

Qualitative Manpower Development through Effective Public Policies: the Pathway to Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Meeting the needs of the present without jeopardizing the chances of the future generations to meet their own needs, is the thrust of sustainable development. The realization of the lofty aims of sustainable development is a herculean task for developing nations given their low level of capital formation. This paper examined three goals of sustainable development – poverty alleviation, reduction in inequality and food security within the context of the extent to which qualitative manpower development through effective public policies can enhance the prospects of developing countries in realizing such goals by year 2030. It is a descriptive analysis based on content analysis in which data was sourced from secondary materials such as books, journals, magazines, periodicals, internet etc. The human capital theory by Barney (1991) was adopted as its theoretical framework. The paper ran in parts- introduction, problem statement, literature review, theoretical framework, the gap in literature, methodology, findings, recommendations and conclusion. The results of the study indicate that qualitative manpower development will facilitate the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria. It also concluded that such qualitative manpower development could be realized through a revisit of existing public policies to make them effective.

Keywords: *Qualitative manpower development, Effective public policies, Sustainable development, Neo-classical theory of environmental sustainability, Capital formation.*

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Background to the Study

It is obvious that the growth of tangible capital stock which is the springboard for growth and development of any nation depends to a great extent on the human capital development. This makes the development of human capital the focus of concern in many countries in recent times. Without adequate investment in developing human capital, the possibility of the growth of a nation might be minimal. Human capital development is the process of increasing knowledge, skills, competencies and the capacities of people in a country. Historical evidences reveal that the advanced countries depended on education for their rapid economic growth, such as those of United States, former Soviet Union, Denmark and Japan. Miachi (2006), observes that “there were significant relationships between their economic growth and the quantum and kinds of education provided to their work-forces”. Similarly, the increase in the Gross National Product (GNP) depends on the national expenditure on education. For instance, Harbison and Myres (1964), found a significant statistical relationship between levels of human capital development and GNP. The totality of the population of a country which determines the potential labour force of that country, is referred to as her human resources. The European Commission (2007), posits that “investment in human resource determines the types, quality, availability and productivity of the nation's manpower. In Nigeria, the education sector has always constituted the instrument and process for human resource development. Through policy reforms, the education sector has made attempts at meeting the challenge of the global world economies which is encapsulated in the Vision 2020(Nigeria).The vision envisaged that Nigeria would attain a sustainable socio-economic development by the year 2020.

A nation's economy is reflected on her standard of living, knowledge, longevity , food sufficiency, housing, good health care delivery system ,etc. Eziefula and Umezurike (2014), believe that “any nation that does not have the above for her citizenry has economic problem”. In his own view, Akoma (2011) opines that, “economic problem is the undesirable gap between the desired economic condition and the actual situation”. He further explains that “Nigeria has economic problem because the nations mode of production, power, consumption, import substitution, are in disorder”. To transform the economy, “the government has to address the fundamentals by deciding which sectors should grow in which places and aligning infrastructure, innovation , human capacity building and other investments to make it happen” (Ezefula & Umezurike 2014). Azikwe (2008) believes, “it implies a change in a forward direction, a modification in the positive sense, and a change of an improvement”.

Development is therefore, seen as, a process of change for the better. Sustainable development in another view implies constant and steady economic growth as a result of acquisition of knowledge and skills used for solving national problems that add value to lives and property .Simply put, it means “sustained social, economic, political, scientific and technological growth of a nation and its members”. Nwazor, (2012), made an important point when he observed that the “ability of a country to follow sustainable development paths is determined to a large extent by the capacity as well as ecological and geographical condition”. According to him, “the fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial question related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on the understanding of environmental

potentials and limits of needs as perceived by the people of the country in question". Interestingly, Ajayi (2006), captured the situations in the following words:

The 21st century workforce lacks new knowledge, generally apathetic to globalization, reluctant to adopt IT, averse to multi-skills and change .21st century workforce lacks ability to apply knowledge to real situation; frequency of job changes inhibits acquisition of meaningful experience.

