

Enhancing Human Capital Efficiency in the Nigeria Educational Sector

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Abstract

The role of human capital in economic development has been a frequent theme in the theoretical and applied literature. The belief of policy makers that human capital is a key contributor to economic development has led, virtually everywhere in the developing world, to the provision of subsidised education. Human capital resource performance in education is still underestimated, however, it is central in educational development in Nigeria. Nigerian leaders should pay close attention to the needs of the educational sector, and treat it as a public-health issue, because the sociopolitical and economic development of a nation and (or her health) is, in many ways, determined by the quality and level of educational attainment of the population.

Teachers have poor quality of life which could however significantly impede teachers' efficiency and even educational efficiency and development. Inadequate teacher quality, teacher inadequacy in relation to teacher - pupil ratio, lack of specialisation, and constraints affecting teacher performance such as gender streamlining; non-conducive teaching – learning environment, unfavourable attitudinal disposition; inadequate remuneration and lack of constant improvement programmes, low self esteem of teachers, lack of motivation, lack of self development leave, and most especially bad maintenance culture of the Nigerian educational human resources are all impediments to the human resource efficiency in the Nigeria educational sector. There is a dare need to address these constraints, since educational delivery and effective educational development of a nation is strictly tied to an enhanced and efficient human resource development for education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human Capital Efficiency; Nigerian Education; Teacher performance

Introduction

The utmost importance of developing human skills is vital and fundamental to National development (Babatunde, 2004). Corroborating this viewpoint is the assertion by Onwioduokit and Tule (2002) that human resources form the critical basis for wealth of nations as well as typify the most essential variable in a country's development. The role of human capital in economic development has been a frequent theme in the theoretical and applied literature. The belief of policy makers that human capital is a key contributor to economic development has led, virtually everywhere in the developing world, to the provision of subsidised education.

Human capital is generated and put into use in labour markets. The structure of the labour market is therefore critical for the quantity and quality of human capital that is generated and for the uses to which it is put. The structure of the market will determine, for example, how much human capital is put into growth-enhancing activities and how much into other activities, such as redistribution. It will also determine what types of human capital will be demanded.

Positive externalities of investment in Nigeria education sector justifies state intervention. However, human capital resource performance in education is still underestimated (Johannes, 1999). August (2006) stated that the human capital is central in educational development.

Nigerian leaders should pay close attention to the needs of the educational sector, and treat it as a public-health issue, because the sociopolitical and economic development of a nation and (or her health) is, in many ways, determined by the quality and level of educational attainment of the population. Political leaders should take politics out of education, as the continued neglect of this sector would lead to social paralysis (Dike, 2002). Olayemi (2001) has observed that "the depreciation that has endangered public schools is undoubtedly the major cause that led to the emergence of private schools".

Statement of problem

Nigeria is being rocked by labor unrests prompted by nonpayment of salaries, among other factors (Dike, 2002). Israel (2001) stated some problems militating against the quality of teacher in the Nigerian education and they include, poor health care services for teachers, poor educational qualifications, poor water supply and provision of toilet facilities for teachers, poor access and transportation to school, lack of payment of salary. Thus teachers have poor quality of life and this could however significantly impede teacher and even educational efficiency and development.

This is because all these will make teachers to be inefficient and no or little energy might be devoted for both teaching preparation and teaching activities. Teachers also have the problem of low prestige in the community, lack of upgrading programmes through in-service or part time training programme and lack of study leave

which can also hamper the teaching activities of teachers and also affecting the national educational objectives and also in addition, national development when put together (Israel, 2001). Also, Giwa and Illo (2000) expressed the problems militating against schools inspection as shortage of manpower and quality of the personnel available for the work.

In economics terms, resources are scarce, however, with such a great population of approximately 150,000,000 (NPC, 2006), Nigeria wouldn't say that human resources for education is scarce when even the unemployment rate of the nation falls in two digit (even more than 10%) (NISER, 2005). Thus, Nigeria however do not lack the human capacity resources to fulfill her educational objectives but have a very low and poor maintenance culture for her human capital resources which will significantly impede her educational efficiency and objectives at the medium and long run. With the troubling problem of the shortage and half-baked human resources employed to teach in the nation's schools, how are we certain that, the UBE program will be successful? Has the government trained the required number and quality of teachers needed to successfully implement the program? Are the teachers going to be motivated to perform their duties well? Are the classrooms and seats ready, or are the pupils going to sit on bare floor? Are the books and other teaching materials ready? To improve the standard of education in Nigeria, the society has to first educate the educators, and motivate them to perform their duties well (Dike, 2000). But the leaders do not seem to want to listen! (Dike, 2002). This paper provides a basis for enhancing teachers and teaching profession in the Nigeria Education sector and also in Nigeria in general.

