

IMPROVING THE HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF EFFICIENCY AS A MEANS OF ENSURING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between improvement of higher education staff efficiency as a means of ensuring youth empowerment. Youths form strong formidable force in the society we live, study, but are not totally empowered while in school mostly in higher institution. Higher education staff efficiency plays a vital role instilling basic skills into the life of student (would be youth in future). Not only this, eradicate ignorance and help improving economic and social development of any nation. To this end, an effective, efficiency and quality personnel is required to ensure that the above roles are skills at higher education staff efficiency. This paper has addressed some strategic ways of improving staff efficiency in higher education. Three research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated in order to guide the study. The study used ex-post facto design. 148 youths were drawn out of a population of 600 youths as samples. Self-developed questionnaire consisting of 30 items was used as instrument for data collection and analysis. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. From the analysis the result of the study showed that when staff in higher education was motivated for efficiency and effectiveness, this will cause youths to acquire skills that can empower them. Therefore, the paper recommended that governments, management in higher institution and stakeholders should address the issue of ways of improving efficiency in higher institutions that will enable youths to acquire skills for empowerment in the communities and society at large.

Keywords: Higher Education, Staff Efficiency, Youth Empowerment.

Introduction

Graduates that are turned out from our tertiary institutions are narrowly trained in a single discipline which has not given them the opportunity of understanding the narrowness of the graduates' knowledge. So there is a need for the youth to have reliable and practical knowledge; to understand, to be enlightened and developed to be useful for himself and for the society. This can be achieved through higher education efficiency. Knowledge from education makes someone to boast and have hope for future to be self-reliant. Youth need to be pragmatic in whatever skills acquired to rely on themselves, improving the efficiency of higher education helps reduce the youth unemployment in the society.

The role of education in empowering youth of a nation cannot be overemphasized. Youth represents the country's future, thus, Nigeria cannot expect to prosper and hold its place in the world, if so many of these youths continue to progress to adulthood poorly educated, frustrated and facing an uncertain future with great moral decadence (Beran, Collier and Paul 1991).

Animashaun, (2004) testified that the nation will continue to fail in investing in the lives of the youth by not giving them enviable and workable environment with job opportunity within the nations resources. Higher education need to be improved to take care of the broad, social, economic and political goals of the community. Improving the efficiency of higher institution will meet the needs and aspirations of the society or community. Oluchukwu (2000) said efficiency of the school system refers to the fit between education and the needs of the society i.e. the labour market.

Education – Education as a concept at all levels regarded as a major factor in empowering people for development and building of a nation. No country can expect to successfully integrate in and benefit from future Nigeria economy without a well – educated and empowered workforce who in this context is the youths, (Ojedele and Fadokun, 2009). Therefore, there is need for efficiency of higher education for empowering youths. Since functional higher education is the best tool for youth in sustainable development of the society particularly the youth. For higher education to serve as tools for empowering youth, its content must be fully implemented and practicalised. Education is basically a continuous activity through which an individual acquires skills which enable him/her to function and be relevance to the society. According to Morinho (2009), education is an agent of social change as well as reflecting the dynamic process of nation building. Also, education was meant to foster the frontier of knowledge, or store house of knowledge, formulate ideas for youth empowerment, train and develop manpower in man and various institutions of society (Jaja, 2007), and to inculcate national values, morals and character necessary for national unity and development (Emeh & Agba, 2010). To have standard empowerment of youth, the nation needs to pay a price by improving the efficiency of higher education. Having standard and articulate policies, regular provision of educational resources can help to improve the efficiency of higher education. Also, obstruction to academic calendar should be taken care of by the concerned leader.

Value of Higher education for Youth Empowerment

The National Policy on Education (2014) refers to higher education as that which is given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnic and monotechnics including those institution offering correspondence courses. It is also known as post-secondary education.