There is the need to underscore the necessity for effective policies to realize the objectives of sustainable development. It must also be emphasized that there is difficulty in determining what is "good " or effective public policy agenda setting, designing, implementation and evaluation .This problem derives from the fact that in many circumstances , the success in solving social problems does not depend only on the efforts of a single organization, but of a multitude of them, and also because the results are influenced by factors outside the control of policy makers. Therefore , it is even more difficult to establish a straightforward set of competencies necessary to deliver good policies .Taking these limitations into account , there are certain accepted characters of a good policy:

- a. It is rational in the sense that the chosen means has a high probability of delivering the desired and declared goals and objectives ;
- b. At the legal level, it does not contradict the existing provisions and respects the basic entitlements of the citizens:
- c. Feasible in the sense that the instruments selected are not so costly (in terms of money , time and human costs)as to make them impossible to recur to, and
- d. Political viability; from the perspective of policies not being irremediably blocked by citizens or interested stakeholders.

The Problem

Western Civilization recognizes the importance of manpower planning and development as a human resource(HRM) practice .Thus, the practice has witnessed "paradigm shift from macro-analytical approach to macro strategic approach. This however, is not the situation in developing countries where Nigeria for instance, micro level perspective is yet to be fully harnessed. Ulrich (2007) , observes that "apart from the traditional personnel functions, HRM has recognized new roles in terms of employee champion, change agent and strategic partner". In addition, Ake (2002) , believes that "the development of indigenous manpower to serve as the propelling force for national growth and development is no doubt a key to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development ". This is quite indispensable considering the argument of the concept of transfer of technology as a propelling force for the development of the developing countries such as Nigeria. However, it is important to state that:

the lack of adequate manpower planning and development in Nigeria on the part of government cannot be farfetched from the lack of understanding of both the concept and methods for manpower planning and development in a post – colonial Nigerian state (Ekpo, 2006).

In this most populous African country, macro and micro manpower planning and development as an important HR strategy for achieving national and organizational performance is hardly taken seriously by the Nigerian public sector. As a matter of fact, public

sector managers see manpower planning and development as mere ritual and academic exercise. To attain a qualitative manpower development that would stand the test of time via the challenges of sustainable development, effective public policies have to come on stream. Before now, such policies had hardly been enunciated. This is the only way to attaining the lofty ideals of sustainable development. The present study seeks to underscore the need to evolve effective public policies. This paper seeks to suggest the nature/structure of policies that would provide the much desired qualitative manpower development to realize the ultimate goal of sustainable development.

Objectives of the Study

The study has as its broad objective, to underscore the necessity for policies that would provide for qualitative manpower development towards the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria.

The specific objectives include to:

- a) Identify the components of the programme for qualitative manpower development in Nigeria.
- b) Isolate the stakeholders that must be involved in formulating such policies.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following questions will be addressed:

- a. What should be the nature/structure of a policy framework that would ensure an effective manpower development in Nigeria?
- b. Who should constitute the stakeholders in the policy formulation?

Literature Review

Conceptual Discourse

In the management and social sciences, most concepts do not lend themselves to universally agreed definitions. Definitions are often times only relevant within the parameters set for a given study. Thus, it is within the intent of Babbies & Mounton (2001) methodological research diction that “we specify why we use particular terms for the purpose of facilitating their contextual discourse and comprehension”. In this paper, the conceptual framework is geared towards having a proper understanding of the concept of manpower planning and development and how it relates to the concept of sustainable development. Both concepts may be used interchangeably; however, it is necessary to emphasize that manpower development as a concept evokes several meanings and studies abound which elaborate various dimensions of it. Hence, in Obojo (2012), Ibijofo, presents manpower planning as: the process by which an organization ensures that it has the right number of people and the right calibre of persons at the right place and the right time, doing things for which they are economically most useful.

For Ekpo (2009), manpower development may be defined as “the existence of unskilled and / or skilled humans who need training or retaining to perform specific task in society. Thus, manpower development may be perceived as being organizational specific. This is due to the fact that it is largely a function of organizational manpower or job specification. That is, it may in our present circumstance be human resources in the country to the needs, goals and orientation of the country under investigation. On the other hand, manpower conceived as

the adaptation of the available development as a concept, may be reviewed as one that is generic owing to its focus on turning out the human resource that is needed for the purpose of development in the state (Drucker, 1999). As a result, the development of manpower considers “man as the most important asset in the process of development in any society” (Chelosky and Reinhart, 2008; Muchinsky, 2000; Drucker, 1999; Ekpo 2009).

