Challenges of University Education in the Promotion of Capacity Building and Social Stability in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined contributions of university education in the promotion of capacity building and social stability in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study; descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 23000 academic staff of the public universities in South-East Nigeria. The sample comprised of 400 academic staff of the universities. The sample was composed using the simple random method. Data collected were analyzed using mean. Findings of the study showed that Nigeria university education contributes to capacity building through global practice on education con for all, provision of quality teaching infrastructure, access for students to ICT education, improved teaching methods, well equipped lecturers, proper management of universities, well-funded university research, properly motivated faculty; Nigeria university education contributes to social stability through skill and knowledge to navigate tensions, knowledge to avoid violence, help students build mental strength and resilience, help reduce child labor and early marriage, prevention of school-drop outs, help students navigate emotional and psychological trauma, help students navigate physical trauma, and help student make and become members of a peaceful society. The study concludes that Nigeria university education is contributing very little to human capacity building and development and as well social stability, this is linked to some intervening issues that has to do with peculiar issues with developing nations that could reduce the extent of social stability and human capacity development. The study therefore recommends that Nigeria government through the yearly budget address the insufficiency in Nigeria education system such as high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, poor staff remuneration, poor infrastructure, poor education funding, strike actions that cripple education, political instability, poverty among others as a means to circumvent the issue of social stability and improve human capacity.

Keywords: human capacity, social stability, Nigeria higher education, human capital.

**Introduction**

To achieve successful capacity building and social stability, the place of education can never be over emphasized. Byrd (2020) argues that human capital development has been identified as a crucial factor for a nation’s progress and development because education is the primary mechanism for escalating human resources and accumulating human capital. Therefore, public education is one of the most important inputs for nations’ social stability and economic outcomes. Education is consistently argued to be a very important factor in human capacity building and achieving capacity development (Nicholl, 2014). Thus, the idea of education policies must be linked to security, social, and economic strategies for higher probability of success in a nation.

However, education has been conceptualized by different scholars and through different prisms. According to Naziev (2017), education is the socially organized and regulated process of socially transference of significant experience from the previous generations to the following generations. Education is a very important factor in human development, and it brings about critical thinking, festers changes in human life, in teaching someone how to make important decisions, boosts creativity, enhances individual’s potentials and importance to the society, and has been ultimately explained to be a passage to progress (Chirazze, 2023). Other scholars argued that the importance of education in human existence cannot be over emphasized; it includes the change it brings to a person, it helps to set the person for future success in their chosen fields, and these changes could be learnt formally in school and are very important for the overall development of individuals in the society.

To properly imbibe education, learn, practice and go through the process of capacity building, one must go through the walls of University education which is at the apex of formal education. University education also called post-secondary school education in Nigeria entails a burden student going through the rigors of passing Senior School Certificate Examinations and also the Joint Admission and Matriculations Board exam to be formally admitted in a university (National University Commission, 2024). Once one meets the set minimum requirements, the post-secondary student is legally admitted into a university system in Nigeria. Alemu (2018) conceptualized university as a higher learning institution that brings men and women to a high level of intellectual development in the arts and science, and in the traditional professional disciplines, and promotes high-level research. It also signifies a community of persons engaged in study and research. A university is a source of universal knowledge and highly skilled human power for the professions. In the university system, the lecturers and other teaching staffs form the core of the knowledge base, as they have the crucial task of teaching and disseminating knowledge to the students who have enrolled to undertake courses in the university (Gayson, 2022).

