

# Functional Education: The Propeller for National Development

Nwaelele Okezie, PhD

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,  
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**ABSTRACT:** Functional education is seen as a catalyst for socio-economic and political development of any society. Education enhances the development of the human intelligent and abilities through its formal and informal settings that results to better knowledge acquisition, values, altitudinal change and skilled oriented activities. The paper sees functional education as the only measure and propeller to National development. The success of many nations depend on the ability of the system of education to function as a change agent that results to better outcome or products. The work which adopted a historical research method had its data from the primary and secondary sources. The paper identified inadequate funding and the use of non-professionals as the major factors affecting the implementation of educational policies. Based on the findings the paper recommended among other things that institutions should be practical-oriented in using appropriate instructional materials, teaching methods and physical infrastructures to facilitate teaching and learning activities.

**KEYWORD:** Functional, education, propeller, national, development.

## Introduction

Education which is the super-structure upon which every form of development stands, is a critical tool and a means of survival of any society. Thus, many countries of the world see education as a good investment for national economic growth. Functional education is more encompassing meaningful and most desirable system of education. This is because it is the type of education that equips the recipient with the knowledge and skills needed for the performance of productive task. This system helps the societies to meet their developmental needs. Ahiakwor (2007) defines functional education as a system of education for which there is an anticipated application, which thus assumes that the learner has immediate meaning, transferable into action of his learning activities.

Cookey as cited in (Iman, 2012) sees functional education as the education in which the ability to perform productive task is more emphasized than that education that aims at acquiring certificate only. Functional education emphasizes practice (practical) more than theory. Cookey posits further that the Nigeria education has not been functional because much attention has been paid on the theoretical and academic knowledge. This created undue emphasis on the possession of certificate instead of what one can do.

Okoli (2011) states that Nigeria education is geared towards preparing candidates for examinations. Through this method, the products acquired knowledge and facts with real understanding and without any tangible skill. The result of the functional system of education is that school turn out graduates with useful knowledge and skills for effective economic development in the society.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem emanates from the fact that it has been observed the years that the system of education practiced failed to provide employment for the people, certificate became the order of the day; the question is instead of what one can do to solve the problem of the society. This paper primarily focused on how functional education serve as a propeller to national development.

## Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used to development extent at which functional education serve as a propeller to national development in Nigeria

## Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on the functional context theory in education as propounded by Thomas Sticht in 1975. Thomas sees education as something that is worthwhile, bring a positive change, identify the problems of the society and proffer solution to those problems, thereby making a man to feel better in his environment. Moreso, the input in educational system should provide adequate needs of the society. On the reviews of relevant literatures, it has been observed that the system of a country's education determines the nature and growth of the society, on this note, if an educational system is functional, the society will develop.

## Functional Education

Functional education is generally accepted as the foundation or the principal agent of transformation towards a sustainable development, a potential that increases people's capacities to change views, aspirations, economy, technology and even the culture of a society into reality. It emphasizes the current and practical system of education towards the development of international organizations and institutions covering politics, culture and religion (Okoli, 2011). Functional education is a system of education where there is adequate staffing, provision of facilities, infrastructure and a conducive learning environment.

Education is functional when it has the ability to solve the problem of individuals within the society and enhance the quality of productivity by increasing opportunities for every individual to participate positively in the development of the society.

Functional education provides a lasting solution to the peril of youth respectively and create a good relationship between the educational sector and the society. It is in recognition of the importance of education to the development of the society, the determination of the intellectual and social outlook of the society that the functionality of education becomes a serious issue in the society.

However, in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, education has a lot to ensure national development. Therefore for a smooth interaction in the society, the philosophy of Nigeria education is based on the development of individuals into a sound and effective citizen. (FRN, 2004).

According to Osokoya (2008) functional education is a propeller to National development as it creates opportunity for every citizen to contribute positively towards economic development. A functional education is examined as a body of action to induce learning and probing the nature of what one is learning (exploration) and thinking about one's learning process (reflection). The functional education is therefore, the transformation of society through education which is seen as a power, energizer and a light to developing Nations like Nigeria. Besides, Functional education is a concept of acquisition and developing taught variable (long life skills) in order to produce new behavior for life activities. It is a system of education which makes the holder to be useful, to self, society and contribute to the development of any society.

Functional education is designed to work in accordance with the principles or educational policies for the development of abilities, understanding, attitude, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by a worker to enter and make a useful and productive basis in the society. Ogbondah and Wobi, (2014) in every society, the main objective of education is to raise the standard of living or general wellbeing of the people to enable majority of the people to feel the advantages of educational system been functional by making efforts to develop industrially, economically, socially, politically, technologically, and any type of developmental effort.

### **Principles of Functional Education**

1. One should not place much interest on exams that are but a burden on the memory instead, one has to introduce an “achievement summary” that were achieved during the school year. The teacher has to use diagnostics and test in order to check his own teaching method and to summarize the achievements of the students.
2. The educator should get to know properly the child’s interest and the changes that he undergoes as he grows up physically and emotionally; hence the teacher should adopt his teaching to the natural growth of the child.
3. One has to put the study in the center of the curriculum that will no-longer or mace according to the principles exterior to the child (Nwagwu, 2011). The functional education is based on the natural needs of the child to enquire, to know, to observe and to work, and especially to play or strives to arouse in the child spiritual longing, like the love of good and work that will not come by force rather in a free atmosphere and is a suitable living condition. For this purpose, the school should create a lively and happy environment, where the child will act enthusiastically.
4. The system of education should be goal oriented. The subject matter should be considered according to the importance in the life of the child as it will help in solving the problem of the child and the society. The subject matter should be able to shape the child mentally, socially, environmentally, politically and provide the child with a long lasting skill that will help him to stand self in the society after school, (Ogbondah & Wobi, 2014).

