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Education Strategies and Economy Viability of Self Help in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to examine educating strategies and economic viable of help self in the 21st century. The research method adopted for this study was logical reasoning. The study maintained that as a nation we ought to move beyond asking whether students can reproduce what they learned in school. The question should be how creatively students can use what they know, and whether they can extrapolate from it and apply their knowledge in another context. UNICEF statistics on Education in Nigeria has it that "Nigeria's population growth has put pressure on the country's resources, public services, and infrastructure". With children under 15 years of age accounting for 45% of the **211,772,942** million populations, the burden on education has become overwhelming with about 70%, Nigeria now has 13.2 million out of school children the world's highest number. 60% of those children are in northern Nigeria. The finding revealed that to fulfill their human potential and lead their communities and economies, students must not only master a foundation of facts and concepts, but also be able to apply, extend, and expand on that knowledge. They must develop 21st century, transversal skills that enable them to work independently as self-driven, life-long learners and innovators. The study recommend that increase alignment with workforce needs, including an increase in entrepreneurial skills and skills that drive innovation and new job development for the knowledge economy. Inclusion, The only rational course for the nation is to turn to educating self for economic viability and revisit the purpose of education in nation building.

Introduction

In a rapidly-changing and interconnected world, education ought to prepare students for success in life because the present day global economy does not pay you for what you know, the Internet knows everything. The world economy pays you for what you can do with wh

you know. Therefore for Nigeria as a nation to have a knowledge economy there is needs to invest in students who can intelligently manage and evaluate information and data. Succinctly put, Michael Fullan and Maria Langworthy¹ say that nations ought to move beyond asking whether students can reproduce what they learned in school. The question should be how creatively students can use what they know, and whether they can extrapolate from it and apply their knowledge in another context. Skills such as critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and collaboration are at an increasing premium. In the more complex the world becomes the more creative we need to be to meet its challenges, and this is becoming increasingly clear in education and the workplace. Now a day's people now need to be creative to be successful, but while the idea of success has changed, the education system has not always adjusted its methods or goals to meet it.

I will argue that in Sub-Section (1) (7d) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN)², the national educational goals, which derive from the philosophy states that "the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society is a prerequisite for achieving a great and dynamic economy. That is why Ajana Sola³ stated that, education and training that children receive in secondary and tertiary institutions equip them with skills that are necessary to fully participate in society and be economically viable in the 21st century. Though the standards of teachers in each state of the federation vary in helping to achieve this goal, secondary education typically covers ages 12 to 17 and is divided into two levels: lower secondary education (spanning 3 to 4 years) and upper secondary education (spanning 2 to 3 years). However, UNICEF⁴ in 2019 opines that, two in three children attended either lower or upper secondary school, and only one in two children attended either upper secondary school or higher education. Furthermore, UNICEF⁵ stated that from 2000 to 2019, the number of out-of-school children of lower secondary school-age shrank from 99 million to 61 million, and the number of out-of-school children of upper secondary school-age fell from 177 million to 137 million in Nigeria.

UNICEF⁵ statistics on Education in Nigeria has it that "Nigeria's population growth has put pressure on the country's resources, public services, and infrastructure". With children under 15 years of age accounting for 45% of the **211,772,942** million populations, the burden on education has become overwhelming. UBEC⁷ observed further that primary school enrollment has increased in recent years, but net attendance is only about 70%, Nigeria now has 13.2 million out of school children the world's highest number. In Unicef Global Databases Based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Demographic and Health Surveys and other National Household Surveys⁶, 2020, 60% of those children are in northern Nigeria. That is to say Nigeria accounts for more than one in five out-of-school children and 45 percent of out-of-school children in West Africa.

In 2018, 6.8 million students in Nigeria were enrolled in low secondary schools as cited in [Http://Www.Unesco.Org/New/En/Unesco/Themes/Icts/Teacher-Education/Unesco-Ict](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/icts/teacher-education/unesco-ict). The official junior secondary education age in Nigeria goes from 12 to 14 years old. As of 2018, private and public middle schools in Nigeria counted 4.9 million students aged 12 to 14 years, holding 72 percent of the total number of students in junior secondary schools. Some 28 percent

of scholars were either younger or older than the ordinary age for this educational level. In the same vein, education statistics, like other social data, facilitates planning.

Education for what?

