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## HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: A SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR IN A BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>Arc D. O. Eze (MNIA, FIIA), <sup>2</sup>Iyke P. Eze (CAN, ACE) & <sup>3</sup>C. Odom  
<sup>1&3</sup>*Department of Architectural Technology,  
Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana,  
Ebonyi State*  
<sup>2</sup>*Department of Economic,  
Imo State University, Owerri Imo State*

### Abstract

The rate of development of a city lies on the quality and quantity of qualified/ trained man-power that exist in that city. Human capital development is one of the fundamental solutions to enter the international arena of development. Establishments, both public and private must invest reasonable resources in the development of human capital which has a great impact in the development of their organization in particular and the environment in general. Evidence of human capital model was identified and findings reveal that investments in human capital development have positive correlation with economic growth and development especially as it relates to the built environment. This paper examines the extent to which human capitals have direct impact on our built environment from various critical perspectives, especially in the area that leads to high growth in the development, and a good look into the connection between human capital and the built environment in the developmental economics of this nation.

**Keywords:** *Human capital, Development, Built- environment and Sustainability*

### Background to the Study

Of recent, our environment is faced with many issues that border on activities of the developers. Human capital development being one of the central nerves of human existence, its development needs urgent attention so that it can grow in the same rate with the economy as the global market is improving tremendously with technology and innovations. A strategy for improving workforce productivity to drive higher value for improvement of the environment has become a paramount importance. The improvement of the environment can be achieved through the comprehensive human capital development programs. Developing human capital requires creating and cultivating environments in which human beings can rapidly learn and apply new ideas, competencies, skills, behaviors and attitude into their area of specialization. This will not only improve the environment but also sustain and keep it survive for a long term.

In order to achieve all these, government and employers of personnel of built environment like Architects, Engineers, Builders, Quantity surveyors, Estate managers, Land surveyors, Urban and regional planners etcetera should be trained and re-train them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to work effectively due to the rapid changing and complex environment. At the turn of the century, urban reformers adopted zoning laws and building codes to reduce the spread of disease from overcrowded conditions in central cities by lowering housing densities, as well as to separate residences from noxious commercial and industrial enterprises.

In acceptance to these rapid changes in the environment, most organizations and government have come to the acceptance of the notion of human capital development as a good advantage that will enhance higher performance in the development of the environment. They need to understand the human capital that mostly enhance employee satisfaction and improves performance. These employees being professionals need to always up-date themselves on the latest issues and trend in the industry; otherwise, they will price themselves out of the market. The development of skills being one of the important factors in production activities should be emphasized on to focus on education as a capital good that relates to the concept of human capital. This paper therefore attempts to look into the connection between the human capital development and the improvement of the built environment as it relates to the developmental economy through the professionals. A research question will be generated to help us in this investigation. Human capital development has an impact on the built environment.

It will also defines the concept; human capital and built environment, it explores the human capital theory and x-rays the connection between human capital and built environment. Finally, we shall develop the model and conclude with the significance of human capital as a sterling force in the future analysis of our built environment.

#### Objective of the Study

The objective of this paper is to examine the extent to which human capitals have direct impact on our built environment from various critical perspectives, especially in the area that leads to high growth in the development, and a good look into the connection between human capital and the built environment in the developmental economics of this nation.

#### Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive research method to examine the Human Capital Development as a sustainability factor in a built environment of Nigeria. Data/information were mostly drawn from secondary sources.

#### Conceptual/ Theoretical Framework

##### Human Capital

Proficiently put, human capital is the additional productivity of people with skills and qualifications, which if discounted in the present value, exhibit a bigger percentage over and above the product of unskilled labour. In other words, it is the stock of knowledge full of competencies poised with creativity and embodied in the ability to perform labour as to produce services and things of value in a larger magnitude. It is an aggregate view of the tutored human being acting within the confines of Economics discipline in an attempt to capture the economical, social-cultural and psychological complexities as they interact unambiguously.

The full comprehension of the above definition, which is not exhaustive, leads us to the quest on how and where to acquire human capital, Suffice it to say that it may be acquired through unequivocal training or on the job knowledge. Just like physical capital, it is predisposed to obsolescence because of improved technological changes and taste qualities, but it is important to note that it cannot be sold without slavery. Actual training needed to generate human capital has to be paid for, acquired intact and in tarred. Square peg in a square hole through human capital, brings about capital deepening whereby

investment allows unchangeable volume of output produced at lower cost, which may be by saving on labour or material inputs. This integral possession of productivity trait, which is one of the factors of production that actualizes development and, development, enhances the environment in a built structure.

Human capital is a key element in improving a firm asset and employees in order to increase production as well as sustain competitive advantage (Schultz 1993). In order to sustain competitiveness, human capital now becomes an instrument used to increase productivity. It is referred to as the processes which relates to educating, training, mentoring and other professional initiatives in order to increase the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and social assets of an employee which leads not only to the employees self satisfaction and performance but also to the improvement of the environment. When an employee gains better training and skill over his work, he is bound to perform better. An Architect or Engineer, who receives training and re-training on the job, produces a more quality built environment. This is why Rastogi (2000) says that human capital is an important input for organization especially for employees' continuous improvement mainly on knowledge, skill and abilities.

The rapid changes in the development of the environment through new Innovations and Technology require that the operators or developers through human resources be acquainted with these changes in order to blend with the trend of affairs. This is very important for their long-term sustainability.

Human capital development teaches people how to utilize the power of diverse thinking styles (analytical and intuitive) to achieve holistic best practical solution. Human capital development and training are the same.

