

MAKING TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ECONOMICALLY RESPONSIVE FOR POLITICAL STABILITY

ABSTRACT

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Education is a veritable instrument for political, economic and social development and stability. Even though educational institutions are actively engaged in the transmission of such knowledge there are still many unexplored avenues which such institutions can capitalize to derive surplus revenue. From the abundant responses from the respondent, the paper unveils a myriad of avenues from which both the students and university can generate funds instead of wanting endlessly for revenue which the government cannot shoulder. Also the engagement of students in revenue yielding activities like work and study schedules will prevent them from engaging in destructive activities like cultism, armed robbery and social unrest.

INTRODUCTION

Just as the potentials of a growing child hinge on the socio- economic well being of its parents so as the fate of any nation tied to the socio-political and economic well being of its citizenry. One of the most effective instruments ever discovered to positively shape the destiny of any nation is education. The National Policy on Education rightly confirmed this in the statement that education is:

the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick developing of its economic, political, sociological and human resources.

The type of educational innovation launched through the 6-3-3-4 system is very demanding in terms of content emphasis and approach. It also effectively covers the domains of learning in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain areas of learning. Most notable of all is the 60 - 40 ratio in admission in favour of the sciences at the tertiary level.

However, the foundation for a comprehensive, responsive and enlarged curriculum content had been laid at the secondary school sector of the 6-3-3-4 system. It is the products of this sector that are fed into tertiary institutions. The curriculum at the secondary school was meant to prepare its products for:

1. useful living and
2. for higher education

Wither way, the testing ground for these theoretical assumptions are the tertiary institutions. But the cycle of schooling is conducted as such as that it does not leave room for the practicability of these theories before the graduate is launched into the already over flooded job market if he is lucky to get a job.

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Government through the National Policy document on Education expects all institutions to strive to excellence through the promotion of these educational goals:

- (a) a free and democratic society
- (b) a just and egalitarian society
- (c) a united, strong and self reliant nation
- (d) a great and dynamic economy
- (e) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens

It is worthy to note that for about ten or more years or so, tertiary institutions in the country have degenerated in their economic output. Instead not only do they expect all their financial burden to be borne by their respective governments. Federal or State, but they have not played the role of exemplary institutions that would justify their

financial demand. The main actors on the scene have not exploited the full potentials for maximum economic gains.

There are many ways through which tertiary institutions can generate money -consultancy service endowment funds, sale of agricultural products, in-service training, owning a printing press; charging fees on conference and publication of publishable articles etc. Staff of such institutions can be useful in this respect. But tertiary institutions have not bothered to explore possible ways of maximizing the potentials of the students so that they can contribute economically to help themselves and their parents and to contribute indirectly to peace, progress of the economy and political stability. It is this under utilization of the student that students have capitalized upon to foment unrest, engage in cultism and under unproductive ventures that destabilize these educational institution. Very unfortunately enough, the university management indirectly encourage such unproductive ventures through strikes, student unrest etc.. All of us know that the idle mind is the devil workshop. Therefore this papers set out to unveil those variables that both the students and the staff should explore inwardly and outwardly to boost their economic orientation. It is hoped that such a positive step would stem the tides of unrest, death and destruction and generate not only the very needed self reliance but also economic buoyance to both the teachers and the taught.

Brief Literature Review

In an attempt to close the gap between theory and practice Swabb (1983) defined curriculum as: what is successfully conveyed in differing degrees to different students, by committed teachers, using appropriate materials and actions, of legitimated bodies of knowledge, skill taste and propens to act and react which are chosen for instruction after serious reflection and communal decision by representative of these involved in the teaching of a specific group of students who are known to the decision makers.

He further explained that the concept of curriculum goes beyond the endless collection of course objective of curriculum description conceived by specialist teachers under the quest of academic freedom. He concluded by saying that the quality of education is measured by the positions the products of such an institution occupy in life. He also pointed out the importance of the contribution of the teacher, the learner, the content and the learning environment to teaching and learning and warned that any deficiency; in any of the four would spell doom for the entire educational effort.

