

**INNOVATIVE MEASURES FOR TRANSFORMING TERTIARY  
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN AND  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**OKEWORO, STEPHEN NWALI. (PhD)**

**DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION  
EBONYI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, IKWO**

---

***Abstract***

*The fourth goal of tertiary education in Nigeria is to equip the beneficiaries with physical and intellectual skills that will enable them to survive in the society and also contribute towards national development. Regrettably, achievement of this goal is yet to become a reality in Nigerian. This is evident in the teeming population of graduates of tertiary institutions who lack the capabilities that can make them self-reliant. The causes of this ugly trend have been identified to include lack of skill-oriented education and a myriad of other factors that pose challenges to tertiary education. In the light of this back-drop, this paper tried to examine measures to be taken to transform education in Nigeria at the tertiary level for sustainable human and national development. The paper began by highlighting the concepts and goals of tertiary education and relevance of those goals to the needs of the Nigerian society. It went on to discuss inadequacies of tertiary education in Nigeria. In that light, conclusion was made followed by recommendations among which are that government should always consider first the factors that can enhance actualization of tertiary education policies before formulating such policies, ensuring that tertiary institutions operate in line with the stipulations of the regulatory bodies and increasing annual budgetary allocation to education.*

**Keywords: Tertiary Education, Human development and Psychological Perspective**

---

**Introduction**

The major concern of Educational Psychology as a discipline is how best to foster improvement in education particularly in teaching and learning. The concern of Educational Psychology in this direction is germane, considering the need for quality and skill-oriented education for accelerated development in any society. Indeed, in the developing countries of the world, education

is a veritable tool for human and national development. This fact is obvious because it is education that develops human resources such as teachers, administrators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, legislators, economists and the rest.

When education develops people in the various spheres of life mentioned, the beneficiaries will use their capabilities to

initiate meaningful ideas, plan adequately and implement effectively in different sectors of national needs to enhance meaningful and sustainable development. This corroborates the view of Lawal, (1992) that education is a development of other resources and potentials of the country. Quoting Okunrotifa, Lawal (1992:183) remarked as follows:

“Resources alone no longer determine a country’s economic strength. Emphasis has thus shifted to concentration on the development of manpower. Availability of natural resources must be supported with appropriate manpower capability in order to achieve an accelerated economic development”.

Still in the same vein, Ogunlade (2014:138) remarked thus:

*“Education is development; it creates choice and opportunities for people, reduces the twin burdens of poverty and diseases and gives a stronger voice to the society; creating a dynamic work force and well-informed citizens able to compete and operate globally”.*

Simply put, the main point stressed is that although our country Nigeria, is endowed with abundant natural resources such as minerals, fertile land, forest and sea products, the resources alone have no meaning without developed human potentials to manage or utilize them to promote national growth. This assertion agrees with the observation of Ocho in Alumdoe (2011) that despite abundant natural resources in Nigeria, the country still remains one of the poorest nations in the

world. The argument in this direction is that Nigeria as a third world country needs education for effective development of human potentials necessary for optimum management of both her political, social, economic and technological sectors to enhance wholesome development of the nation.

Admittedly, it is the tertiary levels of education that is mostly responsible for human resources development needed to boost national growth. Development of human resources constitutes the first goal of tertiary education which is to contribute to national growth through high level manpower training (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). However, it is relevant to note that education in Nigeria at all levels, is plagued with a lot of problems which deny people access to quality education needed for national development. Research findings, Girei and Girei (1995), Bakari and Kaibo (1998), Idowu (2002), Ekpeiken (2008) and Alumde (2011) identified such problems to include lack of qualified teachers, lack equipment and facilities, poor curriculum content, poor funding, inadequate assessment techniques and others. This being the case, higher institutions which are the focus of this paper will find it difficult to achieve the intended goal gainfully and optimally vis-à-vis human resources development. It is this background that provoked this paper to discuss measures for transforming education in Nigeria at the tertiary level in line with the tenets of educational psychology and for sustainable national development.