In Emmanuel and Danmagaji⁷, it is commented that people have aims and purpose. Education is not a person, it is not a thing. However, like a thing, it has its uses. The purpose of education is the uses that people would have for education. Plato defined education as a training given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children, when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in irrational souls. The particular training in respect of pleasure and pain, which leads you to hate and love what you ought to hate and love, it is called education. Suffice to say that Plato definition captured a moral emphasis which are ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘pleasure’ and ‘pain’. Furthermore, Nakhat Nasreen & Tazyeen Bano⁸ attests to the above fact when they comments that,

“Education is a process and a service for mankind the result of which is complex and multifaceted; quality of education reflects itself in multiple facets of life transcending from the individual through national to international roles of an individual. If we compare the qualitative aspects of material things and education, we find that the quality of any product can be quantified, measured and compared with other products but the quality of education cannot be measured easily, for education is expressed in service, in behavior and duties. Its effects are long lasting and long term.”

Taking a holistic looks from the above statement it is glaring that quality is a force for economy viability of self help in the 21st century that draws attention to a product for quantification, measurement and comparison to others. Considering the benefits of having an educated population in a nation explains why most countries of the world, including Nigeria place a premium on education.

Statistics and facts on demographics in Nigeria

Nigeria is the country with the highest population in Africa. The current population of **Nigeria** is **211,772,942** as of Wednesday, August 11, 2021, based on Worldometer⁹ elaboration of the latest United Nations data and was estimated to constantly increase in the next decades. By 2050, this figure could double and reach 400 million people. In fact, in the last 50 years, Nigeria's population grew at a very high rate. The largest city of Nigeria is Lagos, which is also the largest city in all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Abuja, the Capital City of Nigeria, counted about half a million inhabitants in 2020, ranking 15th among the largest cities of Nigeria.

Simona Varrella Simona¹⁰ added that one main feature which characterizes Nigeria's demographics is the young age of the population. In 2018, the median age of the population equaled 18.4 years, meaning that half of the population was aged less than 19 years. Nigeria represents the 18th country with the lowest median age in Africa as well as in the world. Indeed, the 21 countries with the youngest median age on the African continent are also the countries with the youngest median age worldwide. A young population reflects several demographic characteristics of a country. For instance, together with a high population growth, life expectancy in Nigeria is among the lowest globally. The average life span in Nigeria for those

born in 1919 was 54 years. Consequently, people aged 60 years and over make up a very small part of the Nigerian population.

The rapid population growth observed in Nigeria went hand in hand with a high birth rate. The crude birth rate is among the highest in Africa, reaching 35 births per 1,000 people. Nevertheless, the birth rate was projected to decline in the next decades. Although the birth rate might decline, the number of women keeps growing. In other words, despite the decreasing birth rate, more women are having children. However, many mothers in Nigeria die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. In www.worldometers.info¹¹, in low-income countries the maternal mortality rate in 2017 was 462 deaths per 100,000 live births, whereas in high-income countries this figure was 11. In Nigeria, per 100,000 children, 917 mothers died from causes related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management.

Azeezat Adedigba¹² avers that, in 2018, Nigeria overtook India as the country with the largest population living in extreme poverty. These data are very alarming, as India has a population almost seven times higher than Nigeria. An individual is considered poor in Nigeria when less **than 361 U.S. dollars** per year are available to him or her. In total, 40.1 percent of the population in Nigeria lived in poverty, which equals almost 83 million people. The majorities of individuals living in poverty are concentrated in rural areas and live in large households. Moreover, further data on the poverty rate indicate that households with a male at the head are much more impacted by poverty than those with a female lead. Additionally, more people working exclusively in the agricultural sector live in poverty. The states of Sokoto and Taraba had the largest percentage of people living below the poverty line. The lowest poverty rates were recorded in the South and South-Western states. For instance, in Lagos this figure equaled 4.5 percent, the lowest rate in Nigeria.

The concept of economic viability

Economic viability is the ability to sustain operation on the basis of current and projected revenues equal to or in excess of current and planned expenditures. An activity that can support itself financially is said to be viable. Viability can be applied to any economic unit, from a single project to a business or even to a country. Applied to education, the focus would be on having basic ideas of all aspect of knowledge, but cannot be specialists in all to achieve and meeting national needs, operating in a reasonably open world system. Unfortunately, not many nations are able to achieve and meet national needs in spite of endowed resources. Consequently, development issues are commonplace.

