

**MS Word Export To Multiple PDF Files Software - Please purchase license.TOWARDS A
FUTURISTIC EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the nations of the world were colonized and went through wars at various times, but had turned around their fortunes through economic and educational reforms. In Nigeria however, there had been series of educational reforms from: 7/6-5-4 to 6-3-3-4 and now 9-3-4 system. Similarly, the recent reform in the higher education sector which has resulted into the conversion of the nation's higher technical educational institutions to degree awarding universities, which arose largely from the disparity between the graduates of the two institutions in the labor market and the fallen standard of education.

This paper presents a critical review of the various educational reforms with a view to designing a viable educational model based on the examples of some developed and developing nations. It attempts to proffer solutions to some of the existing problems.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian education sector has suffered from systemic dysfunction at all levels for decades and government is poised more than ever before to find a more lasting and enduring solution. The decay in the ivory tower is exemplified by cultism, examination malpractices, system abuse and corruption. Consequently, according to the Honourable Minister of Education (Ezekwesili, 2006), "the country is producing less leaders, managers, teachers and other professionals but mass-producing miscreants, the disaffected and the rejected, the misdirected, the unlearned, the angry, the wronged, the agitated and the hopeless".

The World Bank report, as presented in William et al (2003), posited that education, particularly Higher Education is a fundamental instrument for the construction of a knowledge economy and the society of all nations. He identified knowledge as the most important factor for economic development in the 21st century.

The present deplorable state of education in Nigeria is not unconnected with the long years of military rule characterized by corruption and massive looting with little or no concern for education. Aiyetan (2004) reported an upward increase in the amount of stolen monies from \$50 billion in 1999 to \$170 billion in 2003. Under military rules, the education system was in perpetual crises ranging from incessant strike action by students, faculty and staff of higher institutions arising from poor funding and provision of the necessary infrastructure (Teboho, 2000).

By 1980, some higher institutions had distinguished themselves in a number of disciplines at international standards, the quality of education was high and employers used to troop to campuses to recruit manpower for her workforce. By the 90s due to military incursion and outright neglect of the sector, the various achievements disappeared. The present situation is such that employers of labour believe that university graduates are poorly trained and unfit for the job demand; and they are delinquent in both oral and written communication as well as in applied technical skills (First Bank Chief et al, 2005). Therefore, arising from the consolidation exercise-the bank reforms of 2005, Nigerian Banks currently shop for skilled personnel abroad (Ugwu, 2006).

The convocation of a national seminar on education in the 70's was centered on achieving some national objectives through the instrumentality of education, such as: the development of a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a great and dynamic economy; and a land of bright future and opportunities for all (Soyombo, 2007). Unfortunately, 46 years after independence, none of the stated goals has been fully achieved.

Currently, most of the qualified dons in the Nigerian universities were lost to overseas countries and Africa for improved condition of service and proper funding of education for research and development resulting in the "brain-drain" syndrome. Parents prefer overseas universities for their children because Nigerian schools are staffed with teachers who are products of a system that is delinquent academically and morally. In a University in Ghana for example, 40% of the students' population are Nigerians and the same is true of other African nations particularly, South Africa.

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows: section 2 presents the education reforms across the various tiers of learning, sections 3, 4, and 5 present the statements of problem, objectives of research and research methodology respectively, section 6 presents the current status of education in Nigeria, section 7 presents a review of the education systems in some developed world, section 8 presents the proposed education model for Nigeria, while sections 9 and 10 present the recommendations and conclusion respectively.

THE EDUCATION REFORMS

Nigeria had witnessed a number of reforms cutting across the various tiers of education without success. The system of education varied slightly in the 60's from one region to another. Thus, we had the 7-5-4 which represents 7 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary education and 4 years of tertiary education. While in some regions, it was 6-5-4 across the three tiers respectively. This system was later replaced by the 6-3-3-4, that is, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of Junior Secondary School (JSS), 3 years of Senior Secondary School (SSS) and, 4 years of tertiary education. The difference is the additional one year to the secondary education and its split to 2-tiers: junior and senior secondary.