Manpower development has capacity building as a vital aspect. Such capacity building is a process of change and the systematic management of transformations. “It involves the transformation of peoples, institutional and societal capacity” (World Bank 2012). Dibia & Dibia (2014) hold that “capacity building in the context of sustainable manpower development implies a dynamic process which enables individuals and agencies to develop the critical, social and technical capacities to identify and analyze problems as well as provide solutions to them. The civil service in any country is the center of the public administration structure. It is the major instrument of policy formation and implementation by government – federal, state or local. There cannot be an effective policy formulation and implementation without the civil service. Thus, policy implementation and formulation on manpower development has the civil service occupying the center stage.

Policy Formulation in Developing Countries

In the public policy world, policy formulation is part of the pre-decision phase of policy making. “Developing countries throughout the world vary considerably in their ability and perhaps willingness to formulate and implement policies that will generate improved development performance” (Corkery, Land and Bossuyt, 1995). The formulation runs in phases, these are:

1. Policy Design

Policy “designs contribute to policy outcome” (Hai, 2012). Firstly, “the policy design will need to specify the lists of policy instruments, institution – building” (Uleimmer, 1992). Fischer (2000) and Rexecker (1994), provide that “innovation and creativity are often raised from the voices that contribute to the policy dialogue”.

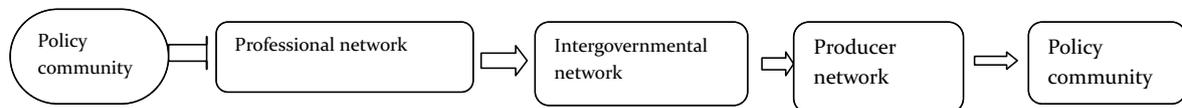
2. Policy Tools

Over time, a subset of policy literature has focused explicitly on policy tools. Bardach (2005), offers eight step framework of policy analysis, describing taxes, regulation, grants, services, budgets information, rights and other policy tools. For each tool, he suggests why and how it might be used, and what some of the possible pitfalls could be, aiming to stimulate creativity in crafting policy.

In the policy sub-system Howleft and Ramesh, (2003), says actors and institutions exist in a mutual relationship. The state actors include – elected officials, appointed officials, business actors, labour, public, think – think and research organizations, political parties, mass media, interest groups.

Policy Communities in Developing Countries

The term policy community is part of an idiom used by policy researchers, political scientists, and public administration scholars to signify the extra-formal interactions which take place beyond or outside formal process of government that occur in the interests between and among government agencies, interest groups, corporations, industry associations, elected officials and other institutions and individuals. (Miller and Demir, 2000). Wilks and Wright (1987), proposed a three – fold typology including “policy universe”, “policy community” and “policy network”. Policy universe is the large population of actors and potential actors who share a common interest in industrial policy and may contribute to the policy process on a regular basis. Policy community, on the other hand, refers to a more disaggregated system involving those actors and potential actors who share an interest in a particular industry and who interact with another for mutual benefit. Policy network in their thinking, becomes a linking mechanism between and among policy communities.



Source: Rodes Classification (Dowding, 1994)

The Benefits of Effective Public Policy

Some studies reveal the benefits derivable from improved public policy. Curristine, Lonti and Jounard (2007), in a study on improving public sector efficiency, outlined some of its benefits to include-

1. **Improvement in the Setting of Objectives:** Improved public policies provide a mechanism that enables politicians to clarify objectives. It has proved a useful tool for setting over the short and medium term and clarifies what results are expected from the public sector.
2. **It Improves the Monitoring of Performances and Serves as a Signaling Device:** Reforms of this kind have provided a mechanism for monitoring agencies, performance and progress and provides key actors with details of what is working (and what is not) within government.
3. **Greater Emphasis on Planning:** The introduction of PI has resulted in a greater emphasis on planning in management and budgeting, and a move towards outcome focus in policy design and delivery. There is more emphasis on long-term planning through the introduction of three to five years strategic plans.
4. **Improved Management:** PI is most often used by ministries and agencies to manage programmes. Adopting a results-focused approach allows managers to ask fundamental strategic questions about how to deliver services.
5. **Improved Transparency:** Reforms in public policy making have led to improved transparency by increasing the amount of information provided to the legislative and public on the performance of the public sector as was found in 24 out of 30 OECD countries.