In the case of Nigeria, the GDP was rebased in 2014, thus granting the status of the fastest growing economy in Africa, in league with countries like Mexico and Singapore. But the achieved growth has not been accompanied with egalitarian welfare-oriented distributions. Tackling contemporary development issues would undoubtedly involve strategies that give rise to sustainable poverty reduction. Nigeria continues to face a number of challenges, including widespread poverty, unemployment, weak infrastructure and high rate of urbanization, low earnings, poor social indicators and significant disparities by income, gender and location. Political development characterized by instability in the pre- 1999 period seemed to have slightly improved recently.

Nevertheless, the long years of political misrule seemed to have exerted a sustained tempo of poor attitude to productivity, but eager acceptance of corruption, which indirectly hurts employment creation, and instigates terrorism and Globalization-inspired economic reforms since the late 1980s led to low capacity utilization and staff rationalization, employers have reduced the earnings of new entrants and have raised the standard for applicants. Global and local climate change continues to exacerbate desertification, reduce grazing land, pushing water pollution and depressing water supply to dams. Oil activities have induced degradation of the environment in the Niger Delta, with adverse effects on agricultural production (crop and fish), as well as reduction in hydroelectric power generation, gully erosion, loss of jobs and sustained poverty and the resultant restiveness of youths.

The development deficits in the area of unemployment center largely on how to eliminate the large scale unemployment, especially among youths and women. The ineffectiveness of previous policy measures to make any significant impact on this serious socio-economic and psychological malaise suggests new policy directions and strategies underpinned by effective policy implementation. Other unemployment-related development-deficits are: managing the imbalance between the demand and supply of labour of all ages; addressing the low quality of work, education and pay which under-employment accentuates; redressing structural imbalance in the access to jobs among older and younger job seekers; and improving the employability of graduates who currently suffer lack of market-ready skills and competencies.

According to Fajana¹³ development deficits also arise in the following areas of lack of quality education and social protection, thus the criminal neglect of senior citizens welfare; the inability of the state to find meaningful engagement for senior citizens who are desirous of working; inability to introduce unemployment benefits for senior citizens, and others of younger age; the neglect of people with disabilities and their unemployment benefits needs; the unsatisfactory pace of the NHIS scheme; the rudimentary nature of child social protection schemes; and the desire of the people for a functional pensions system.

Acquiring degrees only may not be enough to be relevant in the 21st Century. Going as far back as a 2003 World Bank report, the effectiveness of traditional educational systems, in which the teacher is the sole source of knowledge, was being questioned. And when examined in the context of the 21st Century economy, an education that says to students “wait to learn it from the teacher” may not help them compete in a global workforce.

What is missing then from many traditional models? Simply put, many do not teach students that they should expect to acquire new knowledge and learn new skills for a lifetime. Without this awareness, graduates entering the economy will not remain viable. But steps to address this challenge are being implemented in the tertiary institution as they create greater connections to career experiences through programmes like entrepreneurship offered by all students.

A critical factor outdating the traditional model is that in the new economy, knowledge and technology merge more rapidly. With this quickened pace of development, there is simply more to learn. Take our cell phones for example. In just a short time, our phones have advanced such that now they offer greater access to information and a broader array of

communications than ever-phone, text, and email. But each generation of improvements requires us to learn how to use more applications and integrate them across newer platforms.

And just as our phones require us to learn new innovations, the same “upskilling” of the workforce will demand greater career-length educations from everyone. That is, it is more important than ever for undergraduates to invest in themselves through education and continuous learning to update their skill sets and knowledge base. For example, students pursuing degrees in the 21st Century economy will continue to learn new things with greater frequency. In response, educators feel a call to action instinctively. Herein lays our opportunity: develop a craving for lifelong learning in students.

Educating Strategies and Economy Viability of Self Help in the 21st Century

Today’s students live in a rapidly changing world with opportunities and challenges that are very different from the ones many of us grew up with 20yrs back. To fulfill their human potential and lead their communities and economies, students must not only master a foundation of facts and concepts, but also be able to apply, extend, and expand on that knowledge. European Commission¹³ pointed out that to develop 21st century, students will need transversal skills that enable them to:

- i. Work independently as self-driven, life-long learners and innovators
- ii. Work collaboratively and respect diverse viewpoints
- iii. Think critically about new challenges
- iv. Communicate via a range of technologies and methods
- v. Work persistently in the face of difficult challenges

And, in reflecting on applied experiences, graduates gain the confidence to apply this ability as working professionals. This effect happens because their success is validated by real world results with impacts that can be measured in tangible ways. In addition to raising achievement, policymakers increasingly recognize that they have a moral as well as a practical imperative to increase equity and improve success for all students. In a closely connected, knowledge-driven world, each school, community, state, municipality, province, and nation benefits by raising student outcomes for every learner and no society can excel if it writes off a large part of its populace.

