

Education as a Tool for Economic and Sustainable National Transformation in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper was a theoretical paper which was aimed at discussing the various roles played by education towards economic transformation. The paper critically looked at how education can be employed to transform the economy and for sustainable national transformation. Without education, the attainment of economic transformation and sustainable national transformation will be a mirage. Therefore, it was emphasized in the paper that for education to result to transformation, there must be quality education which is possible through adequate funding of the sector, review of the curriculum from time to time, training and motivation of teachers etc. However, there are some challenges facing education that act as hindrances to economic and national transformation which are inadequate funding of the education sector, non-alignment of the curriculum with the needs of the society etc. It was suggested that government should provide adequate fund to the education sector and there should be frequent review of the curriculum to align with the skills needed in the society.

Introduction

Education is an indispensable tool for the total transformation of an individual as well as the nation in general. Education is the foundation on which the economic and other sectors of the nation are built. This implies that education as an instrument of economic transformation should not be underrated if a total overhaul sustainable national transformation is to be achieved. Education makes it possible for the individual to acquire skills, knowledge, values, belief which are essential for higher productivity and to have a good quality of life. Education is a veritable tools for developing the three domain for learning which are the cognitive, (head) affective and psych-motor (hand). These three domain are very essential for the transformation of the economy. This was in accordance with Ejemeyowi et al in Beecroft et al, (2021) that viewed education and technology as a very important instrument for economic transformation, since it enhances innovation and creativity which can lead to knowledge driven development.

Education does not only covers the numbers of years you have spent in the school (quantity in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary but most importantly on the quality of education that is been received which is reflect in the ability to compete with other international economies. This comparism help to ascertain the extent of the nations' transformation and level of development (Samaila & Olaide, 2023). Thus, the quality of education is a key determination of economy and national transformation. The three levels of education are essential for the transformation of the economy. But the higher institutions mostly university is responsible for manpower skill development and research purposes that are indispensable for total transformation.

Economic transformation is a sustainable process of shifting resources to sectors that are more productive. To ensure consistent economic progress, there are structural change in the economy so as favour the more productive sectors (Beecroft et al, 2021). In addition, Olusala et al (2014) said that economic transformation is the process that guarantees greater propensity and quality of life for the average citizens and these forms part of the pillar for sustainable development. This was buttressed by United Nations General Assembly in Somalia and Kehinde (2023) that education is a veritable tool for development of any nation and sustainability cannot be achieved without education.

Sustainable national transformation is a transformation that transcend all sector of the country which is driven by education. This transformation occurs in the nation for a long period of time and for which the present transformation does not jeopardize the ability of the nation to attain transformation in the future. Education transforms a society's human resources into human capital this is possible by equipping them with requisite knowledge, competencies, techniques and skills. This transformation make them more functional and productive by contributing to the overall transformation of the nation (Emediegwu & Clement, 2016).

Transformation of the economy and attainment of sustainable national transformation cannot be feasible without education because it has a relationship with nation building and economic development. Thus, education cannot be ignored when economic and sustainable national transformation is expected. Therefore, education is an investment which must be invested heavily in order to receive quality education that will play key role in economy and sustainable national transformation. On this note, the paper seek to examine the roles of education in transforming the economy as well as achieving sustainable national transformation.

Roles of education in economic and sustainable national transformation

Education play a significant role in the transformation of the economy as well as sustainable national development. It has been established that no country can develop beyond her education level. This implies economic is a function of the education sector. The roles of education in economic transformation are as follows:

1. **It helps in building human capabilities needed for economic transformation:** All sectors in the economy depend on education for the production of human capabilities needed to develop those sector. Health sector depends on Doctors that are produced by education to function well, the same apply to all other sectors. This revealed that all the human capabilities needed for the transformation of the entire sector depends solely on education.
2. **Education increases productivity:** Samalia & Olaide (2023) said that education enhances the culture of productivity by enhancing an individuals' creativity and innovative abilities that are employed in their daily tasks or activities.
3. **Education enhances the development of innovation for technological change:** Schumpeter in Jelilow et al (2016) stressed the role of innovation in the process of economic growth. This assertion can be achieved through assigning important role to entrepreneurs because they have the ability to innovate like creation of new products and markets and also, designing effective methods of production that are cost effective. To buttressed the role of education in innovation, Toivanen and Vaananen cited in Valero (2021) considered how education of an individual influences their propensity to innovate. They studied the causal effects of MSC engineering education on the patenting of finishing inventing using distance to the nearest technical university as an instrument for education. They found a positive effect of engineering education on the propensity to patent. Also, linking scientific education to innovation.
4. **Education helps in the invention of new ideals and technology:** education plays a key role in the invention of new ideals and technologies which are required to achieve all round transformation of the nation. The ideals and technologies stem from the research aspect of higher institution (university). It is the technology that are generated from the research section that brings technological changes that are essential for transformation and have a transformation that will be beneficial to both the present and future economy.
5. **It helps in the acceptance and adoption of new technology:** technological changes are quickly accepted and adopted because education has enlightened the individual to be more

open to accept and adjust to changes within the education sector as well as the entire society. Moreover, education is the tool that aid the transformation of the knowledge which is needed to implement and operate the new technology. This was asserted by Nelson and Phelps in Valero (2021) that production management is a function requiring adaptation of change and (---) the more educated a manager is, the quicker will be to introduce new techniques of production.

Ways of supporting economic transformation through Education

For Nigeria to achieve economic and sustainable national transformation through education, government and policy makers should consider the following;

- **Adequate funding of the education sector:** education sector should be considered as a key determinant of economic transformation by both government and policy maker and as such great percentage of the national budget should be allocated to education sector. When it is viewed from this point, fund will be available to employ more teachers, payment of teacher's salary, and provision of infrastructures and facilities needed for quality education that will inculcate in students the necessary skills, knowledge, capabilities for economic transformation. UNDP cited in Emediegu and Clement (2016) succinctly pointed that Malaysias government gave adequate funding to the educational sector by allocating over 20% of its total expenditure to the education sector and this resulted to a great technological development. This reforms help to stimulate other sector of the economy development. Nigeria will drive toward this transformation also just like Malaysia, if adequate funding is allocated to the sector and other sector will eventually transform as they rely heavenly for education for the production of human capabilities. Hence, sustainable nation transformation is been achieved.
- **Constant reviews of educational programmes to align with modern needs.** This implies that there should be curriculum review to accommodate changes that occur in the society which arises from the modern needs. Educational programmes should be adjusted and adapted to meet the changes. Education becomes a powerful instrument for economic transformation when it aligns with the modern needs of the society. As technologies and competency requirements changes, so does education systems which will enable skilled workforce to be able to compete in the global the global market. Olusola and Rashidat (2014) asserted that new educational model is required to and economic change develop skills which are needed to respond to complex social, environmental and economic change.

3. There should be policies that will ensure all citizens access to education with the key role of education to economic transformation, no individual should be excluded from education. As such the government should enshrine in legislation some policies or law in regards to this. OECD in Nargiza (2018) asserted that giving every child access to education and skills needed to participate fully in society would boost gross domestic product (GDP) by an average of 25% per year in lower-income countries and 16% per year in high-income industries for the next 80 years. Education programmes for young people and adults acquire skills that will be needed in the labour market as well as technological world, so as to contribute or enhance economic transformation.

4. Quality education through recruitment of quantitative and qualitative teachers The quality of education gotten depends on the quality of the teachers that are employed into the sector. Qualified teachers should be employed so as to inculcate quality skills and knowledge that are essential for innovation which cumulate to total transformation. In addition, teachers should employ innovative teaching methods so as to transmit the needed skills. Therefore, they should use problem solving skills and collaborative skills methods of teaching.