Shuaibu (1997) observed that at the tertiary level, the community involved is narrow, largely self conceited, protective, conservative and hardly forward looking. Tertiary education, in Nigeria he opined is hardly responsive to societal needs. While the goals and objectives are peripheral, the contents are tangentially relevant and quite often obsolete. The methods of delivery are as stale and as unstimulating, just as their selection are seldom based on the needs of the learners. He called the evaluation system backward looking. He concluded by reworking that the narrow views of a strong, vocal and prevailed minority (pressure group) always seem to dictate what is taught, how it is taught and evaluated at the tertiary level. His observation also led him to note that in spite of the 60-40 ratio in the admission exercise in favour of the science, most students struggle for admission in the areas of Business Administration, Accounting, Law, Economics etc. than they do in the pure sciences and technology.

With respect to the learning environment, students (1997) bemoaned the paucity of the teaching learning environment, the collapsed structures, the unappetising walls and the unreliability in the basic facilities. All these according to him has erased whatever little motivation for higher education is left.

Obanya (1994) peeping into the 21st century opined that curriculum organization should became a lot more integrated than what it is, He observed that education of the 21 st century could be used as a weapon for fighting poverty and inequality in the distribution of wealth between and within countries.

From the larger community, he prescribed that government could tax parents, commercial and industrial

firms. But in most cases some of these firms are not faithful in their payments.

While the researcher agrees with the suggestions of Gravenir, it should be noted that the present atmosphere of worldwide economic recession is not favourable for such suggestions. This observation can be confirmed from the state of unrest that greeted the introduction of municipal fees" by University of Ibadan which escalated the fees payable by both returning and fresh undergraduates.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to unveil other viable alternatives that could be introduced into the university system for income generation on the part of the students for self reliance as well as engagement in productive activities for political stability.

Sample

The sample of the students were taken from Federal College of Education. Out of a randomly selected number of fifty students, only thirty returned the questionnaire duly filled. The majority of these who returned their questionnaire are in the field of Business Education. Is this indicative of a lack of awareness of the area being sampled by the researcher?

Instrument

The instrument used comprised a ten point questionnaire that probed them in the area of their gender age, their subject combination, their state, and religion. Then the questionnaire asked the students to list five reasons each by which Education can contribute to each of the stipulated goals of tertiary education namely:

1. A free and democratic society
2. A just and egalitarian society
3. A united strong and self reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of bright and full citizens

Limitation

The study was conducted in Federal College of Education and so the findings will be limited to that institution. Although fifty questionnaires were administered to randomly selected students, the respondent comprise students who are overtly contributing to the economic sector of the country. Though the respondents responded effectively to the other factors in the goals of education, the main focus of this paper is on the fourth element - " a great and dynamic economy".

Analyses and Discussion

The respondents range from 20 years to thirty five years of age and their subject combinations range from Business Education to English and Social Studies, SOS/PES, English/PES; CRS/PES, and FIAU/PES. 85% of the students come from the younger age bracket in the nation. Table I shows the students age in years and their subject combination.

Table 1: Age in Years with Subject Combination

Age in Years	Bus. Ed	E/SOS	SOS/PES	E/PES	CRS/PES	HIAU/PES
20-24	11		1			

25-29	•-»	1	1]	
30-34	2	1	1	2		
35 above			2		1	1
.Anonymous			1	1		
Total	16	2	6	3	2	1

	=	Business Education
1. Bus. Ed	=	English/Social Studies
1. E/SOS	=	Social Studies and Primary Education
J. SOS/PES	=	English and Primary Education Studies
4. E/PES	=	Christian Religion Studies and Primary Education
5. CRS/PES		Studies
6. HAU/PE	=	Hausa and Primary Education Studies