### **Concept and Goals of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

The tertiary levels of education simply refer to higher institutions. They are those institutions of learning which come after the secondary levels. It is on this premise that the Federal Government of Nigeria (2014), explained tertiary education as education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics including those institutions offering corresponding courses.

The tertiary levels of education aim at specific goals for wholesome development of the nation. The goals are to:

- (a) (a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- (b) (b) develop and inculcate proper values for survival of the individual and society;
- (c) (c) develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- (d) (d) acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
  - a. promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
  - b. forge and cement national unity, and
  - c. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

A critical look at these goals would reveal that they are all relevant in various ways. Their relevance therefore needs to be highlighted.

**Relevance of the Goal of Tertiary Education to the needs of the Nigeria society**

In realistic terms, no education policy in any country is relevant if it is not in conformity with the aspirations and needs of the citizens of that country. This being the case, both

educational goals and policies in Nigeria should align with what the citizens need for their survival and development of the nation as well. Days are gone when education in Nigeria was expected to focus on the intellectual development of individuals without recourse to preparing them to use their capabilities to develop their country. Along this line, Ogbonnaya (2013) remarked that there is need for functional education in order to equip the beneficiaries with practical knowledge, skills and values for their own benefit and that of the society in general.

In the light of the above, the relevance of the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria needs to be highlighted. In the first place, the first goal which is, contributing to national development through high level relevant manpower training is crucial considering the relative impact of human potentials in national development. It is when education develops human potentials in various spheres of life that the beneficiaries will use their capabilities to manage the different sectors of the country expeditiously to boost national development. It is in realization of this fact that Lawal (1992) quoting Ondo State Government broadcast on component of the third development remarked that education is meant to enable the individual discover his potentials and make him contribute to the development process.

Development and inculcation of proper values in the individuals as the second goal stipulates, is essential to promote the moral aspect of individuals which are needed for peaceful co-existence in the society. This agrees with the view of Ogbonnaya (2013:6) that:

*“Education should prepare the individual to have value for himself, his fellow human beings, the society, established culture and mores and also have respect for the dignity of labour and co-operate with colleagues to solve common problems of the society”.*

Development of the intellectual capability of individual is the third goal. It is relevant because there is need to produce the caliber of manpower that can think critically and decide reasonably when it comes to tackling issues that concern the development of the society. It is in that vein that Alumode (2011) remarked that education should provide people with mental or intellectual ability that will enable them to co-ordinate and integrate the entire interest and activities of their society by applying information and concepts to practice.

Obvious, acquisition of physical and intellectual skills highlighted in the fourth goal is very crucial especially in the present day society when there are baffling issues of economic recession and unemployment opportunities for school leavers. In this own right, Okoro (2006) maintained that there is need to develop attitudes, basic education skills and habits appropriate for the world of work to enable them advance themselves and their society. Also contributing, Ogbonnaya (2013) opined that in this day and age, our youths in fact, graduates, should not depend on government employment. Rather they should acquire skills to start a business of their own.

The fifth goal is to promote and encourage scholarship and community service. This

goal is relevant because it will help to ameliorate the condition of those who have poor backgrounds that are inimical to their educational opportunities. The sixth and seventh goals talk of forging and cementing national unity and to promote national and international understanding and interaction. These goals are all relevant because there is need for education to inculcate sound moral and spiritual values which individuals need to appreciate their worth and the worth of others and their society. In this direction, they will be able to show commitment to all causes that are in the national and international interest. The issue of moral development for promoting interpersonal relationship, national and international unity is imperative especially at this time of indiscipline and moral decadence in our society (Ogbonnaya, 2013).

