



## Managing Tertiary Education for Sustainable Development and Economic Security in Nigeria

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### Abstract

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In this era of globalization and knowledge based economy, no nation can expect to successfully navigate in the frequency of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy without a well Educated workforce. Tertiary education in Nigeria basically aims at producing professional and highly skilled manpower fro the nation's growth and development. This is achievable through proper management of the tertiary education system. Management of tertiary education entails pulling resources (human and material) together to produce highly skilled and professional manpower that will work towards sustainable national development. The relationship between the management of tertiary education and sustainable development for economic security is obvious in the sense that the achievement of the noble goals of tertiary education is highly dependent on its management. This paper therefore critically examined the concepts: Tertiary education, sustainable development and economic security. It equally x-rayed in the issues that pose challenges to the management of tertiary education in Nigeria and suggested among other things that fund should be adequately provided to improve the management of tertiary education.

**Keywords:** *Tertiary education, Sustainable development, Economic security*

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### **Background to the Study**

Nigeria, with her rich mineral and agricultural resources, has been described as one of the poorest countries in the world. The United Nations (2012) report on human development Index, ranked Nigeria 153 out of the 186 countries studied. The report stated that 68% of Nigerian population live below one dollar per day, life expectancy is placed at 52 years and illiteracy rate for adults (both sexes) is 61.3%. This report supported the earlier findings of Ogbu (2008) that an estimated 54% of Nigerians live below poverty line and 67% of the poor are extremely poor. A reflection on the above studies makes one to wonder on the role of education as an instrument for national development, looking at the level of poverty that has gripped the Country. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) takes cognizance of the fact that education is the bedrock of all developments. It is acknowledged as a powerful tool for enhancing economic growth and national development.

Similarly, Alumode and Nwite (2009) posited that the education sector in any country especially developing countries is very important because education is the engine house for the production of skilled manpower need for addressing all developmental problems – politically and technologically. Education is so indispensable that it cannot be toyed with by any nation that wishes to survive and have a future. Management is a universal concept because it applies to every organization of which education is one.

According to Ogba (2012), management is the art of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting, Adetoro, Oladipo and Adekunle (2009) opined that management comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing and controlling an organization to achieve the desired goals. Simply put, management involves the use of available resources (human and material) to achieve an organization's desired goal. The recognition of the importance of education in national development underscores why its management cannot be ignored. Effective and efficient management of education at all levels and particularly at the tertiary level is a pre-requisite for economic growth and sustainable development. It stands to reason that the economic threat facing Nigeria can be adequately addressed through the development of qualitative human resources base. The production of these human resources can only be possible in a systematic and well managed tertiary education system.

### **Conceptualizing Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

Tertiary education according to FRN (2004) is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Okoro and Okey (2012) viewed tertiary education as a social process which brings awareness, nurtures productive abilities and confers honour to the people as they venture to live useful purposeful lives in a dynamic society.

Nwokolo (2008), sees tertiary education as that education that is capable of producing Nigerians who can manufacture raw materials, machines and tools needed for our industries, produce enough food for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable and transform the nation from a consuming one to a manufacturing one.

World Bank (2002) maintained that in today's life learning framework, tertiary education provides not only high level skills necessary for every market but also the training essential for professionalism in all spheres of human endeavour. Summarily, tertiary education is that of each to education which leads people to the realization of the potentials of each to contribute maximally to the development of oneself and the community. Ivowi (2006) noted that knowledge and skills acquired through exposure to relevant programmes in tertiary institutions manifest in their innovative use to increase the tempo, quantity and quality of goods and services.

In FRN (2004), tertiary education is meant to attain the following goals:

1. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
2. Develop and inculcate proper value for the survival of the individual and society;
3. Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments,
4. Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
5. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
6. Forge and cement national unity
7. Promote national and international understanding and interaction (p.36).