6. **Informing Citizens' Choices:** Some governments like Australia and the UK have provided PI evaluations to citizens and have also benchmarked the provision of local services e.g, schools and hospitals. League tables and benchmarking which provide explanations and more detailed information than just raw numbers, can help citizens choose among local schools and hospitals.

(Source: OECD Journal on budgeting, Vol. 7, No, 1 (2007))

Theoretical Framework

The human capital theory was developed by Barney (1991). It is associated with the resource – based view of the firm. The theory views people as assets and stress that investment by organization in people will generate worthwhile returns. The theory therefore, underpins the philosophies of human resources management and human capital management (Armstrong, 2006). It is therefore adopted as the theoretical framework of this study.

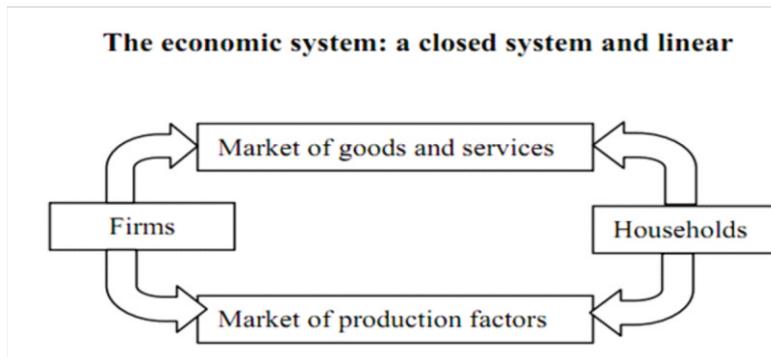
Human Capital theory proposes that sustainable competitive advantage is attained when the firm has human resource pool which cannot be initiated or substituted by its rivals. In this regard, training and developing people is a means of attracting and retaining human capital as getting better returns from these investments . These returns are expected to be improvement in performance, increased productivity, flexibility and the capacity to innovate that which should result from enlarging the skill base and increasing knowledge and competence. Schuller (2000) , further suggests that : “the general message is persuasive ; skills , knowledge and competence are key factors in determining whether organization and nation will prosper” .This study suits the purposes of our study as its emphasis is on manpower development for the purpose of sustenance and development of any nation.

Theories of Environmental Sustainability

The neoclassical sustainability of growth- The neo- classical policies have as their stated goal, the maximization of welfare (Varian, 1990). This goal is identified with the willingness to offer to the widest number of people, greater opportunities for consumption. Such neo – liberal policies are in turn “premised upon the neo classical vision of economics” (Cozzi, Zamagni, 1989). This theory of growth (or development), considers the increase of production and therefore, of disposable income in higher levels of consumption as a solution to poverty for progress and development. The approach is based on the assumption that the capacity for self-regulation of free markets and not bound , and technological advances are able to ensure capacity of substitutions endless between the various forms of capital, mitigating so, the constraints arising from the possible scarcity of resources allow sustainable growth, a level of consumption does not decrease over time.

The neo – classical approach offers, for an economic system considered as closed and linear , a model of continuous growth. Even if the endogenous growth models share the basic philosophy of Solow, removing both the assumptions of decreasing productivity of capital and endogeneity of technical progress. The removal of these assumptions leads both to deny that in the future we have the process of convergence between the growth rates of the various countries and to predict the tendency to continue expanding. The heightened interest for the market equilibrium, believed to be able to ensure economic efficiency and the maximization of well –being has obscured almost completely the study of the long term, eliminating thus,

any “pessimistic“ considerations, typical of classical studies” (Tietenberg , 2006; Cozzi., Zamagni., 1989). For classical economists like Malthus, Ricardo, Mill, Marx, clearly, the economic activity was conditioned by the environment, they believed in the role of the market as an indispensable basis for economic growth. The market would have, in fact, distributed merits and efficiency generating wealth for all. The point of view of “pessimistic” of the studies of Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo. Malthus and Ricardo watched the constraints imposed by the government in terms of scarcity of fertile land for cultivation.