Responses **according to the Five** Reasons

An attempt has been made to categorize the reasons advanced for economic buoyancy by education for the nation. The reasons proposed range from concerned reality to abyssal dreams. Their reasons range from:

- citizens should be employed
- people should be trained to understand government policy
- education should inculcate different disciplines
- education can make people economical
- the introduction of technical and vocational education at all levels
- provision of adult education programme i.e. effective mass literacy programmes
- functional education
- restructuring of the economy

Some of these cogent reasons are advanced by those in Business Education Programmes while some strange responses like improving socio- economic status of Nigeria, provision of more funds, were adduced by others.

Responses to second **Reason**

Responses proposed by the respondents for economic buoyance through education are synthesized through the following points:

- effective freedom for citizens (really emphasised)
- evaluation of government decisions
- removing ambiguities in government receipts and payments
- teach citizens to exhibit positive effort to economic development
- encouragement of local industries
- more emphasis on qualitative than quantitative education
- right personnel in right and position
- creating opportunities for practicals during studies
- education trains people to deal maximally with the economy
- bribery and corruption should be reduced.
- standard education should be achieved by teachers.

The responses suggested by the respondents have ex-rayed the society and being a young generation, they have proffered workable solutions to problems militating against economic recovery.

Their responses to the third reason concerning how education can contribute to economic stability are the following:

- not introducing oddity to the economy
- provision of good leaders

- Agric education and other fields of science and areas like computer education, Business Education and PHE should be boosted
- Orientation of children to value the dignity of labour
- Curriculum planning should take cognisance of the various facets of the economy to engender the various manpower skills for the different aspects of the economy
- Encouraging students through adequate provision of needed resources in order to release their potentials
- Education is the bedrock of any meaningful development
- Self employment courses should be encouraged in schools.
- Our economic resources should be maintained.

All of the above suggestions confirm the fact that courses offered in tertiary institutions are not in congruence with societal demands. This observation calls for a serious overhaul of the entire educational system to make it viable and emulative.

- The fourth cluster of reason proposed for economic buoyancy through education centre on the following: by
- not having corrupt leaders by allowing foreign investors
 - by emphasizing the psychomotor domain of learning
 - Education is a life long process so continuity and dynamism should be accorded.
 - bribery and corruption should be reduced to the lowest level

A curious observer would notice that as one advances to the fourth reasons, the solutions proffered begin to dwindle as almost all the reasons possible have already been proposed. One factor to note however is not our vision in proposing solutions to our problems, it is our collective will to take the right step in the right direction that stalls all the good plans.

The last and fifth cluster of solution to the country's economic quagmire by ardent observers are the following;

- Having a favourable balance of modern economic theory
- Teach individuals things that fall the economy e.g. bribery and corruption
- When there is political stability
- SOS and language Arts should broaden national and international affairs.

All of these suggestions are laudable. But are they all feasible in the presence of the competing demands on the nation's resources and economic buoyancy?

This paper would like to lift some aspects of the solutions proffered by the respondents as leverages for improving economic downturn in tertiary institutions. The discussion does not agree with the nonpayment of school fees but proffers means of alleviating the financial encumbrance of both parents, their children and their wards.

The points asterisked among the myriads of solutions proffered are:

1. The introduction of Technical vocational Education at all levels
 2. Restructuring the economy
 3. Encouragement of local industries
 4. Creating opportunities for practicals during studies
 5. Africa-education and other fields of science and arts like computer education, Business Education PHE should be boosted.
- € Orientation of children to value dignity of labour
- » Curriculum planning should take cognisance of the various facets of the economy to engender the various

manpower skills for the different aspect of the economy. :&.

Self employment courses should be encouraged Not having corrupt leaders

10. By allowing foreign investors
11. By emphasizing the Psychomotor domain of learning

Earlier on, it was posited that the foundations for sustainable economic development has already been laid at the secondary school through its comprehensive content that is oriented to provisional compulsory and elective courses.