However, university education entails the cultivation of the individual for the sake of the ideal society; the individual is to be helped to achieve inner happiness, which would allow the state to benefit from the harmony of satisfied citizens fulfilling their proper roles (Allen, 2018). Alemu (2018) further contends that university education could be explained to mean the pursuit of truth in learning, and dedication to the advancement of knowledge and the training of scholars for its own sake and the betterment of the
life of the individual and the society. Agrawal (2014) further made some pertinent observation as regards the importance of university education in human life; one is the charge that university education provides a broad based learning that goes beyond job-specific skills, as it focuses on critical thinking, communication, and analytical abilities that are applicable across various industries. Hence, this well-rounded education enables individuals to navigate an ever changing job market and contributes to the economy in a wide range of roles; secondly is the charge that university education also offers advanced specializations in specific fields - disciplines such as law, medicine, engineering and research require in-depth knowledge which cannot be achieved by vocational training alone, and these specialized areas of knowledge drive economic growth and attract investment (Agrawal, 2014). One might however argue that that university education does not provide practical knowledge but that is not the case; universities provide practical knowledge in the form of internships, projects and experiments. Business programs offer courses in strategic planning, organizational behaviour, and financial management. Generally, university education should aim at initiating critical thinking through both teaching and research. Thus, the critical thinking associated with education is imperative to use resources better and to improve the human condition, with intelligence and for good judgment, to cope up with any eventuality. Therefore, education is to improve life, develop good judgment, and understand the environment while advancing societal stability (Nicholl, 2014).

In Nigeria, formal education plays an important role in shaping human development and human destiny by fostering capacity building and social stability, as it provides people with the opportunity to learn, re-learn and un-learn for the purpose of becoming a better person. Formal university education is the type of education that takes place in the premises of a school, where a person learn basic, academic, or trade skills. This type of education is given by specially qualified teachers that are efficient in the art of instruction, and the students and teachers in this formal education setting engages themselves in the process of this education through classroom interaction.

Capacity building is the process in which skills, capabilities, and resources which the society needs to survive is developed and harnessed for the growth and betterment of the society (United Nations Report, 2023). For Beuns (2023), human Capacity Building involves strengthening management, governance, and infrastructure, as well as changing mindsets and attitudes. Capacity building is a process that starts from within and is sustained over time. It is a term that is often used in the context of social and economic development, especially by international, multinational, and global organizations. The hallmark of human capacity development is transformation that is generated and sustained over time from within; transformation of this kind goes beyond performing tasks to changing mindsets and attitudes. The place of human capacity building is contained in the Goal number 17 of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that focus on human capacity building and the goals seeks to increase technology and innovation in least developed countries and improving data collection and monitoring for the achievement of the SDGs themselves. Universities in particular can serve as centers of capacity-building through research, innovation and data collection and analyzing (United Nations Report, 2023).

To promote capacity building in Nigeria, university education have been at the forefront of the push and scholars have made some pertinent observations as regards the efforts of university education in this regard (Adedeji and Omolora, 2013; Khan, 2014). To aid in the country’s capacity building, university education makes contribution through the content of the education curriculum- that is exposing
students undertaking university education to skills, knowledge and opportunities and attitudes that could benefit them in all spheres of life, through the curriculum of the university education tailored to their diverse fields; again, access to education by both the rich, middle class and poor is another means through which university education contributes to human capacity building. Commenting, Adedeji and Omolora (2013) argues that if a large number of people are exposed to education opportunities at the university level, when they apply the gained knowledge to societal problems and production, there are high chances that there will be an accelerated economic growth. Other have argued that the supply of education to the labour market is blind and at such, universities must help in human capacity building by tailoring their teaching to labor market demand as it is through this means that what is learnt in the university will be useful in the labor market. Other have argued that the provision of quality infrastructure in universities help prepare students for the rigors of labour market, and this is in the light of the Information Communication Technology era were the demands of moving the society forward relies on the knowledge of ICT (Shehu, Dauda & Abubakar, 2018). The authors further contend that university education provides ICT education for students because it creates financial stability, enhances wealth creation, job opportunities and employability for graduating university students. Other means through which university education contributes to capacity building is through proper management of university education, improvement of the curricula, improved teaching methods/ infrastructure, recruitment and retention of qualifies lecturers, motivation of academic staffs and providing funds and environment for a well-rounded science research.