Source: Our elaboration on Tuner K., Pearce W., Bateman I., p.28

Some empirical investigations have been conducted in support of certain realistic paths to sustainable development. For instance, while reviewing some theories of environmental sustainability, Dragulanescu, Natalia (2013), examined the neo classical sustainability of the growth theory. The paper highlighted how environmental aspects are processed within a defined perimeter of economic instruments to defend the neoclassical orthodoxy in front of the market failure and support undertaking of a path of development that is sustainable .

Igbokwe- Ibeto ,Osakede and Anazodo (n.d) , studied the effect of Manpower planning and development in Lagos state civil service performance . The stated civil service was identified as the greatest asset of the state in the quest for socio-economic development. In its view, to achieve better performance in service, the state should among others, improve on the current manpower planning strategy and continue to update its manpower development curriculum in line with global best practices.

Chukwudi (2013), did a study on manpower development, capacity building and services delivery in Ife- East local government Area, Osun state of Nigeria. The study underscored the point that the essence of government and administration at local levels is to ensure effective services delivery to the people at the grass roots. It also observed that capacity building through training, seminars and workshops – usually helps to ensure that local workers possess the right knowledge and skills that equip them to take on new responsibilities and adapt to changing conditions. The study obtained its data from primary and secondary sources and came to the conclusion that local governments should commit their efforts to efficient service delivery and the principles of good governance.

Nwankwo, Okorie and Nnenna (2015) examined the human capacity building and sustainable development in the 21st century, implications and challenges in Nigeria. They identified human capital building as the bed-rock of any nation. It suggested ways of stemming the effects of the challenges to effective implementation of programmes like NAPEP, NDE. etc which it observed have not yielded the desired effects on the nations quest to sustainable development. In its recommendation, the paper recommends measures towards ameliorating the inadequacies of existing programmes and policies and urges the relevant stakeholders to consider the suggestions for policy design and implementation strategy in achieving human capacity building and sustainable development in the 21st century.

Quite a number of studies have been conducted on the need for and benefits of manpower development for sustainable development. While examining the existing policies on manpower development in Nigeria and beyond, interesting recommendations were made. However, none of these studies employed the method of content analysis in its investigation. The current study identifies this as a gap which needs to be filled

Methodology

In this study, data obtained from secondary sources such as books, journals, periodicals, and the internet are analyzed by applying the method of content analysis. The analysis is backed up by some empirical findings to eschew subjectivity.

Research Question One (1): what should constitute the contents / components of the programme for the acquisition of the required skills / competencies for the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria?.

Before now, economic development was conceived as the provision of the greatest welfare for the greatest number of people in the society or country. Following this conception, most governments, particularly the developing countries, embarked upon all sorts of activities to generate revenue to run the affairs of the state .Such activities included, the exploitation of their physical environments (natural resources, etc). Initially, this seemed beneficial as oil producing countries like Nigeria earned so much revenue from oil that they tended to relegate other sectors. This massive exploitation of the environment backfired as it later resulted to green house emissions, climate change, environmental degradation, etc. The attention of the global leaders was drawn to such changes on the environment and its adverse consequences. An attempt to address the obvious challenge led to the sensitization of the human race on the need to stop environmental exploitation which translates to the craze for alternative means of survival and economic activities rather than the cheap option of exploitation. This meant that mankind must identify productive means of livelihood such that the needs of the present generation could be satisfied without jeopardizing the chances of meeting the needs of the future generations. Such means of survival would guarantee the sustainability of the environment. Environmental sustainability is synonymous with sustainable development which can only come through articulate public policy formulation and implementation for which government occupies the center stage.