Nigeria's National Policy Provision on Teacher Education

Section 9: 57 of Nigeria's national policy on education (1981) emphasised that teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, while section 9:58 outlined the purpose of teacher education as:

- (i) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
- (ii) To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- (iii) To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.
- (iv) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of the country, but in the wider world;
- (v) To enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

Conceptual Framework: Human capital efficiency measurement

Efficiency is defined as a measurement of firm's performance (koopmans, 1951) and it consists of two components in economics perspective: technical and allocative efficiencies. Technical efficiency reflects the ability of a firm to obtain maximal output from a given set of inputs. A firm is technically efficient if it produces the maximum obtainable level of output from a certain amount of input. Allocative efficiency, on the other hand refers to the ability of a given firm to use the inputs in optimal proportion given their respective prices. A firm is allocatively efficient if production inputs are allocated according to their relative prices.

There are factors to be considered in measuring technical and allocative efficiency, Omiunu (2003) stated that human resource capitals which include level of experience and educational qualification are major factors to be considered in measuring their technical efficiency. Also, cost of other inputs and resources used are factors to consider in measuring allocative efficiency.

In Educational perspective, Hallack (1990) emphasized that the availability, relevance and adequacy of educational resource, which include human resources contribute to academic achievement, which is a measure of efficiency. Bajah (1979), Oni (1995) and Adesina (1990) discovered that human resources played the important role in the teaching-learning situation than any other factor of production and that the quality of education hinges upon the qualities of teachers available. Edward (1991), found that as school's condition improved from one category, for example, from poor to fair, students' standardized achievement scores rose an average of 5.45 percentage points, thus enhancing national educational output.

Lorton and Walley (1979) posited that learning experiences are richest when the environment (physical resources) around them meet their needs through its adequacy and effective utilization by the human resources. To Beeby (1969), the quality of educational systems of a nation can be assessed by:

- (1) The general level of education of the teachers in the system, and
- (2) The amount and kind of training they received to develop them and enhance their commitment to the teaching profession.

In other words, to enhance teachers' efficiency and the Nigeria educational outcome, there is need to pay close attention to human resources and also provide an effective maintenance culture to keep them on track and motivate, develop them and also place more worth on the teaching profession.

Constraints to Teacher Performance

If quality is to be ensured, it is important that constraints affecting performance should be identified, it is on such, that proper solution, and educational enhancement lies (Babatunde, 2004). Babatunde (2004) provided six constraints causing inefficiency in the teaching profession, and they include:

- Apparent in Nigerian, it is a vogue whereby teachers, especially in the lower educational levels, which include the primary and secondary are seen as inferior and substandard, evident in seeming tolerated lower qualification of teachers in the elementary educational level.
- In addition, poor treatment of School teachers such as long delay in payment of wages resulting into endless industrial action which further compounds the quality issue of the Nigeria education.
- Another constraint is the gender dominance of the primary and Secondary School Level whereby female teachers dominate.
- Related to the Gender factor is the students enrolment by faculty in all Nigerian Universities in 1988/99 by the Nigerian Universities Commission annual report which shows female enrolment ratio of 41% in education faculty as highest in all faculties, while male ratio of 59% in education is the lowest male ratio in all faculties. To the researcher, this is a result of the apathy to teaching profession and factor for preponderance of high female teaching staff. The gender dis-equilibrium is fallout of cultural stream lining of vocations on gender basis, coupled with total learning environment seen as not conducive especially in terms of remuneration.
- Also, is the issue of low commitment to the teaching profession by non-professionals who see it as a stepping-stone to other vocations.
- Another constraint is the conduciveness of the teaching - learning environment. Such include the availability and adequacy of physical structures such as classrooms, conducive office environment; communication possibilities such as the internet, electronic mail as well as libraries, and adequate instructional materials.

It is important to improve programme for teachers such as in-service training programmes, and workshops, to enable teachers keep abreast of modern trends in education. Remuneration and other incentives are constraint in teacher performance. Addressing such appropriately is also vital in enhancing performance in the third world. Of importance is encouragement of teachers and pre-service teachers/students in teacher training institutions through grants and other incentives.

Such would encourage and enable teachers and students develop interest in the teaching profession. Lawal (1999) looked at educational problems of developing countries in the light of under funding, inadequate qualified teachers and inadequate motivation of teachers.