These goals FRN (2004) maintained shall be pursued through teaching, research and development, virile staff development programmes, etc. The attainment of these noble goals will of course imply a guaranteed stable economy.

### **Concept of Sustainable Development**

UNESCO (2002) asserted that sustainable development is that type of development designed to meet the needs of the present generation from diverse regions, continent, race, language and religious beliefs without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their requisite needs. Ekong (2002), defined sustainable development as an economic and social development that meets the satisfying their needs and choosing their life styles.

Bassey, Ekpoh and Edet (2008) asserted that sustainable development in a nation involves achieving a level of quality life that is socially desirable and economically viable. To Inya-Abia (2007), sustainable development involves all strategies for managing available resources and assets for increasing wealth and well being. Charles, its and Charles (2006), maintain that it arises out of policy interest of the key players in the development and delivery of social services and employment opportunities. From the above views, it is clear that sustainable development is seen as the efforts of a nation to address her developmental needs at all times without jeopardizing the future of any segment of the society. The desire of Nigeria to be an economically viable nation is clearly demonstrated in her five main national philosophy of education which have formed the foundation for her national policy on education.

According to FRN (200) they are: the building of:

- (a) a free and democratic society;
- (b) a just and egalitarian society;

- (c) a united, strong self-reliant nation;
- (d) a great and dynamic economy and
- (e) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens(p.d).

The attainment of the above goals according to Ominyi (2008) is a necessary step towards sustainable development in Nigeria. Lending credence to the above, Ocho (2004) maintained that the attainment of these goals is dependent on the quality of education received. Supportively, Igu and Ogba (2008) affirmed that education fosters the worth and development of the individual and the society. It stands to reason that the most important means of achieving sustainable development is investment in education. The success stories of countries like Japan, South Korea, Singapore and China to mention a few are overwhelming evidence that no country has achieved or will achieve socio-economic transformation without a significant rise in the level of education among its people. Ocho (2004), believes that Japan's wealth is the result of her investment in a systematic and rigorous education that developed its human resources and exploited same to build an enviable nation that believes that whatever any nation can do, Japan can do. The relationship between education and sustainable development is intricately inter-woven that none can be dispensed for the other. In this context, the issue of management of education becomes very important.

According to Ezeocha (2000) educational management emerged out of the need to connect education with national development. The effective managerial roles of tertiary education in Nigeria should be geared towards professional specialization of graduates who will be equipped to exploit the rich abundant natural resources of the country for sustainable economic development.

Oni in Chukwuemeka, Onwuka and Uzoechina (2008) posited that the three principal motives states invest in tertiary education is to produce highly skilled personnel in technology, engineering, management and other professions, to produce a corps of academic personnel that is the intellectual pool that will through scientific research generate new knowledge and innovation to solve developmental problems. For tertiary education to play its expected roles, emphasis must practically shift from theoretical knowledge to technological, vocational and entrepreneurial education for these are the basic ingredients of development. Managing tertiary education in this context therefore, is an imperative for sustainable development and economic security.

### **Economic Security in Nigeria**

Economic security is a universal concept that does not lend itself to a common definition. Authors and Scholars have variously defined it. According to Nwachi (2008), economic security means access to basic needs infrastructure pertaining to food, health, shelter, information and social protection as well as work-related security. Ogba and Igu (2012) conceptualized it as the ability to have a stable source of income and other resources that support living standard now and in the future. Wikipedia (2013) defined it as the ability of a nation state to follow its choice of policies to develop the national economy in the manner desired.

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Economic security has been a front burner issue in national and international discourse because it defines the wealth and health of a nation. Report on Human Development Index by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2007/2008 cited in Anyaegbu (2009) classified Nigeria as a low Human Development country alongside with such countries as Senegal, Eritrea, Tanzania, Rivanda, Angola, Benin Republic, among others. Still on the report Nigeria ranked 80 with adult illiteracy level of 309% and 52% of Nigerians do not have access to water supply, while 70.8% live on less than one dollar per day. It is disheartening that after seven years of that report the situation has grown worse. This is evidenced in UNDP's 2012 Human Development Index Report of selected countries as shown in the table below.