Higher Education (tertiary institution) has values for roles in the economic and social development of nation which indirectly influence empowerment of the youth. World Bank (2002), in Ojedele (2009) observed that in today's life-long learning framework, higher education provides not only high level skills necessary for every market but also the training essential for youth empowerment, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists and myriads of personnel. It is these empowered youths who develop the capacity and skills that improve local economies support civil society, control and lead effective government and making right decisions that affect the entire society. Having efficiency, purposeful and functional higher education for the youth in the society is the best way for youth sustainability and development.

Through higher education, you gain intellectual fulfillment. Okpeh (2005) stated that if youths are not empowered through higher education and given responsibilities in the society, they are likely to constitute a threat to national survival and stability, especially, if they are allowed to drift, unemployed ill-disciplined and morally bankrupt. Improving the efficiency of higher education, it is likely to empower the youth to have access to skill acquisitions and having qualitative education. This would allow youth transformation from a polite economic entity to the level of high productivity and sustainable development.

The goal of higher education has been mentioned in National policy on Education (2014);

the development of individuals through high level relevant manpower training, inculcation of proper values for the survival of individuals development of intellectual capacity of individuals to understand their environments, acquisition of physical and intellectual skills for self-reliance to promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Efficiency of Higher Education: - Inefficiency of the lecturers and the use of resources in all the education institutions may usually affect the output (graduate). Efficiency in higher education is very crucial to the life of graduates or students which in turn affects their development indirectly. Efficiency refers to the relationship between the inputs into a system and the outputs from that system (Ajayi; 2009); the improved productivity and giving out the quality education to student in higher education, leading to empowering the youth. Students learn to develop the necessary imaginative, intellectual, theoretical and practical skills to equip them for continuing personal development and professionalism (Ajibade, Enamhe and Oloidi, 2011, 2006). Efficiency in higher education is seen as a situation in which the educational administrator (both academic and Non-teaching) is able to satisfy by giving out best and necessary skills to the human elements within the system. According to Oluchukwu (1999), refers efficiency of the institution as the relationship between the inputs (Students and materials) from the school system. It is through higher education that youth can totally be empowered to stand on his/her own. This can be actualized if right from the onset the institutions improve their productivity and quality given out. Higher education improves the development of any system through empowering the youth that will occupy significant positions in future. Higher institutions at various levels are expected to be efficient in order to empower the graduate (youth) and produce future leaders. To empower the youth physically, economically, intellectually, they should be given the necessary skill acquisition and to achieve this staff efficiency in higher education in very paramount.

Ways of Improving the Staff Efficiency in Higher Education

Empowerment and development of youth cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation and financial instruments alone. There is need to improve the efficiency in all ramification of higher education so as to discharge quality education for student to acquire basic skill to be independent and reliable in the society. These are the basic ways for improving the efficiency of higher education;

- (i) **Motivation of qualified personnel:** - Both academic and non-teaching staff should be motivated by receiving their salary regularly. Good authority-staff relationship and good flow of information must continually be the watch-word of the system. Provision for conducive work environment, necessary resources and welfare packages. When staffs are motivated, they are able to release their best and be effective. Lawal (1994) noted that to get the best out of staffs, staffs need to be highly motivated.
- (ii) **Release of Fund Regularly:** - Governments should regularly release the budgetary allocation to higher education and utilization of their funds should be monitored and tailored toward specific purpose. Not only this source, well-to-do stakeholders like Parents-Teachers Association, Communities, Philanthropists and private sector should arise in support of government efforts in funding of higher education.
- (iii) **Stability of educational system policies:** - Political instability in Nigeria has, in fact, made the realization of the educational objective to be a difficult task. Government should uphold the principle of change in educational policies; though, there must be change when necessary. But however, educational policies should not be prone to frequent and unnecessary changes. To improve the efficiency in higher education, the government at all levels should seriously be able to determine and implement necessary changes in educational policies with proper monitoring. It should not be done in such a way of distorting the efficiency and stability of higher education.
- (iv) **Provision of more physical facilities:** - In order to increase the efficiency of staff and their productivity in higher institution, government and management team should provide necessary physical facilities like libraries, equipped classroom or lecture hall. Lecturers should have regular access to workshop, seminars through government sponsoring.