Teachers’ knowledge on Technology

Knowledge of ICT is a direct and profound enabler for transformed learning environments but teachers, and the deep personal relationships they create with their students, remain the foundation for learning. However, teachers take on new roles as facilitators and guides who activate each student’s unique learning path. Supported by effective policies, professional development, and digital curriculum, teachers gain unprecedented tools and information to customize the student’s learning experience and deliver an academically rigorous education that emphasizes inquiry, investigation, independent learning, and collaboration.

Guided by highly skilled teachers, students in a transformed environment use powerful mobile devices as personal learning platforms. To Omatseye¹⁴, accessing a wealth of digital learning resources and following modern pedagogic strategies, students can:

- i. Manage their time and take more control of their learning
- ii. Engage with the world and access different mediums for learning in ways that fit their individual needs, excite their passions, and improve outcomes
- iii. Explore and analyze vibrant, interactive learning resources throughout the school day and beyond
- iv. Interact with materials that bring abstract concepts to life and tailor the presentation of content to each learner's needs
- v. Use a wide range of creative methods to demonstrate what they're learning
- vi. Create and publish unique content, taking ownership of their ideas and engaging in meaningful social learning

In addition to direct support for student learning, ICT provides valuable tools and data for creating a more transparent, evidence-based culture. Teachers can use data from formative assessments to identify learning problems and intervene in real time to optimize outcomes. School performance management systems, human capital management systems, and other solutions provide a firmer basis to identify effective strategies and make evidence-based decisions on resource allocation and programme management for economy viability of self help in the 21st century.

I will argue further that as it is in other areas of the economy and society, ICT in education can increase efficiency and provide new ways to work. Teachers can reduce isolation and share best practices through online communities of practices and self-paced professional learning. Digital tools can offer efficient ways to organize and manage courses, content, assessments, grades, and other data. Digital learning resources can reduce the costs of textbooks while offering access to more timely content for economic viability.

Conclusion

A 21st century education and economic viability of self help is about giving students the skills they need to succeed in this new world, and helping them grow the confidence to practice those skills. With so much information readily available to them, education focus more on making sense of that information, sharing and using it in smart ways. However, as Nigerians continue to ponder over the state of the nation, the question that logically arises is which way forward? The only rational course for the nation is to turn to educating self for economic viability and revisit the purpose of education in nation building. This is why many countries of the world have given it a pride of place as reflected in the way their educational systems are being handled because of their belief that educating self would ultimately lead to self-reliance, job creation, security, economic growth and development. Thus, the educational systems in these countries were allocated appropriate funding in their budgets to promote compulsory qualitative education and human resource development for their citizens as can be observed in the South East Asian countries. However, in Nigeria, since independence, education funding has been far from being impressive. Education is the tool to upgrade the quality of human capital for the production of goods and services to satisfy human wants. Thus, any country that wants to enhance productive capacity of her inhabitants and promote rapid growth socially, economically, politically, etc. must invest maximally in the education of her populace.

Recommendations

1. Government should create an enabling environment for education by improving the quality of education, increasing demand for education, and humanitarian assistance.
2. Teachers should have core knowledge and competencies to use proven teaching methodologies to deliver appropriate quality education.
3. Parents and communities should have improved knowledge and commitment to contribute to enrolling children at the right age in quality learning in safe and protective school environments.
4. Raise levels of achievement on standards-based assessments, particularly in reading and in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and other areas that are critical to economic progress.
5. Enable students to demonstrate higher levels of critical thinking, analysis, communication, and other 21st century, transversal skills.
6. Equitable access to high-quality resources across regions and genders and increase the number of girls enrolled in school.
7. Bridge the digital divide and provide equal access to technology across socio-economic barriers.
8. Government and private sectors should concentrate highly on providing infrastructural development to its citizens
9. Government should strengthen anti draft institution to tackle corruption, which indirectly hurts employment creation, and instigates terrorism.
10. Having knowledge of ICT in education can increase efficiency and provide new ways to work as teachers can reduce isolation and share best practices through online communities of practices and self-paced professional learning.

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