Government policies must therefore, be tailored/ structured towards human capital development. A country like Nigeria should enunciate policies that would empower her citizens through knowledge and skill acquisition, competencies, beliefs, attitudes, values, tradition, culture and virtues of hard work. These are components /contents which should constitute the programme that would ensure effective policies that would lead to the obvious benefits towards sustainable development. Such benefits include- informed citizen's choices, improved management of performance, improvement in the setting of objectives, etc. Empirical evidence abound to buttress the positive impact of qualitative manpower development on the drive towards sustainable development. Studies also reveal that the only way to facilitate such effect is through improved public policies. Thus, Chukwudi, (2013).Igbokwe- Ibeton, Osakede and Anazodo (n.d) , Nwankwo , Okorie and Nnenna (2015) , etc to mention but a few , in separate independent studies , reveal that effective public policies are what mankind needs to attain sustainable development , Hence , all countries (Nigeria) must key in.

Research Question Two: Who should constitute the stakeholders in the policy framework for purposes of sustainable development in Nigeria?

There are two vital components of public policy – policy design and policy tools. The two components make the involvement of a number of actors inevitable. Hawleft and Ramesh (2003), posit that “the actors and institutions exist in a mutual relationship“ in the policy sub-system. They list such state actors to include: elected officials, appointed officials, business actors, labor, public, think – tank and research organizations, political parties, mass media, and interest groups. All the above must make up the public policy system which must be incorporated in the policy-making process if the lofty ideals of sustainable development must be realized.

Findings

Consequent upon our analyses, the following revelations have been recorded-

- 1 Qualitative manpower development is an essential component of the quest for sustainable development in any developing country such as Nigeria.
- 2 The only way to achieve qualitative manpower development for purposes of sustainable development is through the articulation of effective public policies by the federal government.
- 3 Two vital components of the policy process include- policy design and policy tools.
- 4 The state actors in the policy sub-system are –the elected officials, appointed officials, business actors, labor, the public think –thank and research organizations, political parties, mass media, and interest groups.
- 5 Effective public policy will yield the following results-
 - a. Improvements in the setting of objectives.
 - b. Improvements in the monitoring of performances
 - c. Greater emphasis on planning
 - d. Improved management
 - e. Improved transparency
 - f. Informed citizens' choices

qualitative manpower development in Nigeria can only be achieved through effective public policies that can articulate and match policy formulations with implementations.

Conclusion

It is an established fact that “the lack of adequate emphasis on manpower planning and development as a tool for development in Nigeria on the part of government as well as the organized private sector, could not be far-fetched from the lack of understanding of both the concept and methods for manpower planning and development in a post- colonial Nigerian state for national growth was distorted by colonialism with its attendant negative orientation that was injection into political leadership” (Ekpo, 2009) . Thus, “manpower planning and development became an elitist design that was geared to favor the capitalist mode of production in which labor was relegated to the background among the factors of production” (Omodia, 2009). Such relegation constitutes the bane of the nation's quest for economic growth and development.

Conceptually, growth and development are complete phenomena. Sustainability adds yet another layer to such complexity. Sustainable development has the major thrust of attaining the needs of the present without jeopardizing the choices whereby those of the future generations are met. This necessitates greater knowledge of the environment, skill acquisition, strong beliefs, attitude, and approach to work, innovation, efficiency, tradition, culture, competencies etc, to empower the average human (society), with what it takes to reduce environmental exploitation. Only properly articulated policy designs and implementation can ensure and facilitate the attainment of the desired goal through manpower development. Programmes on manpower development require effective policy formulation. The world today, is a global village in which nations jostle for enviable positions in this regard. Nigeria must not be left out.

Recommendations

The study makes bold to recommend as follows:

1. Qualitative manpower development should be accorded the attention it deserves by the federal government of Nigeria.
2. National policies must be enunciated to make it a priority.
3. Special focus must be placed on policy design and policy tools.
4. All stakeholders in the policy sub-system must be carried along in the policy-making and implementation process.
5. Skill acquisition / competencies must be given the same level of attention as the issue of knowledge acquisition.
6. Funding must be beefed up to ensure policy implementation.

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