### **Inadequacies of Tertiary Levels of Education in Nigeria**

A critical assessment of education in Nigeria at the tertiary levels would reveal a myriad of problems that hinder the achievement of the desired goals at those levels. It may therefore be proper to point out some of the problems as follows:

**(a) Frequent changing of educational policies:** Nigeria is very fond of making educational policies and also changing them prematurely. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, the 6-5-4, 6-3-3-4 and currently the 9-3-4 systems of education are typical examples of such truncated policies. Following short duration of the policies, teachers usually find it difficult to implement the curriculum in line with the intended goals of education and

needs of the society. This so because each of the systems is characterized by different curriculum contents in which a lot of teachers were bound to implement in the wrong direction. For instance, the teachers who have been teaching perhaps, for many years in a more traditional way might be apathetic or resistant to the idea of a wholesome change (Ekpo, 2014). A situation like that can affect uniformity of standards in students' academic achievements. It is in this light that Ekpo and Osam (2009) argued that in any educational policy in which the teachers are not well informed, implementation of the curriculum in respect of that policy will be marred.

**(b) Proliferation of unconventional tertiary institutions:** The rapid increase in the number of unconventional tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria in the present days is quite obvious. The reasons for the proliferation of the illegal institutions may be linked with the limited admission chances in the conventional institutions which make it difficult for the teeming population of Nigerians who seek admission to secure them. The situation has given rise to alarming influx of candidates in the private institutions most of which provide quantity rather than quality education as a result of apparent inadequate infrastructural facilities, unqualified teaching staff an unconducive learning atmosphere.

Another flaw is that a good number of the money minded private institutions admit candidates who in most cases are not qualified to read the courses they have applied for. This agrees with the observation of Okorafor (2013) that the proliferation of

illegal degree meals preys on the desperation of Nigerians for university education. The point here is that those tertiary institutions that compromise quality for quantity only churn out graduates who lack the necessary skills required in the millennium global knowledge and market.

**(c) Poor Funding:** The claim that education is not properly funded in Nigeria may not be far from being correct. This claim is supported by the finding of Alumode (2011) that funding in our educational institutions has continued to remain a mirage. The finding revealed that the Nigerian government is yet to conform to the United Nation's Policy on funding of education in which 25% of the national annual budget should be set aside for education. There are available statistical records to prove that Nigeria has not been able to implement this policy. For example, the table below shows that the percentage annual budgetary allocation to education for the past five years is far below the United Nation's stipulations for each of those years.

**Percentage Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education (2013-2017)**

| S/N | TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET | YEAR | BUDGET FOR EDUCATION | % ALLOCATION |
|-----|---------------------|------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1   | 4.8 trillion        | 2013 | 426.26 billion       | 8%           |
| 2   | 4.69 trillion       | 2014 | 424.3 billion        | 9%           |
| 3   | 4.493 trillion      | 2015 | 392 billion          | 8.7%         |

|   |               |      |                |      |
|---|---------------|------|----------------|------|
|   | trillion      | 5    |                |      |
| 4 | 6.06 trillion | 2016 | 369.6 billion  | 6%   |
| 5 | 7.44 trillion | 2017 | 455.41 billion | 6.5% |

**Sources:**

[www.naireland.com./2818905/budgetary-allocation-education/2010-2016](http://www.naireland.com./2818905/budgetary-allocation-education/2010-2016) (web. site: www.google.com) and [www.bellanaija.com/2014/04-national-budget-is-n4-69-trillion/?e-pi=-7%2\(page-1010%zcs40\)](http://www.bellanaija.com/2014/04-national-budget-is-n4-69-trillion/?e-pi=-7%2(page-1010%zcs40)).

The meaning of this shoestring budgetary allocation to education as the above table reveals is that there is lack of commitment in implementing educational policies in line with the stipulations of the regulatory bodies. Stressing also on the ugly scenario, Mordi (2008) remarked that the total yearly budgetary allocation to education sector in Nigeria could not even cater for the infrastructural need of one university in the country. The summary of it all is that tertiary education in Nigeria is poorly funded. As a result, the ugly situation has led to serious lack of learning resources and services needed to boost academic activities in both tertiary and other levels of education in the country.