The importance of the junior tier is to introduce students to vocational and technical education, so that at the end of the first tier they are separated based on their ability. The best students go through SSS and later to the University, while the rest would pursue vocational and technical education. The 6-3-3-4 system had not really failed, but was not well implemented. The

equipment meant to prosecute the JSS tier was not in place and where it was, it was not installed for lack of basic amenities such as space, power, water, etc. According to the Honorable Minister of Education, Ezekwesili (2006), the country needs twice of the available physical infrastructure (classroom) and 50% of the ones available are not in good condition due to lack of water and electricity. The newly introduced system is the 9-3-4 system. This system combines the 6 years of primary education with the 3 years of JSS to a single indivisible tier of free and compulsory basic education.

The Current Education Reforms

Currently, there are two basic reforms in the education sector. One is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) that concerns both the primary and the junior secondary schools. The second is the higher educational reform that converts the schools of technology and polytechnics and colleges of education into degree awarding universities.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE)

The universal basic education is a wake-up call towards fulfilling the millennium development goals (MDGs) particularly goal 2, captioned universal primary education and aimed at ensuring that boys and girls complete a full course of primary education by the year 2015 (UNDP, 2000).

Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Education in the country came up with a redefined mission and vision for education tagged: "WE CAN", which stands for "We Educate our Character, Aptitude and Needs (Abiri et al, 2006). Its objectives include a new basic education curriculum; tracking assets for progress (TAP) initiative; operation reach all secondary schools (ORASS); in-service training of 145,000 teachers to cope with the scheme, and the training of 40,000 unemployed National Certificate of Education (NCE) degree holders.

The UBE came as a replacement for Nigeria's universal primary education scheme of the 6-3-3-4 system of primary education. The current 9-3-4 system of education was designed in conformity with the MDGs and education for all (EFA) (Kayode, 2006).

The UBE involves 6 years of primary School and 3 years of junior secondary school, culminating in 9 years of uninterrupted schooling, and transition from one class to another is automatic but assessed through continuous assessment. This scheme is monitored by the universal basic education commission (UBEC), and has made it free and a right of every child.

Therefore, the UBEC law section 15 defines UBE as early childhood care and education. The law stipulates a 9-year formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skill acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and women, Al-majiri, street children and disabled group (Aderinoye, 2007).

Higher Education Reform

This reform was borne out of the current deplorable state of the quality of higher educational institutions in the country. The increased demand for higher education with unplanned capacity has fraught the system with admission and examination malpractices, incessant strikes and uncontrollable trend of secret cult activities with the resultant effect of drastic fall in standards (Terhemba 2006).

Ezekwesili (2006) and Edukugho (2006) presented the general problems plaguing the higher education sector as follow:

1. General fallen standards and quality;
2. The disparity between the graduates of the Polytechnic and the University; and
3. Lack of capacity to offer access to University education (less than 20% of applicants are admitted yearly;

STATEMENTS OF PROBLEM

The reform did not address the issue of morale in the tertiary institution as the graduates are more of miscreants because of the level of cultism with little or no leadership quality. Secondly, the curriculum and its implementation have little interaction with the prevailing trends in the industry. As such, the graduates are not well-suited for employment hence, the preference of the employers of labour for graduates trained abroad.

Furthermore, the reform and its mode of implementation would further relegate the level of technological development as the training of low and middle-level manpower which the polytechnic institutions are to produce would be stopped in favor of high-level manpower development from the University.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of this study include:

1. To develop an educational model that fosters closer tie with the industry in the areas of research, development and training with a view to making the graduates employable.
2. To inculcate into the curriculum moral, ethical and technological revolution for national development.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This research is based on data collected through mixed methods and procedures. The methods of data collection employed are field observations, interviews and archival searches. The collected data were content-analyzed to obtain the information required.

The researcher has over 22 years post-graduation teaching experience in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria with about 10 years in the polytechnic/technical institutions while the remaining years are in the university institutions. The Author has been involved in curriculum design particularly, Computer Engineering as it has been practiced till date; and has been involved in accreditation exercises on behalf of apex monitoring body – The Nation Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

Similarly, selected institutions were visited for their opinions about the reform, while the bulk of the data for the research was obtained from archives, journals and the Internet.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

Aderinoye (2002) reported that 62 million Nigerians are illiterate (with the assumed 120 million population); that 20 million children of school age are not in school (UBE report); and less than 50% of secondary school age attend school.