Despite the contribution of university education to human capital development, university education also contributes to achieving social stability in Nigeria. Social stability have been viewed as the extent at which the society and its people remain stable and reliable, and even predictable; it is even more important because it allows people in the society to plan and conduct their activities without any atom of fear in them. Ononye (2020) further contend that any society that have achieved social stability have the higher chances of also achieving a higher level of human capital development that affects the economy and other socio-political indicators. In this regard, university education through imparting of knowledge contributes to enthroning social stability in the country (UNESCO, 2021). According to Amiti (2021), education is a clear indicator of life outcomes, including of positive perceptions and behaviours; it can promote diversity as well as increase people’s wellbeing and decrease resorting to negative coping strategies. Education can contribute to social stability, at least through building knowledge and skills to address tensions without violence and discrimination, especially when schools are among the few spaces where children can mingle and experience diversity in the country. To help achieve social stability in Nigeria, university education undertakes tasks that include- building knowledge that help student navigate tensions, inculcate knowledge that reduces violence, help students build mental strength and resilience, help reduce child labour and early marriage that destabilizes students and have social consequences (Amiti, 2021; UNICEF LEBANON Humanitarian Situation Report, 2023). Other means university education contribute to social stability include through prevention of school drop-out, prevents students from emotional, psychological and physical trauma, and build competencies that help students become members of a peaceful society.

Despite the contribution of education to capacity building and social stability, it is pertinent to note that a nation like Nigeria is still battling with diverse challenges that borders on university education becoming less equipped and competent to deliver on
their roles in enthroning social stability in the country and contributing adequately to human capacity development in the Nation; such challenges include high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, poor staff remuneration, poor infrastructure, poor education funding, strike actions that cripple education, political instability, poverty among others (Ajeowle, 2023). This no doubt is problematic and necessitates this empirical examination to measure Nigeria University efforts in this regard viz a viz other intervening variables.

**Research Questions**

This research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the issues of university education in promoting capacity building?
2. What are the issues of university education in promoting social stability?

**Method**

Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised 23000 academic staff in the 10 public universities in South-East Nigeria. Simple Random sampling technique was used to obtain 8 out of the 10 public universities in the region. Then purposive sampling was used to obtain five faculties from each of the universities. Then, multi staged and simple random sampling technique was used to obtain two departments from each of the faculties to give rise to 80 departments. Finally, simple random sampling was used to obtain 5 teaching staff in each of the 80 sampled departments to give rise to 400 academic staffs in the universities.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, trial testing method was used on 50 academic staffs of Delta state University, Abraka, which was outside the study area. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha for each of the subsections. At the end of the analysis, the scores obtained were 0.83 for ways university education impact on human capacity building and 0.81 for possible ways university education help to achieve social stability in Nigeria. The results showed high reliability of the instrument. The instrument has two parts, A and B. Part A sought information on the respondents. Part B sought information required to answer the research questions. It has 1 & 2 and these were concerned with information regarding research questions one and two. Part A contains 15 items while part B also contains 9 items, making a total of 24 items. The four point response mode of strongly Agreed (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) was adopted in the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of 20 research assistants, who were paired for each of the 10 faculties. Administration of the questionnaire was done during the first semester of 2022/2023 academic session. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were collected back because of on the spot delivery method and collection technique applied. Mean was used to analyze the data. The four point response mode used, informed the use of mean 2.50 as the cut-off point for decision. The decision rule was that mean scores of items of 2.50 and above were regarded as positives while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as negative.
Table 1. Issues of University Education in Promoting Capacity Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited Skilled Human Resources</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Budgetary Constraints</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of equal access to education</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of quality teaching in the universities</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Poor or no access to Information Communication Technology in the universities</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of research on the part of the lecturers</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lack of well Equipped laboratories</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Poor management of University education</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor research funding in the university</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Poorly paid university lecturers</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cluster</td>
<td>28.81/10</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in table 1 showed that respondents agreed to the items with a mean score above 2.5. Stated clearly, the cluster mean of 2.81 indicates that respondents agreed to the fact that the challenges of capacity building in Nigeria universities include Limited Skilled Human Resources, Budgetary Constraints, Lack of equal access to education due to funds, Lack of quality teaching in the universities, Poor or no Information Communication Technology in the universities, Lack of research on the part of the lecturers, Lack of well Equipped laboratories, Poor management of University education, Poor research funding in the university and Poorly paid university lecturers.