**(d) Poor Motivation of Teachers:** Generally in Nigeria, motivation of teachers is not encouraging. In many states of the federation, there are remarkable indicators to prove this lapse such as delay or irregular payment of monthly salaries, non-payment of annual leave allowances and failure to pay financial benefits for promotions to deserving staff. As

Enyi (2013) observed, one of the militating factors against staff effective motivation in Nigeria relates to poor remunerations. He added that all cannot be well in a system where staff are poorly remunerated and are always agitating for improvements, which sometimes leads to trade disputes and closure of schools.

**(e) Lack of Skill Oriented Education Program:**

It is worrisome to note that in spite of the laudable provision of the National Policy on Education vis-à-vis production of skill-oriented manpower, impressive achievement is yet to be made in that direction. This is evident in the manner in which university graduates roam the streets in Nigeria today in search of white collar jobs. As pointed out earlier, it is the desired role of higher education to produce trained manpower in line with the modern national objectives that will enable them to attain self sufficiency. Stressing on this intended role of tertiary education, Denga (2008) pointed out that there is today in every part of Nigeria a great need to develop vocational-technical education so that all may become efficient and productive citizens. He further stated that the need has come for every young person and adult to have equal opportunity to become employable and maintain his employable status regardless of the economic and social change that inevitably affects them. All the same, Ogbonnaya, (2013) remarked that Nigerian students are now required to acquire functional knowledge and saleable skills that will be of practical value in the society. In spite of the skill-oriented education emphasized by the authorities cited above, it

is quite unfortunate that the knowledge and skills desired in that direction are very much lacking in most graduates of this country.

**(f) Unreliable Assessment of Students' Learning Achievements:** Another area of serious lapse in tertiary education in Nigeria is in the assessment of students' learning progress. Evidences abound to prove that continuous assessment in the tertiary institutions is profoundly unreliable. Sharing this view, Aduloji in Denga and Ekoja (2008) identified that assessment of students' learning progress in most of the institutions in Nigeria is not trustworthy.

Inadequacy of continuous assessment as this paper observes manifests in various dimensions. Among the dimensions are ignorance of a good number of lecturers on what to assess, how to assess and when to assess, lack of accommodation which makes it difficult to control large population of students from cheating. Other irregularities are 'sorting syndrome'—the practice whereby students lobby or pay lecturers to obtain high marks, lecturers' partiality and victimization of students, devolving marking duties to students, limited scope of assessment which makes students to be insufficiently assessed in all the domain areas. Supporting, Denga and Ekoja (2008) argued that failure to assess students properly in all the domain areas namely cognitive, psychomotor and affective cannot properly showcase their overall and true abilities.

**(g) Examination Malpractice:** Related to the issue of unreliable assessment is the scourge of examination malpractice. The emergence of the cankerworm in the education system in Nigeria has obviously

made it possible for grades which students or graduates make to be in serious doubt. The ugly practice takes different forms including leakage of examination questions, impersonating for candidates, lifting answers from text books or hand phones, entering examination hall with already made materials, sorting or paying lecturers in cash or otherwise to make good grades, and others.

The implication of the obnoxious practices highlighted is that the academic achievements of candidates who indulge in them remain quite unreliable. All the same, those who passed through that abnormal means usually contribute little or in no measures at all towards developing themselves and their society. It is on this premise that Onwuzo (2014) maintained that examination malpractice waters down the quality of certificates issued to the graduates. She also argued that it affects productivity when it comes to the products delivering the degree of services required of them when the need arises.

### **Psychological Perspective**

The fact that tertiary education in Nigeria as it relates to teaching and learning is plagued with myriads of problems is noted. However, whichever type of measures it requires to bring improvement at that level, the role which Educational Psychology plays should remain a pointer. The knowledge of the domain of Educational Psychology is central to teaching and learning process because it mainly boards on the improvement of the key factors namely; the learner, the teacher, the content and the learning environment.

The learner is central in every learning situation considering his learning needs and active roles in teaching-learning process. It is in the face of this fact that Abdullahi (2015) remarked that the learner is perhaps the most important element in teaching and learning process and without him there can be no teaching. According to him, the learner plays multiple roles which include his capacity to see, hear, talk, touch, taste, smell, acquire, retain, recall and reproduce information.