### UNDP HDI World Rank 2012

	Very High HDI	high HDI	Medium HDI	Low HDI
S/N	Country	Country	Country	Country
1	Norway - 0.955	Bahrain - 0.796	Tonga - 0.710	Angola - 0.508
2	Australia - 0.938	Bahamas - 0.794	Belize - 0.702	Burma - 0.498
3	USA - 0.937	Belarus - 0.792	Jordan - 0.700	Cameroon - 0.495
4	Netherlands - 0.921	Uruguay - 0.792	China - 0.699	Madagascar - 0.483
5	Germany 0.920	Montenegro -0.791	Turkmenistan - 0.698	Tanzania - 0.476
6	new Zealand 0.913	Palau - 0.791	Thailand - 0.690	Nigeria - 0.471
7	Ireland - 0.916	Kuwait - 0.790	Gabon - 0.683	Senegal - 0.470
8	Switzerland - 0.913	Russia - 0.788	Egypt - 0.662	Mauritania - 0.467
9	Japan - 0.912	Romania 0.786	Syria - 0.648	New Guinea - 0.466
10	Canada - 0.911	Bulgaria - 0.782	Micronesia - 0.645	Nepal - 0.463

It is a common sight in Nigeria that prizes of commodities skyrocket every day. A tin of milk for instance sells at N120.00, A kilogram of meat cost N1,000.00 ice fish as well as food stuff have escalated and are not within the reach of the average Nigerian let alone the poor lots. Even agricultural produce such as vegetables which are locally cultivated are hardly affordable. Destitute are everywhere roaming the street. Unemployed graduates are everywhere in the street searching for jobs. The idle youths have resorted to crimes ranging from armed robbery, kidnapping, oil pipeline vandalism, militancy to the most recent, suicide bombing. Without mincing words, many Nigerians are in a state of stupendous disillusion.

Otunu-Ogbisi (2008) lamented and described as incredible that a nation blessed with enormous endowment of resources, men, money and materials is still under intensive pressure of poverty and its associated societal ills like hunger, prostitution, human labour and trafficking, destitution, homelessness, environmental degradation, youth restiveness and illiteracy. From the foregoing discussion, in a delicate time like this, there is one solution which according to FRN (2004) is education. It is the instrument par excellence for national development. Proper management of tertiary education is indispensably necessary if Nigeria must walk out of the murky waters of economic insecurity.

### **Tertiary Education Management Issues and Sustainable Development for Economic Security in Nigeria**

Management is an integral part of any organization. Agu (2003:122) defined management as 'controlling activities and the use of resources by some people possessing the authority'. In the educational organization, the onus of managing tertiary education for the realization of educational objectives rests on the Vice Chancellor (University), Provost (College of Education), Rector (Polytechnics) and Principal (College of Agriculture)

These heads relate with the various educational authorities to ensure that desire educational goals are achieved. Drucker (2000) affirmed that management is the engine room of economic and social development. According to Azubuike (2009), the specific functions/roles of the school heads include but are not limited to:

1. Establishment of healthy school climate and culture
2. Curriculum instructional development and improvement
3. Provision and maintenance of school plant facilities
4. Instructional and non-instructional supervision
5. Staff development, administration and documentation services.

### **Factors that Challenges the Management of Tertiary Education in Nigeria Political will**

Nigeria has been known to be wonderful in policy formulation but the implementation process has always been the problem due to absence of political will. The absence of political will on the part Government and educational managers has made it difficult for educational programmes and policies to make the desire impacts and achieve the stated objectives.

### **Need for Entrepreneurial Education**

Entrepreneurial education implementation in tertiary institution is a take off point for sustainable economic development. The emphasis on entrepreneurial education is because of its capacity to produce job creators rather than job seekers. Entrepreneurial education makes or self-employment or self-reliance.