Motivation of staff by the government and higher institution management team by providing the above mentioned facilities assist the staff to improve their efficiency. A greater influence is exerted by the staff on the learner (who would become youth) to acquire the basic skills to be useful for them in future.

Ganiyu and Akinmuyise (2013), opined that motivation holds the key to the understanding of human behaviour. It is a belief that education received from higher institution is an engine of growth and empowerment of youth. This calls for staff in higher institution to be efficient and release their best for learners to acquire necessary skills. For the staffs to continue improving their efficiency, they need to possess the following skills (i) have critical thinking and problem solving (ii) have creativity and innovation (iii) Communication and Collaboration (iv) Research and information fluency. Possessing all these skills will still help the staff to improve their efficiency.

Youth Empowerment: - Empowerment of youth can be moderately visible through personal attributes of youth which includes intellect and problem solving, critical and

reflective ability, willingness to learn, flexibility, adaptability and risk-taking. Youth to be empowered need to understand the world of work.

Many youths believe that upon their graduation they have the right skills and attributes to be empowered. To empower youth through higher education, it can be actualized by effective teaching, research, creation and dissemination of information through services by the staff. Educational experiences gained by the youth have to be one that will promote them to the fullest area of sustaining themselves. Okpete (2005) opined that educational experiences of youths have to be such that it is conducive to promoting not only the fullest individual development but also the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and occupational skills that are appropriate for maintaining the social status quo, advancing economic progress and developing individual youth personality.

Youth empowerment through higher education staff efficiency is very paramount because of their exposure to useful programs or activities since this will equip them with basic skills for long-life living in the society where they find themselves. If all these skills are taught by the teachers properly and students gain, it helps them develop individually and economically. Youth are the real pillar of any outstanding, meaningful and sustainable development of a nation. Therefore there is need to give a thorough and functional education to students (Youths). Teachers (Lecturers) play significant role in training, coaching and determining the quality of education given to students that is critical to youth empowerment and development. Improved efficiency of teachers provides vital information for learners to gain more additional skills.

Literature Review:- The role of higher education for youth empowerment in the nation cannot be overemphasized. For higher education to be a veritable tool for youth empowerment and skill acquisition, different ways need to be put in place to maintain right acquisition of skills by the youth for self-reliance.

According to Fadipe (2000), efficiency and effectiveness of staff are the ways or measures to ensure that high standards are maintained and that schools are run in accordance with the laid down regulation.

The quality of teachers, the quality of facilities, the quality of instruction, the quality of evaluation procedures, the quality of morale and the quality of administration and management are the indicators of higher education efficiency (Yolaye, 1976).

Youth empowerment through higher education should involve staff efficiency and effectiveness. Staff efficiency in higher education can contribute meaningfully to skill acquisition of student (youth) for empowerment and development. This can be supported by Stammers and Patrick (2006), who stated that such activities are aimed at developing youth moral values and understanding required in all works of life, rather than knowledge and skills relating to only a limited field of activity. They further stated that the purposes of higher education for youths is to provide the conditions essential for young persons and adult to develop an understanding of the traditions and ideas influencing the society in which they live of their own, and to acquire linguistic and other skills, which are basics to learning, creativity and personal development.

Higher education has been urged to institute reforms in their academic programmes and work efficiency that would benefit the youths and meet their needs (Etuk, Etudor-Eyo

and Ekpo, 2009). Major problem confronting the graduates of today is that they find it difficult to convert their education to intellectually productive ventures. Youth empowerment is useful for the society and improving and enriching the life of both the youth themselves and the entire people.