The teacher, on the other hand, is a person who provides instructions that will bring about changes in the learner. He has the ability to transform education by developing skills in students which they need to function in the society (Afe, 2002). The content or subject matter is another crucial element. It involves the learning needs required in line with the provisions of the curriculum and the approval of the regulatory body. The relevance of the subject matter is therefore imperative in the learners' academic achievement.

The learning environment or situation is another element that is of very much concern to Educational Psychology. The role of the teacher, the learner and the lesson content cannot make any meaning without a stimulating learning environment. Teaching and learning can hardly be effectively carried out if the learning situation is not in conformity with the learning needs of the learner.

From the foregoing, it is understood that the concern of Educational Psychology is the adequacy of those elements that interplay in

teaching-learning process. This concern is relevant considering the fact that it is only when those factors are gratifying that learners or students will achieve maximally when they are exposed to examinations like WAEC and NECO.

### **Conclusion**

Education is most relevant at the tertiary level for high skilled manpower production and sustainable national development. In a developing country like Nigeria, there is need for reasonable attention to address the inadequacies that pose treat to tertiary education and sustainable human and national development. This is proper because any nation that cannot boast of abundant skilled human resources in different fields can hardly attain any meaningful development.

### **Recommendations**

Education at the tertiary levels can adequately equip the beneficiaries with the skills required to boost national development if the following measures are taken:

(a) Government should not formulate or implement educational policies in respect of tertiary education without first of all considering the factors that can favor the actualization and sustenance of such policies. For example, there is hardly any educational policy that does not require at least qualified manpower, adequate funding, equipment and facilities to implement it effectively. Therefore, adequate planning for steady availability of the enabling factors as mentioned above should be ensured by the government before coming up with any policy involving tertiary education.

(b) The issue of proliferation of unconventional tertiary institutions and their attendant sub-standard system should be properly addressed by relevant authorities in Nigeria. This can be done by ensuring that the *modusoperandi* in such institutions is in line with the stipulations of the regulatory bodies of allied conventional institutions. To this end, government should see to it that admission of students, infrastructural facilities, available manpower and academic programs are all based on approved standards.

(c) Government should try to increase her budgetary allocation to education so that the tertiary levels will always get enough funds that will enable them to provide facilities and take care of service that are crucial for boosting teaching and learning. However, the task of funding tertiary education should not rest on the government alone. Tertiary institutions themselves should contribute by mapping out plans that will beef-up their internally generated revenue. By so doing, they will become buoyant enough to provide some of their financial needs. Also, private individuals, all relevant stake holders and philanthropists should assist to bear the burden of funding tertiary education to enable for proper functioning in line with the rules of the regulatory bodies.

(d) Another measure that will enhance repositioning of tertiary education is prompt motivation of the staff. A laborer, they say, deserves his wages and when he achieves that, he becomes motivated towards enhancing his input or performances maximally. On this note, government should introduce workable strategies that will ensure prompt and regular payment of salaries and

other relevant benefits to those who teach in the tertiary institutions.

(e) The issue of examination malpractice demands that learners at all levels of institutions of learning in Nigeria and indeed other relevant stakeholders in education, should be given proper orientation on the dangers inherent in the numerous act. More so, government should formulate policies regulating the menace of examination malpractices and stipulate drastic punishment against offenders.

(f) Now that emphasis on tertiary education is acquisition of saleable skills, tertiary institutions should in liaison with the regulatory bodies, review the course contents to be studied by students in respect of skills acquisition. In addition to this strategy, there is need to introduce more technical and vocational courses and increase the quota of candidates who seek admissions to read such courses. Along that line, courses in Agriculture, Business Studies, Computer Education, Home Economics, Fine Arts, Metal Work, Auto-Mechanics, Electronics, Wood Work and the like, should be given greater attention. Further still, candidates who secure admissions to read technical and Vocational courses should be well encouraged by the lecturers and the host institutions to enable them acquire the relevant skills which they need to develop themselves and the nation at large.

