technical education as an instrument for change and development and a provider of service oriented skills, which play a significant role in economic revival for sustainable human capital development. It is on the recognition of these needs that the National policy on education places on vocational and technical skills at the secondary and tertiary institution (Awotunde, 2004). Effective utilization of vocational and technical education and implementation of the programme will inculcate the necessary skills and competencies that would help the youth to be self-reliant. This would lead to the much desired human capital development in the economy. Also Amaehule and Enyekit (2010) went further to explain that vocational and technical education equips youth with technological skills and managerial skills to manage human and material resources of their own business through the acquisition of skills and competencies in areas of vocational and technical education.

The teaching of vocational and technical subjects requires integrated application of teaching methods and creative approach to their selection and structuring. The specific nature of this kind of teaching requires the application of methods based image and performance, rather than methods solely based on discoursed, hence, Toby (1988) in Onojetah (2010) listed methods used for instruction in vocation technical subjects as: demonstration, lecture, discussion, simulation, 'direct research, visual presentation, supervised performance as the work station, trips, conferences, homework, written and practical examinations.

The complexity of the instructional process coupled with a variety of facts and problems associated with the teaching of vocational subjects, requires skill in making the correct choice of methods in a specific teaching situation. As a matter of fact, theoretical explanations should be accompanied by, diagrams, drawing, graphs, demonstrations as well as schedules and tables for effective teaching and understanding of vocational subjects.

Re-evaluation of vocational curriculum and programmes; The curriculum course content and programme of vocational subjects/courses should be reviewed and compared to the standards of other countries in making sure explained that curriculum evaluation mean the evaluation of the educational goals to find out how far they satisfy the needs of the society. These projection of vocational

education: Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) programme evaluation review technique, cost-effectiveness analysis on the follow-up studied.

Training and re-training approach: the use of the Technical Teacher Training Programme (TTTP) is also seen as a method or approach that could be used for the achievement of the projection of vocation education in Nigeria for the next 25 years of the 21st century. Technical teacher training is an education exposure that assists interested individuals to acquire manipulative skills in their chosen occupations, Olaitan (1997). The individual technical teacher is specifically trained for competency in classroom and workshop.

The needs and importance of training of the vocational teacher can never be overstressed as these objectives are geared towards the preparation of human and material resources for industrial and self-employment. Training function, therefore, proceeds from the assumption that the gap between required and actual performance, which calls for a bridge via training, is the result of inadequacy of knowledge, skills and attitudes, Okorie (2000).

Re-orienting Societal Values for Vocational Education:

The society needs to be re-oriented about the values of vocational education as a special field of human discipline that has its contribution to the development of the economy. It has been the views of the layman on the streets and even some educated men on general education that vocational education is meant for dropouts and no-do-wells. Against these backgrounds, the society should accept that fact that there are geniuses and good brains in vocational education who have contributed immensely to the development of the society.

Challenges of Human Capital Development through Vocational Education

The occurrence and prevalence of involuntary unemployment – retrenchments, redundancy, underemployment, and reduction in the workforce and employment.

1. Declining production in the industries
2. Sharp cuts in human resource training budgets
3. Reduction in wages and salaries, voluntary and involuntary
4. Uncertainties and the attendant low morale among the existing workforce
5. Inflation as a result of decline in production of goods and services.

In stating the key challenges of human capital development in Nigeria, Gumbel and Wartzman (2005) in Anyom (2010) noted thus:

Environment	Organization	Individual
Rise of the internet	Downsizing	Matching people and organization
Workforce diversity	Decentralization	Empowerment
Globalization	Organizational restructuring	Brain drain
Legislation	Organizational culture	Job insecurity
Evolving work and family roles	Outsourcing	Ethical dilemmas and social
	Competitive position, cost, quality	

Furthermore, Okoroafor (2010) also noted that:

The main problem is lack of sponsorship.

Management of the tertiary institutions find it difficult to sponsor the lecturers to seminars, conferences, and short courses claiming that there is lack of fund. This has reduced the rate, the lecturers are upgraded. the month find it difficult to sponsor themselves.

Inadequate infrastructure:

The Lecturers do not have the opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice due to lack of infrastructure. According to Nwachukwu (1998) in Enyekit and Obara (2009) noted that many of the development programmes are not properly planned and there are no sequences to the courses offered from year to year.

Inadequate Timing:

Time should be provided for lecturers to go and upgrade themselves. Work load should not be so demanding that they preclude lecturers from research and time to develop new skills, abilities and knowledge through research and innovation. Intellectual properties are developed to enhance socioeconomic growth and competitiveness as globalization heightens.

Lack of reward for Excellence:

All academic staff should be inspired to initiate inventions and seek resources for research. There should be promotion reward for scholarly excellence.

CONCLUSION

Reforms in education often come about when the current practices are challenges and questions are challenged and questions are asked about the way things are done. The search for a more efficient way of achieving educational objectives may lead to proposal for either a new way of doing the same thing, or restricting the current provisions to enable achievement of the same set of goals. Education should has played and continues to play a vital role in human and material capital development. Teachers should have the potential to be major contributors in the training and retraining of employees. Teachers should be skillful in facilitating the entire instructional process, include assessing student needs, developing a framework for instruction, creating the appropriate environment and evaluating learning. These skills are transferable from the school setting to the training environment in business and industry. In other words, given its desired impact on the development of any nation, reform is more often than not, undertaken after very intensive and extensive research, policy analysis and postulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adequate infrastructure services that support the full mobilization of all economic sectors.
2. A sound, stable and globally competitive economy with a GDP of not less than \$900 billion and a per capita income of not less than \$4000 per annum.
3. A modern, technological enable, agricultural sector that fully exploits the vast agricultural resources of the country, ensures national food security and contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings.
4. A vibrant and globally competitive manufacturing sector that contributes significantly to GDP, with a manufacturing value added of not les than 40%.

5. A health sector that supports and sustains a life expectancy of not less than 70 years and reduces to the barest minimum the burden of infectious diseases, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases.
6. Manufacturing a vibrant and globally competitive manufacturing sector that would contribute significantly to GDP with a manufacturing value added of not less than 40%

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