At a National forum for policy development workshop on national education reform, that was organized by the joint council of the Nigerian civil service (Trade Union) and the academic staff union of universities (ASUU). The inherent problems plaguing the education sector were factored into two: intrinsic and extrinsic as reported by Taiwo (2007). The intrinsic problems include: inadequate physical facilities both in quality and quantity; in-adequate trained, skilled and committed teachers; inadequate teaching facilities; decline in the quality/standards of teaching and research; decline in discipline; increase incidence of fraud in admissions and examinations and other malpractices; and decline in the quality of management, administration, favoritism, corruption and poor accountability.

The extrinsic problems were listed as: poor/inadequate funding; interference of government in management and administration of universities with consequent undermining of university autonomy; interference especially in employment and deployment of staff and admission of students; unstable and sometimes inconsistent human resources development policies. The dysfunctional state of the sector was considered the major cause of the socio-economic problems in the country for the past two decades.

Currently, the performances of students in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) and the University Matriculation Examination have reduced drastically. The success rate in 2006 was about 23% and for decades now, the universities were not able to admit more than 18% of applicants (Aderinoye, 2002).

Polytechnic/Technical Education

According to the National Board for Technical Education Act of 1977, the Polytechnics and Colleges of Technologies were founded to provide skilled and middle-level manpower needs of the country.

The Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology awarded two types of Diploma Degrees:

1. National Diploma (ND) which is obtained after two years of post secondary admission in the Institution.

2. Higher National Diploma (HND), obtained after two years post –ND studies and a mandatory one year industrial training (IT) in the industry.

Admission requirement for polytechnic education is based on 4 credit passes at SSSCE.

Sanni (2006) reported the opinion of Mr. Julius Agboola, who was a Guest Lecturer at the 145th regular meeting of Council of Registrars of Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology in Nigeria. He posited that the Polytechnic have derailed from the laid down objectives and called for a concerted effort to save them from imminent collapse. In his Paper title: "My vision for Nigerian Polytechnic", he observed that Polytechnics have become a dumping ground for those who failed to secure admission into the Universities or those who could not fulfill the admission requirements into the University rather than being a choice of candidates that have passion for vocational and technical education. He further described the polytechnics as over-crowded institutions that have become a haven of criminals, vagabonds, cultists and rapists among others.

Similarly, according to the report of the fact-finding Committee set up by the NBTE to assess the state of competence of the nations 34 Polytechnics, the NBTE had to bar admission into 295 courses pending further accreditation. These courses included those that are suppose to be their core competencies such as Engineering, Architecture, Basic and Management Sciences (Suleiman, 2006).

The report equally revealed that the major problems were lack of adequate facilities and over-population among others. Most institutions had a population of 1,324 for a course whose maximum capacity was 60, some other institutions recorded a population of 1,827 and 5,112 students for another course whose capacity was meant to be 80 students.

However, there is a mandatory one year Industrial Training (IT) after the ND programme to enable holders of the degree acquire industrial experience before the HND degree. But the one year break for IT is almost a waste because of the ailing condition of most companies that are either operating below 50% capacity or some of the companies are completely dead.

University Education

The Universities have the primary mandate of producing high-level manpower in research and development. Higher Education is central to the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depend and the promotion of life-long learning practices that are required for upgrading knowledge and skills (Okebukola, 2006).

Similarly, the Executive Secretary of the National Universities' Commission (NUC), the apex body that governs the activities of universities in Nigeria, in a special interview, presented the current state of Nigerian Universities (Special Focus, 2006) as:

(a)	Number of Universities:	76
	Federal	25
	State	25
	Private	26
(b)	Students Enrolment:	750,765
(c)	Number of Teachers:	35,595
(d)	Student/Teacher Ratio:	21:1
(e)	Funding:	N53, 682, 343,757.

Admission requirement for university education is based on 5 credit passes at SSSCE.