Table 2. Issues of University Education in Promoting Social Stability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Inability to teach students skills and knowledge to navigate tensions</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not impacting students with knowledge to avoid violence</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Inadequate teaching of students skills to build mental strength and resilience</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor teachings on the need to reduce child labor and early marriage.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Universities inability to reduce the rate of School-drop outs</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inability to teach students skills to navigate emotional and psychological trauma</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Poor teaching on students to become better in their field.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lack of teaching students on need to become members of a peaceful society</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cluster</td>
<td>23.22/8</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in table 2 showed that respondents agreed to the items with a mean score above 2.5. Stated clearly, the cluster mean of 2.90 indicates that respondents agreed to the fact that Nigeria university has numerous challenges in promoting social stability and they include Lack of teaching students skills and knowledge to navigate tensions, Inability to Not impacting students with knowledge to avoid violence, Inadequate teaching of students skills to build mental strength and resilience, Poor teachings on
the need to reduce child labor and early marriage, Universities inability to reduce the rate of School-drop outs, Inability to teach students skills to navigate emotional and psychological trauma, Poor teaching on students to become better in their field, and Lack of teaching students on need to become members of a peaceful society.

**Discussions**

From the interpretation of the collected data, the following findings emerged:

1. Nigeria university is challenges in promoting capacity building in the following ways Limited Skilled Human Resources, Budgetary Constraints, Lack of equal access to education due to funds, Lack of quality teaching in the universities. Studies of Nurdin and Basharin (2023) also found similar variables as what could pose challenges to human capacity development by Universities. The study also found Poor or no Information Communication Technology in the universities, Lack of research on the part of the lecturers, Lack of well Equipped laboratories, Poor management of University education, Poor research funding in the university and Poorly paid university lecturers. Akpan and Etoor (2012) found the listed challenges such as found Poor or no Information Communication Technology in the universities, Lack of research on the part of the lecturers, Lack of well Equipped laboratories, Poor management of University education, Poor research funding in the university and Poorly paid university lecturers in their own study on challenges of promoting human capacity building in Nigeria universities. Similarly Hagelsteen et al (2022) found that found poor or no Information Communication Technology in the universities, lack of research on the part of the lecturers, lack of well-equipped laboratories, poor management of university education, poor research funding in the university and poorly paid university lecturers as causes of challenges of human capacity by universities.

2. Nigeria university is challenges in promoting social stability in the following ways Lack of teaching students skills and knowledge to navigate tensions, Inability to Not impacting students with knowledge to avoid violence, Inadequate teaching of students skills to build mental strength and resilience Olo et al (2019) findings agreed that challenges such as Lack of teaching students skills and knowledge to navigate tensions, Inability to Not impacting students with knowledge to avoid violence, Inadequate teaching of students skills to build mental strength and resilience contribute as challenges to universities quest to promote social stability. The study also found Poor teachings on the need to reduce child labor and early marriage Zeleza (2021) in a study similarly found and agree that Poor teachings on the need to reduce child labor and early marriage pose a challenge to universities contribution to social stability. Universities inability to reduce the rate of School-drop outs, Inability to teach students skills to navigate emotional and psychological trauma, Poor teaching on students to become better in their field, and Lack of teaching students on need to become members of a peaceful society Jacob et al (2020) in their study also found and concur that Universities inability to reduce the rate of School-drop outs, Inability to teach students skills to navigate emotional and psychological trauma, Poor teaching on students to become better in their field, and Lack of teaching students on need to become members of a peaceful society are issues that could contribute as a challenge to Universities quest to promote social stability.
Conclusions

It is concluded that Nigeria education is developing and is still bedeviled by some challenges such as high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, poor staff remuneration, poor infrastructure, poor education funding, strike actions that cripple education, political instability, poverty among others which are all hallmark of a developing nations education. However, it is pertinently observed that Nigeria university education is contributing very little to human capacity building and development and as well social stability, and this gap is linked to some intervening issues that has to do with developing nations and could consequently reduce the extent of social stability and human capacity development contribution by Nigeria Universities if no intervention is made immediately.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Nigeria government through the yearly budget address the insufficiency in Nigeria education system such as high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, poor staff remuneration, poor infrastructure, poor education funding, strike actions that cripple education, political instability, poverty among others as a means to circumvent the issue of social stability and improve human capacity.

2. Nigeria universities re-evaluate their curriculum to meet the present global best practices in other to contribute to students’ development and contribution to the society and the country’s education indices in general.

References