(g) In order to ensure that students in tertiary institutions are progressive in acquiring the skills which the institutions are required to offer them, there is need for periodic and reliable assessment of their performances. This will help to provide opportunities for directing, diagnosing, remedying and evaluating students' academic

progress and as well learning programs (Emaikwu in Denga and Ekoja, 2008).

## References

- Abdullahi, F. (2015), Teacher education in Nigeria: The Role of Educational Psychology. In: *Teacher Education in Nigeria: Innovations and Reforms*. Onitsha: Global Academic Group Online Academic Resources.
- Afe, J.O. (2002). *Reflections on becoming a teacher and the challenges of teacher education*. Retrived 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept, 2015 [www.nuc.edu.ng/nucsite/file](http://www.nuc.edu.ng/nucsite/file).
- Alumode, B. E. (2011), *Towards efficient administration of teacher education: Imperatives for 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria*. Lead Paper delivered at the Maiden Conference of School of Education, Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo (16/11/2011).
- Barkari, S.G. and Kaibo, J.M. (1998). Improving access to primary education in Nigeria. *The Jos Journal of Education*, 3 (1), 16-27.
- Denga, I.D. and Ekoja, A.A. (2008). *Education for the new millennium: Foundations and praxe*. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publications Limited.
- Ekpeiken, W.E. (2008). Management of instructional materials and teachers instructional service delivery effectiveness in Cross River State secondary schools. In: The Calabar Counsellor: *Journal of Counseling Association of Nigeria*, 2 (1), 30-34.
- Ekpo, K. (2004). Issues of implementing the senior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. In: *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development by National Association of Research Development*, 22(1), 27-39.
- Ekpo, K. and Osam, O. (2009). *Curriculum implementation in the secondary school education*. Abuja: Top Doddy Nig. Ltd.
- Enyi, Enyi D. (2011). Administering contemporary Colleges of Education in Nigeria: Challenges and options. In: *Journal of Educational Studies and Research* 6(1), 1-22.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2014), *National Policy on education* Lagos: NERDEC Press.
- Girei, A.U. & Girei S. B. (1995). *Towards effective funding and management of primary education in Nigeria*. A paper presented at the School of Education Seminar, F.C.E Yola.
- Idowu, A. I. (2002). The learning environment of the Nigerian child.

- In: The learning environment of the Nigerian child. *Journal of the Nigerian Society for Educational Psychologist (NIESEP)*.
- Lawal, S. (1992). *Planning education for national development: The option for years ahead*. In: Education in Nigeria (past, present and future) (edited by Prof. B. Ipaye). Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishing Co.
- Mordi, R. (2008). *Surviving on a shoestring budget*. Tell Newspaper, 44(3), 32-34.
- Ogbonnaya, N.O. (2013). *Functional education for values, knowledge, skills and national development*. A key Note Address presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference of National Association for Advancement of Knowledge (NAFAK), Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar, 11-15 March.
- Ogunlade, B. A. (2014). Multi-media application in general education: Towards developing a model indigenous learning package for child education in Nigeria. In: *Multi-disciplinary Journal of Research Development* by National Association of Research Development, 22(1),133-144.
- Okoro, O.M. (2006). *Principles and models in vocational education*. Nsukka and Enugu: University Trust Publishers.
- Okorafor, J. (2013). Nigeria: The challenges of higher education addressing the brain drain/infrastructure rot.
- Onwuzo, O.G.U. (2014). Evolving innovating strategies for curbing examination malpractice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In: *The Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development* 22(1),66-71.
- [www.naireland.com./2818905/budgetory-allocation-education/2010-2016](http://www.naireland.com./2818905/budgetory-allocation-education/2010-2016) (web. site: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and [www.bellanaija.com/2014/04-national-budget-is-n4-69-trillion/?e-pi=7%2\(page-1010%zcs40\)](http://www.bellanaija.com/2014/04-national-budget-is-n4-69-trillion/?e-pi=7%2(page-1010%zcs40)).