Improving the higher education staff efficiency can cause the youth to be fitted into various jobs through acquisition of skills for self-reliance. Acquiring useful skills through higher education by empowering youth can reduce the rate of unemployment among the youth, non-involvement in government and human right issues, help in peace building and promotion and majorly security are maintained. Okeke and Emenalo (2008) observed that if the youths are excluded from participating in the country's development as well as peace building process, by depriving them of their survival conditions. They become vulnerable to violence, since they are polarized and marginalized. The youths need to acquire appropriate skills, independence and freedom of choice about their lives. This can only be achieved by motivating the staffs in higher education for them to be effective and efficient. Motivation determines how much effort a person puts in his or her work, the direction to which those efforts are geared and a measure of how long a person can maintain effort (Anthony, Angelina Kwasi, 2010). Motivation may answer the question why the staffs in higher education do what they do. According to Herzberg (1966), in order for employee (staff) to perform, the work itself must be interesting; it must also provide opportunity for extra responsibility, recognition and promotion. Also, Fairweather (2005) opined that staffs will feel happier and work better if they perceive their employer as reasonable and fair. Motivation is very important for staffs, because it puts staff into action and improves the level of efficiency.

Statement of the problem

Staffs' low efficiency results to low student achievement and skill acquisition. This causes major nuisance to the environment. Some people attribute this to low motivation from government, effectiveness and efficiency in education is sine-qua-non to youth empowerment and development. The study is to research on improving the efficiency of higher education staff on youth empowerment.

Purpose of the Study

To empower youths to be useful both for themselves and the entire society, there is need for them to acquire basic and necessary skills from higher Institution. This can be actualized through functional and efficient staffs in the educational sector, mostly in higher institutions. This study aims at finding out the improvement of staff efficiency on youth empowerment. There is need to lay more emphases on various strategic methods used by government to motivate higher education staff workers to increase their productivity.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised and tested:

1. Does higher education staff efficiency influence youth empowerment?
2. Does government motivating strategies for staff efficiency influence youth empowerment?
3. Does staff workers' efficiency have impact on youth acquisition of skills for empowerment?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Higher education staff efficiency does not significantly influence youth empowerment.
2. Government motivating strategies for staff efficiency does not significantly influence youth empowerment.
3. Staff workers' efficiency does not significantly have impact on youth acquisition of skills for empowerment.

Methodology

The study is a survey because it involved very large number of respondents and used quantitative empirical approach, since the study is based on the variables measured with numbers and used statistical procedure to analyze. The design used for this study was ex-post facto with the aim of assessing the impact of staff efficiency in higher education on youth empowerment. The population for the study is about 600 youths. The sample used for the study comprise of 148 youths drawn from various communities in some states in Nigeria. Null hypotheses were formulated in order to guide the study. The major instrument used is the Likert-type question titled: Higher Education Staff Efficiency for Youth Empowerment Questionnaire (HESEYEQ). The questionnaire was in two sections; section one sought the information on youth empowerment and development. The second section consists of 30 items higher education staff efficiency where youths were asked to rate benefit and acquisition of skills in school for self-reliance. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient formula was used to analyze the data collected. The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained indicating that the questionnaires were reliable to use. The questionnaires were administered directly to the respondents by the researchers. Copies of questionnaire were collected back after completion.

Results

HO₁: Higher education staff efficiency does not significantly influence youth empowerment.

Table 1: Higher education staff efficiency for Youth Empowerment.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t.cal	t.crit	Df
Higher Education Efficiency for Youth Empowerment and Skills acquisition	78	80	12	4.55	2.00	144
Youth development in the communities	72	74	10.5			

It has been shown that education given in higher education to train and empower by acquisition of skill for the youth had a higher mean score of 80 than the empowered youth living in the communities with a mean score of 74. This occurs through improving the efficiency of staff. The t-calculate (4.55) was greater than t-critical (2.00) at 0.05 level of significance and 144 degree of freedom; meaning that the two groups were statistically significant. Youth empowerment through higher education staff efficiency influences their skill acquisition for self-reliance and development. The Null hypothesis was rejected

HO₂: Government motivating strategies for staff efficiency does not significantly influence Youth Empowerment.