#### Human Capital Theory

There are different kinds of human capitals that include schooling, computer training course, medical cares, lectures on virtues of punctuality and honesty Becker (1993). They improve the health, raise earnings, or add to a person's appreciation of literature over a lifetime. This is in keeping with the capital concept, which says that expenditure over education, training and medical care etc are investment in capital. In general, human capital represents the investment people make in others or themselves which in turn enhances their economic productivity.

Human capital theory emphasizes on how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability, which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings.

There are two major kinds of human capital under the classical economic theory and they are as follows:

1. The firm-specific human capital, which includes the expertise, obtained through education and training in management information systems, accounting procedures, or other expertise specific to a particular firm like Architecture, surveying, Engineering etc.
2. The General-purpose human capital which is the knowledge gained through Education, training in areas of value to a variety of firms such as generate skills in human resources development. Becker Cousior regarded education and training as the most important investment in human capital, marimuthu et al (2009).

The rationality behind investment in human capital is based on three main arguments Babalola (2003)

1. The new generation must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge, which has already been accumulated by previous generations.
2. The new generations should be learning how existing knowledge are used to develop new products, to introduce new process and production methods and social services.

3. People must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative thinking approaches.

This theory helps us understand that the character, place of a nation's economic, and development do not base on its capital or its material resources but on the human resources of the nation.

Human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development Psachar Opoulos and Woodhall (1997).

#### Built Environment

Defined broadly to include land use patterns, the transportation system, and design features that together provide opportunities for travel and physical activity. *Land use patterns* refer to the spatial distribution of human activities. The *transportation system* refers to the physical infrastructure and services that provide the spatial links or connectivity among activities. *Design* refers to the aesthetic, physical, and functional qualities of the built environment, such as the design of buildings and streetscapes, and relates to both land use patterns and the transportation system.

However, the term built environment refers to the structures, surroundings and infrastructure that are manmade to cater for his basic activities, ranging from simple housing, large-scale civic buildings to entire cities and their supporting infrastructure. The built environment industry or sector referred to the operations of the professionals that help shape the built environment. It is typically used to describe the multidisciplinary field which addresses the planning, design, construction, management, maintenance maturing and use of these man-made surroundings as an interrelated whole.

#### Sustainable Architecture

In agreement to the widespread problems experienced in rapid expanding cities globally, UN-HABITAT launched and implemented a Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) in the early 90's using the cities of Ibadan and Enugu, Nigeria, as the first 18 global demonstration cities where the concepts and principles of Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) were demonstrated. The EPM recognizes the importance of sustainable human settlements and the vital contributions that productive and sustainable cities can make to social and economic advancement. It also recognizes the fact that Environmental degradation obstructs the development contributions of cities and, environmental degradation is inevitable. In these two cities, a sample of sustainability as it affects the developers of the built environment was established.

However all the cities participating in the global Sustainable Cities Programme share a common approach, which reflects the characteristics of the Sustainable Cities Programme. These are:

- a. Central focus on development-environment interaction;
- b. Broad-based participation by public, private and community group sector;
- c. Concern for inter-sectoral and inter-organizational aspects;
- d. Reliance on bottom-up and demand-led responses;
- e. Focus on process: problem-solving and getting things done;
- f. Emphasis on local capacity building.

The Urban Development Bank of Nigeria (UDBN) and the Sustainable Cities Co-ordination Unit of the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (FMW&H) facilitated their entry into the programme. UN-HABITAT provided financial and technical assistance for the preparation of project documents for SIP Extension and the new initiatives in Kano

and Enugu. The UNDP supported this programme with funding allocation under Programme Support Objective. This is aimed at supporting the cities as well as developing a program for National Institutions' Capacity Building Programme for Enhanced Urban Environmental Management.

The sustainable architecture under the sustainable city programme is all about using the architect's imagination and technical knowledge to engage in a central aspect of the practice, designing and building in harmony with our environment (BEER, 1996). It is a revised conceptualization of architecture in response to a myriad of contemporary concerns about the effect of human activity (Williamson et al, 2003). According to Giddens, sustainable architecture is worrying less about what nature can do to us and more about what we have do to nature. This marks the transition from predominance of external risk to that of manufactured risk' (Giddens, 1999), Building 4 production materials, energy, and capital they devour and the pollutants they emit (Williamson et. al, 2003). Sustainable architecture through design is the practice of creating healthier and more resource efficient model of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance and even demolition (OFEE, 2006). Sustainably designed and constructed buildings aim to lessen their impact on the environment.

#### Conclusion/ Recommendation

This paper explored the current literature on human capital and its impact on the built environment. The conceptualization of human capitals is linked closely to some fundamentals of economics and the built environment. The literature reviews show that there are reasonably strong evidences to show that the infusion of human capital enhancement' in organizations promotes innovativeness and greater improvement on the built environment. It also clearly substantiated that the built environment improves tremendously through human capitals development. Using the TETFund scholarship programme in Nigeria, which helps to train the trainers, has not only improved the individuals but has also improved the economy and the country's international relationship. There are many professionals in the country that can authoritatively handle issues relating to their field of study.

In light of this, the understanding of built environment in relation to human capitals should not be regarded as a phenomenon that only adds 'more zeros in a firm's profits; it is rather transforming the entire workforce as the most valuable assets' in order for the organization to pave ways for greater achievements through innovativeness and creativity. It is always better that, companies that deal with the development of the environment should therefore, come up with some effective plans especially in investing the various aspects of human capital as not only does it direct firms to attain greater performance but also it ensures firms to remain competitive for their long term survival among others. It also allows the sustainability of the built environment, which leaves the environment to be in harmony with the development and the inhabitants.

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