- **Adequate attention should be given to education sector:** all levels of the education sector need attention. This implies that the education should be a priority to the government of Nigeria. Each of the levels of education (primary, secondary and higher institutions) are vital for total transformation the nation, hence no level should be ignored. The higher institution (university) should be given more attention because they produce the highly skilled labour and also responsible for the research function and the diffusion of technologies.

Hindrances of education for enhancing economic transformation

- **Inadequate funding of the educational sector:** for quality education to be attained which will definitely lead to economic transformation and national development, adequate funds must be invested into it, this is a mirage in Nigeria since education is not properly funded evidence from their budgetary allocation to the education sector which is below 26% that was recommended for developing countries like Nigeria. The standard of education has continuously been downward trend due to underfunding of the sector (Adetula et al, 2016). To buttress this, he further points that the educational system in Nigeria is experiencing instabilities which are as a result of underfunding. Jega cited in Adetula et al, asserts that the Nigerian government funding of education at all levels is nothing to write home about due to lack of foresight on the part of the leaders of government who intentionally ignore the sector.

Ige cited in Adetula et al (2016) opined that despite the vital role of education in the economic transformation of any nation, education in Nigeria has not been adequately funded by the government. He stressed that, the annual allocation of the government to education through budgetary allocation has not only been inadequate since pre-independence but also unstable. This was also pinpointed by Ifionu and Nteegah cited in Emeiegwu and Clement (2016) that inadequate funding contributed to the failure of government initiatives aimed at improving educational provision.

- **Non alignment of the curriculum with the modern needs of the society.** There is a disparity between what is going on the educational sector in terms of the curriculum and the programmes which are set up. This seems to be responsible for the gap that exist between the skills, knowledge that are acquired in the school and the skills and knowledge that are needed in the labour market as well as those needed for technological changes in line with modern needs. The education system and training institutes seem not to equip students with knowledge and skills that employers demand, thereby, making young people not to find jobs of their dreams.
 - **Neglect of the education sector:** this is one of the problem of that is hindering the economy transformation of the nation. The government and those in authorities do not see the key role of education to economy transformation and sustainable national transformation. They fail to see education as a sector that will produce man power needed to develop the other industries or sector. Hence, the abandonment of some of the educational policies and programs enacted for quality education. This seems to be the reason for frequent strike action in the sector. Oluniyan and Okemakinde in Adetula et al (2016) observed in their study that Nigeria is deficient in appropriate know-how that could stimulate economic growth and development due to the neglect of the education sector.
- 4. Brain drain:** this is the movement of educated individuals to other part of the world for better greener pastures. Education would not be an instrument of economic transformation and sustainable national transformation when the educated citizens of the nation migrate to other nation. Hence using the skills and knowledge acquired for the advancement and transformation of other countries.

Conclusion

Education is a vital instrument which can be used to transform an entire sector. This is because, it is the back done on which other sector rely on. Thus, there should be quality education. Education should enhance the transformation of the economy and as well help in the attainment

of sustainable national transformation. In order to achieve transformation through. It has been discussed that there should be a constant review of the curriculum of education at all level, this is to ensure alignment between what is taught in the school and the needs of the society, adequate provision of funds and education sector should be given proper attention etc. The various roles play by education in economy transformation and the hindrances to education for economic transformation where also discussed. Thus, economic transformation and sustainable nation transformation cannot occur without education.

Suggestions

1. Curricular for every educational level should be reviewed and reformed regularly in order to meet with the current changes and trends in the society.
2. The funds allocated to all the levels of education should be adequate.
3. Government of Nigeria should view education sector as an important sector that enhance growth and development of nation.
4. There should be establishment of industries and creation of employment opportunities to absorb output from education.
5. Government should collaborate with private sector for much need funding that will pave way for technological development
6. There should be continuity in quality governance which will reduce the problem of policy changes.

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