Table 2: Government motivating strategies to improve staff efficiency and contribution to Youth Empowerment.

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t.cal	t.crit	Df
Government motivating strategies in higher education for staff efficiency.	70	40.7	3.7	5.36	1.98	144
Youth development in the communities	64	33.4	5.9			

Analysis from table 2 above shows that government motivating strategies in higher education for staff efficiency has a higher mean score. The t-calculated (5.36) was greater than the t-critical (1.98) meaning that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of government motivating strategies and contribution to Youth Empowerment.

HO₃: Staff Works' efficiency does not significantly have influence on Youth acquisition of skills for empowerment.

Table 3: Staff Workers efficiency in higher education and contribution to Youth Acquisition of Skills for empowerment.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t.cal	t.crit	Df
Workers' efficiency in higher education	78	80	12.9	1.98	1.44	144
Youth development with necessary skills in the community	72	74	11.5			

Result above shows that the t-calculated (1.98) is greater than t-critical (1.44), indicating that there is significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on staff efficiency and Youth empowerment and development.

Analysis from the results in table 1 and 2, in comparing the efficiency of staff in higher institution and their contribution to youth empowerment and development in the state, had higher means scores of 80 and 40.7 respectively, while their contribution through improving efficiency to youth empowerment had mean scores of 74 and 33.40 respectively.

The researchers observed that youth who have acquired basic skill through staff efficiency depend and rely on themselves.

Findings: From the analysis on hypothesis one above, there is a difference between the mean scores of two groups which is statistically significant. This means that youth empowerment through improving higher education efficiency influences youth acquisition of skills for self-reliance and independence with the communities. Agaga (2005) corroborated this, who posits that the current level of moral decadence, crises and instability in our society may likely continue unless efforts are made to empower youths through quality and effective education. He further stated that the provisions of quality education would enable the youths to realize the knowledge acquired by them in their various schools that can be converted to self-reliance, self-actualization and self-development.

It is indicated in the second hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of government motivating strategies for staff efficiency and youth

development in the community. This means that if the governments are not giving necessary motivation strategies for staff improvement and efficiency in higher institution, graduate (youth) would not have the opportunity of acquiring necessary basic knowledge and skills for self-reliance and self-actualization in the communities. This can lead to crises and instability within communities. Okeke and Emenalo (2008) pointed out that youth form part of our nations' population and sees youth as that of creativity, vitality, enthusiasm and being bold in their aspiration. But most of the time youth live, study and work under difficult conditions and used by unscrupulous people for dubious intention instead of empowering them for community service. Therefore, Minuko (2009) stressed that youths need to be empowered through effectiveness and efficiency of staff in which youth can receive qualitative and functional education. From acquiring knowledge and skill, youth can be transformed from docile economic entity to the high level of productivity. Youth empowerment through efficiency of higher education staff is imperative for them to acquire knowledge for self-reliance, self-actualization that will make them independent thinkers in their communities and society at large.

Conclusion:

It is obvious that without sound and dynamic higher education programme, it may be difficult to achieve the objective of making graduates to be self-reliant and independent. Staff efficiency and effectiveness for empowering youth through acquisition of knowledge and skills is a basic necessity. For youth to be empowered for self-actualization and contribute meaningfully to the society, improving staff efficiency through motivation should be the paramount issue for the government.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the management in the higher institution should be more creative and proactive by creation and strategizing new ways that would cater for adequate motivation for the staff. This will be an opportunity for them to improve their efficiency.

Necessary facilities like personal protective equipment for staff and office and lecture hall facilities should be adequately provided. Congenial work environment need to be put in place by encouraging health superior-subordinate relationship.

Due to inadequate government funding for higher institution, it is recommended that the internally generated funds should be sources for in order to enable the management to deal effectively with motivational issues to improve the staff efficiency.

Government and management should regularly advise the student through counseling on choice and pursuits of professional courses in higher education which can empower and make themselves develop and self-reliant.

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