The major problem plaguing tertiary education was traced to poor funding arising from neglect during the long years of military rule in Nigeria. Omegoh (2006) decried the deplorable level of funding of Education. While re-emphasizing the UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of a country's fiscal budget for education, the US spent more than 35% of its budget, while Ghana spent above 30%, but Nigeria spent between 5% and 8%.

Consequently, there is population explosion without facilities to match the demand. Accordingly, (William et al, 2003) summarized the level of research and development per every million population as follows:

1.	Nigeria	15
2.	India	158
3.	Brazil	168
4.	China	459
5.	U.S.	4,103

Thus, the level of R & D in the Nigerian education sector is almost non-existent.

Research Output from the Universities (As of 1995)

Nigeria	711 (1,062 in 1981)
South Africa	3,413
India	14,883
Indonesia	310
Brazil	5,440

The immediate past Executive Secretary of NUC, Okebukola was commended to have contributed meaningfully well to the educational development of Nigeria. This was based on the number of programmes that has full accreditation status. In the 1990/91 accreditation exercise, 21% of the 830 academic programmes had full accreditation, while the 1999/2000 exercise, 11% of the 1,195 had full accreditation and by the last accreditation exercise in 2005 resulted in 42.25% full accreditation status (Special Focus, 2006).

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

The concept of Open University or Distance Learning started as far back as 1940 before independence as correspondence studies. Nigerians enrolled for GCE O'Level and A'Level through Correspondence Colleges of Great Britain. Similarly, Nigerians enrolled for technical and business examinations through the Rapid Result College, Exam Success and Woolsey Hall. Instructional materials were in print form and sent through surface mail (NOUN Brochure, 2006).

It was during the third republic in 2002, that the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) was fully resuscitated with centers created all over the country. Although Open University system was first established by the National Assembly Act 1982 during the second republic but was terminated in 1983 after a military coup that sent the civilian regime packing.

The National Open University of Nigeria was created to raise the literacy level of Nigerians and to make education available for all, but these objectives were stunted. Currently, there are 27 study centers in the six regions of the country, but there are no ICT facilities for its successful implementation. The centers were provided with chairs and desks only, without a single PC nor Internet access.

NOUN was designed to be equipped with VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal), VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), PCs (Personal Computers) and LAN (Local Area Network) as well as teleconferencing and web casting facilities but they are not yet available. Similarly, the modes of lecture delivery are supposed to be through television broadcasting, radio broadcasting, audio and video tapes as well as print materials but the epileptic level of power cut is a major impediment. Ezeobi (2007) posited that 60% Nigerians (80 million) do not have access to electricity. The report of the International Centre for Energy, Equipment and Development put the per capital consumption of electricity in Nigeria at 100 kilowatt per hour, while South Africa, Brazil and China have 4,500kph, 1,934kph and 1,379kph respectively.

A REVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS OF SOME DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

The education systems of some developed countries: UK, USA, Germany, Russia, India, China and Malaysia were critically examined with a view to adapting a suitable model for implementation in Nigeria.

Education in the United Kingdom

In the UK, the education system is classified into nursery (age 3), Infant School (age 4-6), Junior School (age 7-10), Secondary School (age 11-15), the Sixth Form (age 16-17) and the Higher Education.

Education is compulsory and free for all ages in the primary and secondary schools (ages 5-16). Most children are educated in the state (tax) funded Schools. Throughout the UK, the

policy of 'In loco Parentis' is practiced. This means that teachers assume the role of parents of the children within the school territory.

After the secondary education, students may choose to proceed to the Sixth Form preparatory for University education or go to the National Vocation Qualification Programme. All students who are successful in the General Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (GCSEE) and who intend to pursue a university degree attend the Sixth Form called Lower Six and Upper Six, to obtain advanced level certificate that enables them pursue University admission.

Higher Education

The University age is between 17-18 years. Students specialize from inception and upon successful completion of the prescribed courses are awarded a Bachelor's Degree after three years of study. The education system is uniform throughout the U.K. except in Scotland where the Secondary School examination is called the standard grade instead of the GCSEE and students spend four years in the University to obtain a Bachelor's degree.

Education in the United States

The education system of the United States is comprised of Pre-School (Nursery); Primary School, Secondary School and College or University. Education in the States is largely run as public and private or home school.