Ndan (2005) posits that self-reliance calls for a system of education where citizens acquire the right type of values and attitudes, practical skills and knowledge that will enable them attain self development. The high incidence of unemployment with its associated social ills like armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy, attack on oil installation, tugary, suicide bombing prostitution and human trafficking are clear indications that entrepreneurial education has not made only significant impact in the lives of graduates and this is due to poor implementation.

### **Poor Funding**

Funding is a central factor in the management of tertiary education in Nigeria. It has been established that all other problems challenging tertiary education in Nigeria are attributable to poor funding. Ayodele (2006) states that funding education has to do with the application of funds to solve educational problems in order to enhance the attainment of educational goals. A cursory examination of the tertiary educational sector reveals that poor funding has been the bane of her development. The problems of inadequate facilities, dilapidated structures, overcrowded students' hostel, and classrooms, poor equipped staff offices, poor remuneration are all clear indication that the tertiary education sector is grossly under-funded. Without turning a blind eye to the efforts of government at all levels to fund education, the bitter truth remains that government has not done enough in this regard. Up till date Nigerian government has not been able to allocate 20% (talk less of 26% recommended by UNESCO) of her annual budget to the education sector.

### **Lack of Resources**

Resources provision is one of the major issues in the management of tertiary education in Nigeria. The quality and relevance of education has declined as academic resources, whether teachers or equipment and facilities have become increasingly in short supply (Kayode and Adeyinka 2009). They further maintained that the ratio of students to academic staff of the tertiary institutions exceeded the national norm of 1.25. As a result of poor remuneration. Brain drain has become the common sight as lecturers troop out enemas to seek greener pastures.

### **Problem of Curriculum**

Kayoed and Adeyinka (2009) had noted that one important issue in the management of tertiary education is the problem of curriculum. The curriculum of Nigerian education at all levels presently, is defective. There is need for the curriculum to be responsive to the individual and societal needs and aspirations. It should also be comprehensive and adaptable to changing needs, times and conditions.

Emunemu, Archibong and Emetarom (2009) maintained that since universities have largely and successfully, completed its initial task of producing the professionals needed to staff government institutions and organization, graduates need to be prepared in the broader range of complex skills necessary to pursue the nations quest for economic development.

### **Managerial Strategies to Solving Issues in Nigerian Tertiary Education**

It is glaring that the management of tertiary education is *sin-qua-non* for sustainable development and economic security. It is therefore the opinion of this paper that the following strategies be employed to attend to the issues raised.

- i. Policy implementers should be oriented and educated through seminars and workshops on the need for formulated programmes and policies to be implemented to the letter without any form of deviation. Strong will should guide educational policy implementers.
- ii. Entrepreneurial education should be given all the necessary support for effective implementation. Government should endeavour to make available all the needed resources for its implementation.
- iii. Education is a very expensive venture, government should understand the financial implications of underfunding tertiary education and hence should increase financial allocation to the education sector. In addition, tertiary institutions should devise alternative means of generating fund internally to supplement government's subventions.
- iv. To discourage brain drain, government should recognize the strategic positions of teachers and motivate them adequately so as to retain the good brains. Resources human and material should be adequately provided in institutions of learning.
- v. Curriculum implementers should be dynamic and visionary in designing curriculum packages that are relevant to the individual and societal needs. Presently, the curriculum should greatly emphasize vocational and technology based courses.

### **Conclusion**

The poor economic situation in Nigeria has brought about more problems that threaten the nation's development and security. Education is described as an instrument *par excellence* for national development. In the midst of these problems, tertiary education that is concerned with the training of professionals and skilled manpower is being looked upon to provide solutions to the economic problems threatening the nation. Some issues that affect the management of tertiary education highlighted above should be painstakingly addressed so that tertiary education can effectively and efficiently play its expected roles.



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