Enhancing Human Capital Efficiency in Nigerian Educational Sector

School organizations are very important because they provide structural framework in which activities are carried out through human capitals to achieve educational objectives. These human capitals include the teachers and administrative staff, educational planners, students and are however most important of all the resources that are carried out in the production of goods and services in the Nigerian educational sector (Obadara, 2006). This is because it is the only resource that has the capacity to efficiently organize and utilize other resources for the achievement of educational objectives. Obadara (2006) further stated that the effectiveness of the school system is largely dependent on the professional competency, efficiency and morale of the staff.

Human resource is an asset, which must be invested in to help the Nigerian education grow and achieve its aims and objectives. Although, in economic terms, resources are always in short supply, thereby human resources need to be very prudently and effectively maintained for optimum returns to the Nigerian educational sector (Olagboye, 2004), thus, effective human resource management. In other word, human capital efficiency in the Nigerian educational sector implies prudent maintenance of the human capitals which include teachers, administrators, educational planners and students for the optimal achievement of set educational goals and objectives.

Obadara (2006) stated that the economic development, which is desired of any modern government, cannot be achieved even with abundant physical resources unless there is an adequate stock of educational manpower (human capital resources). However, this is also true in the nation's educational development, it takes effective and efficient utilization and maintenance of the human capital to achieve the national educational goals and objectives.

No knowledge could be imparted if no human resources are present, this also shows that low human resource capital capacity impart low level of knowledge thereby making the overall human capital incapable for national development. This is because according to Oni (1995) no educational system can improve better than its teachers and also in the overall, no nation can also improve better than the educational system.

Obadara (2006) states that, teachers interpret educational aims and objectives and ensure that the children are educated in accordance with them. Since quality and efficient output depends on quality and efficient input, the

success and quality of any educational system depends on the quality and efficiency of the teachers input into the system. It has also been discovered that human resources (teaching and nonteaching staff) had positive significant effect on students' academic performance (Bajah, 1979). Therefore to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of teachers, and other educational human resources, there is a dare need for attention to be given to them.

In achieving good human capital efficiency, there is need to measure both technical and allocative efficiency. In the educational sector, especially in the public sector of the Nigerian educational sector, allocative efficiency are external factors as they are mostly provided by the government which include local, state and federal. Although, teachers are also resources supplied by governments, however, their technical efficiency can be well manipulated if the government pay attention to enhancing their value and worth. Technical efficiency can also be seen to measure skills and professionalism in the human capital of the Nigerian Education, if according to Omiunu (2003) level of experience and level of education affects productivity performance of firm, which include school organization or education. This calls for an intervention to enhance human resource worth and value in the Nigerian education system so as to produce an impetus that will propel them to be effectively and efficiently productive.

Recommendation and Conclusion

This paper pointed out that developmental drive of nations cannot be attained without an effective educational system, which however rests on the pivot of the provision of an efficient human resource. To enhance such, it is recommended that government, especially in the Nigerian situation should place high premium on education and the human resources used to process the educational services of the nation in the Nigerian schools if any realistic developmental drive on education and the realization of its objectives is to be attained. The provision of adequate expansion of educational institutions especially teacher training institutions to ensure efficiency, quality and adequacy of professionally qualified teachers is also needed.

Also there is need for proper funding such as creation of teacher training special fund, which will include grants for student teachers. It is assumed such will go a long way in creating favourable attitudinal disposition to the teaching profession, thereby enhancing teaching and teacher efficiency.

There is also a high need to increase the worth and value of the teaching profession by increasing teachers' wages to ensure standard and strict commitment to duty, thereby providing motivation, thus enhancing teaching and teachers' efficiency. There is also need for constant workshops for teachers and motivation through teaching-learning incentives such as material provision, libraries and conducive teaching environment.

The paper also clearly stated that, developing human resource is vital in educational delivery, which can however, be hampered by inadequate teacher quality, teacher inadequacy in relation to teacher - pupil ratio, lack of specialisation, and constraints affecting teacher performance such as gender streamlining; non-conductive teaching – learning environment, unfavourable attitudinal disposition; inadequate remuneration and lack of constant improvement programmes, low self esteem of teachers, lack of motivation, self development leave, lack of teaching materials or other resources used to improve the teaching process, allocative efficiency and the activities of the human resources and most especially bad maintenance culture of the Nigerian educational human resources. There is a dare need to address these constraints, since educational delivery and effective educational development of a nation is strictly tied to an enhanced and efficient human resource development in Nigeria.

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