According to the 2003 statistics:

1	Literacy Level	= 97%
	Men	= 97%
	Women	= 97%
2.	School Enrolment:	
	Primary	= 37.9 million
	Secondary	= 16.4 million
	Post-Secondary	= 17.5 million

In the US, the 'No Child Left Behind' Act, makes it mandatory for all school-age children to attend school. It empowers the Department of Education the right to withhold funding to the States that refuse to comply.

Education at the primary and secondary levels, are free and compulsory. The primary school age is between 5 and 6, while the students complete secondary education at the age of 18.

Higher Education

Higher education School in the United States is called University or College. The College awards a four-year programme classified as: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior years, leading to the award of Bachelor degree. The most prestigious schools are private and they are very competitive.

Unlike in the United Kingdom, Degrees in Law and Medicine are not offered at the undergraduate level, but after the bachelor's degree.

Education in Germany

Like in the United States, the States play a prominent role in financing education in Germany, while the Federal Government plays a very minor role. The education system is comprised of: Kindergarten, Primary School, Secondary School, Vocational School and University. Education is largely free in Germany and attendance is compulsory for twelve (12) years covering the elementary and secondary schools. Education is State-managed and free up to the University until recently. The 2006 education reforms fixed a fee of five hundred Euros (€500) per semester per student.

Secondary education is stratified into four classes based on the student's ability:

1. Gymnasium: This class is for the gifted children and it prepares them for University education.
2. Realschule: This is for intermediate students. It prepares them for vocational studies.
3. Gesamtschule: This is similar to Realschule.
4. Hauptschule: This is a comprehensive school. It combines the features of the three schools. That is, it prepares students for University education as well as vocational studies.

Important notes:

1. Students who obtained Diploma from the Vocation Schools can still proceed to the University.
2. There is a special apprenticeship scheme called 'Duale Ausbildung' that allows students in vocational training to be attached to a company.
3. There is a non-formal education vocation school called Berufsschule, which is attended two times a week, for a period of two, two and a half to three years. The remaining three days are spent working in a company. This fosters a rich blend of practice and theory. During the period of apprenticeship, the student is a part-time staff of the company and after the completion of the scheme; he is registered in a brand of trade and certified, ready for a professional career up to a low-level management position.

Higher Education

There are two types of Degrees: The Bachelor and the Diploma (Vordiploma).

The Bachelor is awarded after three years of study in a University and Masters after two years of study while Doctorate is for three to five years.

Similarly, Vordiplom is awarded after two years, followed by Diploma after two years of study, while Doctorate is awarded after 3-5 years of studies.

Essentially, regardless of the scheme taken to by a student, there are possibilities of obtaining Masters and Doctorate Degrees. Doctoral Degrees are based on independent research under the tutelage of a professor.

Education in Russia

The education system in Russia is very similar to other parts of the world. There is great emphasis on science and technology which is responsible for the high level manpower and development in medicine, engineering, space and aviation among others. The system was inherited from the Soviet Union and education was free for anyone who could pass the entrance examination.

The level of literacy is 98% with 100% male and 97% female. There are about 1,304 higher Institutions in which 685 of them are government owned while the remaining are non-government owned.

According to the 2003 statistics, the total number of students was 5,947,500 students where 5,228,700 were in the government institutions, while about 718,800 are from non-government institutions.

The secondary education takes between 10 and 11 years to complete, while the University degrees are classified as:

1. Bachelor's Degree (4 years)
2. Specialist's Degree (5-6 years)
3. Master's Degree (6 years)

Both Master's and Bachelor's Degrees were introduced lately.

After the specialist's and Master's Degrees, students can pursue a Doctoral Degree which is research-based and awarded after three publications in journals and a defended dissertation. Higher education in Russia is tailored towards specializations. There are technical Universities (many), medical universities, Business, management and economics Universities, Agricultural Universities and the military Universities, to mention a few.

Education in India

The country has some of the best Universities in the world. The education system is composed of Pre-Primary (1-5 years), Primary (6-10 years), Secondary (11-15 years), Higher Secondary (16-17 years) and Higher Education. The literacy level is 64.8% (75.3% men and 53.7% women).