### **Strategies for Improving Functionality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

First of all, it is clear from the analysis that functional education to a very high extent can equip students with creative ideals and innovative capabilities to perform maximally in productive task (Ahiakwo, 2007) this finding conforms to the assertions of many authors who claimed that implementation of functional education can help in equipping recipients with the knowledge and skills to engage in productive tasks (Musa, 2007). Accordingly, a graduate of any institution should be able to contribute positively towards the development of the nation after his school days. This is possible if the school engaged such in a meaningful task, making ones activity to be task oriented and more practical in nature.

It is very important, that the aspect of technical education be made attractive in all higher institution of learning, (Duke, 2006). This will encourage every student to have one skill or the other before graduating from any high institution.

### **The Features of Functional Education**

1. It has to be system of education that is creative in nature.
2. Proper funding and supervision.
3. Self-directed team work.

4. Good learning environment.
5. Solution focus-learning.
6. Adequate staffing and facilities (Akumah, 2002).

### Advantages of Functional Education

1. Functional education builds assets for failure. For instance, the Chinese government is doing well today due to functional system of education adopted years back.
2. Becoming more responsive to people's needs, re-organization, integration and development.
3. Functional education is an improvement which creates additional innovations, encourage the spirit of creativity and productivity in acts of governance, politics, religion and economy.
4. Systematic thinking: This helps in finding answers to the problem(s) of the society. The answers to questions are achievable through functional education (Okoli, 2014).
5. Provision of the needed manpower. This is one of the major economic advantages of functional education. This helps the society to reduce poverty among the people by enabling them to employ effective tools of production.
6. Akumah (2002) asserts that functional education constitute the ultimate basics for the wealth of the Nation's capital and natural resources.
7. It aids the realization of goals of education. The place of functional education helps to motivate and sustain students' interest and as a result, has the ability to make school activities meaningful and attractive.
8. Reduction in migration. When education in functional, it helps to curb rural-urban drifts. The movement of people from one city to another, country to another. Many Nigerians are running to Ghana for education because our educational system is not functional.

### Problems of Functional Education in Nigeria

- 1. The mania for certificate:** (Okoli, 2014), so many Nigerians go to school to acquire certificate, without acquiring knowledge, the rush for cheap certificate is a problem which is affecting the growth of education in our country. Okoli (2014) our institution of learning have been producing possessors of certificate and not possessors of knowledge and skills.
- 2. Poor funding:** This is one of the major problems affecting functional education in Nigeria. The amount of money allocated to education is too poor. (Ogbondah & Wobi, 2014) for education to be functional and encourage development, there must be adequate funding in order to provide the required facilities, good management, proper staffing, and payment of the staff. Our system of education has suffered a lot in the hands of our leaders who mismanaged the funds meant for the development of education in our country. Education as the super structure upon which development stands should be given much attention as regards to the allocation of resources but the reverse has become the case in our country.
- 3. Poor management:** Nigeria had in recent years been facing so many problems created by poor management of resources. The little fund allocated to education are not used adequately. Most of our leaders divert the funds to their private pocket, thereby causing more harm than good to make education functional.
- 4. High level of corruption in our society:** It is believed that in a society where there is high level of corruption, indiscipline and social vices, the level of development will be reduced. High level of corruption and low enthusiasm for honesty, patriotism, exemplary leaders, truth and moral integrity have combine to

cause low quality of education. The scarcity of skilled manpower in the country is as a result of corruption which hinders functional education.

**5. Increase dependency on other countries for survival:** Most Nigerians do not value the quality of materials made in our country. The people of Nigeria prefer graduates from other countries to Nigerian graduates. Every average Nigerian want to attend schools in Ghana, USA, Canada, etc. increasing the economy and educational system of the countries mentioned above, instead of schooling right here in Nigeria.

**6. Inadequate workshops and laboratories:** Most of the workshops in our institution are not well-equipped. This affects education.

## Conclusion

Functional education in the totality of educational experience which majority centered on the identification of situational problem; gather information to make decision in a world of challenge and realities of life, assisting the users to acquire skills and attitudes to manifest new concepts as roadmap for meaningful coexistence and sustainability and development. Every nation developed or developing requires high quality education for the former to maintain what they have and for the latter to reach where the former has reached. Functional education is the key to National development and the custodians of this key are the teachers (Ogbondah & Wobi, 2014).

However, there is the need for mere entrants into the study of science and technology and only a highly qualitative learning can produce candidates with acceptable standard of performances.

There is the need to give adequate preparation to university potentials and assist the people to benefit from education. It is with the tremendous power of functional education that Nigeria can achieve her hopes and aspirations. It is only an educational system that is functional can be used to meet the need of the people.

Nigeria must therefore, use all the resource within her command to ensure that the present problems in our society be turned using functional system of education.

## Recommendations

Functional education, which is the main instrument for national development can be achieved if the following essential requirements for quality education are provided:

1. There should be responsible, patriotic and experienced leaders at the national, state and local government levels.
2. Cultivate world standard in delivering education to the people.
3. Provision of functional education which is equivalent, and qualitative for enrichment and comprehensiveness in tense of education.
4. Proper funding of the educational sector.
5. Adequate provision of infrastructure and facilities.
6. Competent, well-qualified and experienced educational administrators should be employed to manage the educational system.
7. Adequate number of well-qualified teachers.
8. Renovation and provision of adequate materials needed for functional technical schools in Nigeria.
9. Provision of educational facilities that must be of good quality and up-to-date.



10. There should be an adaptation to indigenous cultural and technological system of education.
11. Serious monitoring to schools and proper security of the materials provided should be made.

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