Thus tertiary schools represent the theatre for the implementation of those two pronged laudable objectives of the secondary school level. For them to be able to do this, there is an urgent need to restructure the tertiary school's content to make provisions for work and study. That means that lectures in tertiary institutions would commence from 8 a. m in the morning and terminate at 11 or 12 midnight. Programmes offered would cover both morning and evening sessions. This type of organization would not only have an enlarged body of students, it will also offer students to choose when they will attend lectures. Some might prefer to work in the morning and attend evening lectures while others would prefer to attend morning lectures and work in the evenings. This type of programme would also keep students gainfully employed at the day thereby preventing them from engaging in cults, armed robbery or unrest. By twelve O'clock, the body needs to be rested to be woken up the next day by the line- up of the day's activities.

Possible revenue for engaging students in work could be the university cafeteria, the library, the school farms or even outside the university environment in the far away industries and firms lodged in the community. Apart from earning money, it would afford students the opportunity of relating work with study. Through their experiences, they could suggest to either the school authorities or curriculum planners about what and what should be included or removed from their programmes of study.

It was also suggested that the economy should be restructured. Restructuring the economy involves provision of opportunities for foreign investment in the economy in order to provide employment opportunities for Nigerian students.

Curriculum planning too has not been spared the nod. The content need to be revitalized and boasted to provide opportunities for practical activities on the part of students. Opportunities should be provided in any programme for the introduction of agricultural, technical and vocational education. Apart from enabling the students to learn on the job, they can later in life help themselves as well as be gainfully employed in any Technical or Vocational Enterprise. From these experiences, they would also learn how to respect the dignity of labour. Also the curriculum content should teach self employment courses and opportunities for cognitive, affective and psychomotor growth.

The opportunity for all the above can be boosted through dedicated and committed leadership. Therefore the respondents felt that the economy could be stifled through corruption leadership.

Bribery and corruption could also stifle the economy. Therefore instant justice should be meted on those in positions of authority who embezzle funds. These funds that are stashed in foreign banks would not only be used to create job opportunities for teeming undergraduate students but could also boost the economy to encourage foreign investors.

On the part of the university system, some measures can be taken to boost its income. The government on purchase used textbooks from students and recall at a profits. Endowment funds can be raised. Conferences, workshops and seminars in-service training and consultancy service could be organised to bring in money. A printing press, a binding unit and laundry can be set up and operated as sources of revenue. The 2% education tax can also be used to boost the income of the university. Each level of education, beginning from the primary school sector should have agricultural farms, carpentry workshops, welding workshops, pottery, weaving, dying and fine art studios or workshops that could generate income. Each tertiary institution should have a zoo stocked with animals and open to the public so as to serve as a source of revenue. Fish ponds too could be effectively managed by the science sector of the university. By their engagement in all these ventures, they will be on their way to self reliable and economic buoyancy.

Conclusion

This paper started with the identification of cracks in the existing tertiary institutions in the areas of teachers learners, the content and the learning environment - the four indispensable to a workable curriculum. One of the five goals expected of all levels of education is "a great and dynamic economy". The paper therefore tried to unveil possible avenues of economic buoyancy for tertiary educational sector which has been labelled as the testing ground for all the ideal identified at the secondary school level. From the responses of the respondents, the researcher concludes that there is a need for not only the economy to be restructured but also a revitalization of the curriculum.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to relate content at a tertiary institution to the demands of the world of work.
2. Opportunity should be provided for students at the level of work and study.

3. The government should encourage investors to the country in a threat-free atmosphere.
4. Special attention should be paid to the technological and science oriented content of the curriculum to make it viable.
5. Tertiary institutions should establish various ways within and outside their systems to create jobs as well as boost the economy. This will deter students from engaging in unwholesome activities like cultism and unrest.
6. In order to be positively oriented, leaders and all those in positions of authority must live by examples.

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