The higher education is classified into:

1. Professional (4 years)
2. Medical (5 years)
3. Arts and Commercial (3 years)

Similarly, post graduate degrees take a period of one and a half years to three years.

According to the 2001 Census, we have the following enrolment data:

1.	Nursery	144,831,273
2.	Primary	146,740,047
3.	Lower Secondary	90,226,846
4.	Upper Secondary	79,229,721
5.	Pre-University	37,816,215
6.	Technical Diploma & Degree	3,666,680
7.	Non-Technical Diploma & Degree	386,146
8.	Unclassified	<u>92,756</u>
	TOTAL	<u>502,994,684</u>

Graduation Market

1.	PG - Non-Technical	6,949,704
2.	Graduate - Non-Technical	25,666,044
3.	Engineering and Technology	2,588,405
4.	Teaching	1,547,671
5.	Medicine	768,964
6.	Agriculture and Dairying	100,126
7.	Vetinary	26,642
8.	Others	<u>22,588</u>
	TOTAL	<u>37,670,147</u>

The Indian Institute of Technology ranked 50th in the world. Distance education is well developed and funded.

Education in the People's Republic of China

The education system is structured towards the diverse needs of the society. There are Junior and Senior, middle Schools, Secondary Agricultural and Vocational Schools, Secondary Technical Schools, Regular Secondary Schools, Secondary Teachers' Schools, Secondary Professional and Universities, Professional Colleges and Short-term Vocational Universities.

According to the 1985 statistics, there were 3 million vocational students in the vocational and technical schools and there were moves to convert about 50% of the upper secondary education to vocational education.

Similarly, there were 668,000 new polytechnic enrolments, with plans for an annual increase of 2 million mid-level skilled workers and 400,000 senior technicians.

Education in Malaysia

The education system in Malaysia is composed of Pre-school, Primary education, Secondary education, Tertiary education and Postgraduate. The schools are public, private and home-schools. The level of literacy is 88.7% (92% men and 85.4% women)

Pre-school education is optional and parents are responsible for providing it. Only primary education is universal and compulsory. Primary education is for a period of 6 years referred to as standard 1 to standard 6, which is divided into two levels. Level 1 is composed of years 1-3 and level 2, years 4-6.

The secondary education is of 5 years duration referred to as Forms 1-5. Students are expected to write an evaluation examination at the end of Form 3, which forms the basis of streaming them into Arts and Science students. At the end of Form 5, students are expected to write the final year examination that leads to the award of GCE O'level grade.

There are two ways of pursuing University education. One is through Form 6 which is for a period of two years known Lower Six and Upper Six. The second option is the matriculation, which is a one or two-year programme.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in public schools in Malaysia is highly subsidized by government and admission is through a quota system. Prior to year 2004, postgraduate qualifications were pre-requisites to lecturing in Public tertiary institutions, but presently, this condition has been waived.

Industry professionals with proven track of records are employed to teaching positions directly without a postgraduate degree to introduce a good blend of theory and practice. Many private colleges employ the 'Twining method whereby graduates are produced in collaboration with other universities abroad. That is, the student spend some period of time in the local Universities before transferring abroad to complete their education. Consequently, some of these foreign universities have set up campuses in Malaysia.

Vocational/Technical Education.

Beside the University degrees, there are a number of vocational/technical training institutions that are geared towards acquiring profession technical education in Malaysia. The Polytechnics offers Diploma Courses for three years and certificate courses for two years.

THE PROPOSED EDUCATION SYSTEM.

The proposed education system is a bridge between the 6-3-3-4 and the 9-3-4 education systems. It is a hybrid of the best practices of the two. Thus, it adapts the primary and the Secondary models (9-3) of the 9-3-4 system and a modified tertiary model of the 6-3-3-4 system. It abolishes the terminal constraints associated with the Diploma and HND Degrees, thus holder graduates of the ND and HND degrees can still pursue a University degree through Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) to Master (M.Sc./M.Eng.) and Doctoral (Ph.D.) Levels.

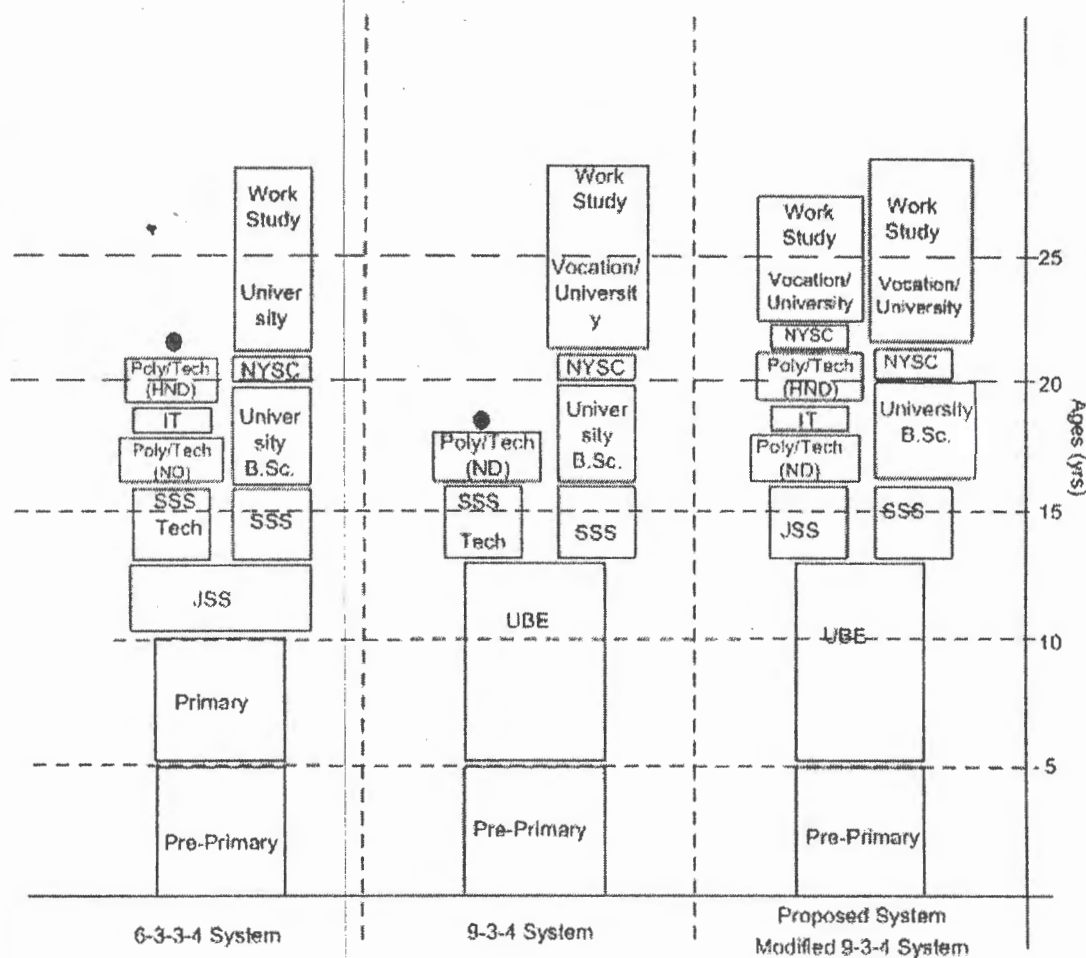


Fig. 1: Proposed Educational Model

The Postgraduate Diploma is to serve as a conversion degree from technical to University degree. This system would solve to certain extent the pronounced disparity between the two classes of graduates as they can all aspire to obtain the highest educational qualification.

However, the discrepancy at the first degree level (HND and B.Sc.) arose from the mis-implementation of the technical degree. From the Acts setting up the schemes, they were not expected to pursue the same job specifications after graduation as witnessed in Nigeria. The technical/vocational education graduates were expected to be absorbed into the industry for the technological transformation of the country but for the ailing industrial sector of the economy. Most industries are producing below 50% capacity while some have completely folded up. Consequently, the two sets of graduates are now pursuing the same job specifications mostly in the public and finance sectors of the economy for which the University graduates are well suited.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For a life-applicable and industry-transforming education, it is recommended that:

War Against Indiscipline (WAI) be launched

This is intended to inculcate in the educational and social lives, moral values, which are currently lacking in the country as a whole. The spate of cultism, examination malpractices and politically motivated assassination are clear indications that parents and the education system of the country have failed.

WAI can be implemented in phases such as:

Phase I – Queue

Phase II – Probity and Accountability (Anti-Corruption)

Phase III – Patriotism and Nationalism

etc

This is intended to change the mindset of all and sundry towards orderliness in public places, transparency in business transactions and respect for the constitution. Presently, this is lacking in the country and there cannot be any meaningful development in a system that is devoid of probity, transparency, accountability, orderliness and respect for the rule of law. Oditia (2006) put the total amount lost to corruption in 40 years at N4.8 Trillion.

Energy sector be revamped

Multinational industries are relocating their offices to other countries where it is less expensive to operate. Faloseyi (2006) reported that 17 companies folded up within two months. Similarly, in the same year, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), a body that is responsible for the registration of companies in Nigeria de-registered 400,000 companies on accounts of non-performance.

Most companies in Nigeria operate purely on generating set which has a resultant effect on the cost of production. Asuelimen (2007) described as shameful that countries like Ghana, Sierra-Leone, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire and Malawi that are less-endowed than Nigeria enjoy uninterrupted supply of electricity.

Therefore, if the needed infra-structure for industries to operate are absent the consequences on the education system would be grievous because of unemployment and absence of the required interaction between the industry and the academia.

There be partnership between the academia and the industry

There is need for a closer tie between the educational institutions particularly the technical/vocational education and the industry. The fact that everything in the country is imported from abroad is a pointer to the fact that there exists a wide gulf between what is taught in schools and what is obtainable in practice.

Therefore, the partnership between the academia and the industry is intended to expose students during industrial training (IT) to the production system and to make the industry participate in the curriculum design of institutions. Thus, through Reverse Engineering, graduates can be empowered to go into small and medium scale enterprises to produce the likes of toys, calculators, radio, bicycle, motor cycle, stapler, tooth-pick, etc. all of which are currently imported abroad.

Education be more Funded

Rather than merging the technical/educational schools and Universities together, government should invest more in the two by increasing the capacity to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the populace. The budgetary allocation is infinitesimally small and below UNESCO's recommendation.

Presently, with the external reserves that is above \$40 billion and the excess on crude oil above \$40 billion, that the country has no electricity to drive the economy, cannot create jobs but rather, laying off staff, that education is underfunded is a clear indication of lack of foresight and plan for the nation. Muriana (2007) reported the comments of the renowned economist (Prof. Sam Aluko), who described the foreign reserves as redundant funds, that add no value to the populace. Such funds can be put to productive use to revamp the economy.

Similarly, there should be improved conditions of service to attract and retain best hands within and abroad to develop this sector of the economy.

Non-technical courses be moved to the university.

Admissions into non-technical programs of the polytechnics and colleges of technology should be stopped forthwith and the students be encouraged to compete for placements in the Universities. There is nothing technical in management science courses and should not be awarded in the technical/vocational institutions. Thus, the quality of the graduates would not be of high quality as the university produced graduates. This was obviously responsible for the disparity between them.

CONCLUSION

From the education systems of some of the developed and developing nations assessed, it is glaring that vocational and technical education occupy a pride of place and hence its effect on the socio-political and economic transformation of such countries. Similarly, their education system is structured to suit the immediate needs of the populace, with government playing a major role by providing funds and access.

The proposed merger of the two education systems by government would lead to increased number of students (350%) without a commensurate increase in manpower and equipment needs, which may further lower the academic standard of Nigerian University. Furthermore, the disparity between the two classes of graduate are pronounced because they

pursue the same job specifications after graduation and the HND holders do not have the opportunity to further their education. These obstacles have been addressed by the proposed system discussed in this paper: The system the country needs now is such that would change the nation from import-dependent to export-oriented economy.

Therefore, with improved funding, partnership between the industry and the academia, changing the mindset of the populace through WAI and specialization of the higher institutions in their areas of strength the nation would be better for it. Then the nation can be said to be in the business of producing future leaders and not miscreants. The National Open Universities of Nigeria, if well-funded and technology-driven has the capability of improving access to university education as witnessed in the developed world.

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