Comparative Analysis Between Nigeria And Malaysia Education Policies And Employability Skills In TVET Curriculum

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A b s t r a c t

Nigeria and Malaysia have almost similar historical background; both had sultan as spiritual and government leader in their major areas, colonized by British and got independence in 1960 and 1957 respectively. Presently, Malaysia has recorded human development increments from 1980 to date and aspire to be a developed country in 2020. While Nigeria has recorded poverty increments from 1980 to date and it may likely be among underdeveloped countries in 2020. The purpose of this study was to make judgments about Technical and Vocational Education and training (TVET) systems of Malaysia and Nigeria. The idea was to see what makes Malaysian system successful and how Nigeria addressed its TVET problems. The methodology employed in this paper was analytical method of study that involved evaluation based on critical reading and review of materials which include Nigeria and Malaysia education philosophies, policies, TVET curriculums, employability skills, Malaysian Human Development Index and Nigeria’s Poverty Incidence. Findings revealed that education philosophy and education policy of Malaysia is intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced based on firm belief and devotion to God while Nigerian education philosophy and policy are limited to intellectual and physical development. Malaysia TVET curriculum is equipped with employability skills including core skills, generic skills and personal attributes which are likely contributed to Malaysian human development and full employment of TVET graduates. Malaysia has recorded increments in human and economic developments from 1980 to date while Nigeria TVET curriculum has not been integrated with employability skills which are likely contributed to Nigeria’s poverty incidence and high Nigerian unemployment rate across all educational levels including TVET graduates at both secondary and tertiary levels. Nigeria has recorded steady increase of poverty incidence from 1980 to date.

Keywords: Education Policy, Education Philosophy, Technical Vocational Education And Training, Curriculum, Employability Skills

INTRODUCTION

Comparative studies on educational matters, problems and achievements are essential and important for the development of all countries in the world because the studies enable the researcher to conduct cross national analysis and evaluation; makes the researcher more global; provide worldwide interconnectedness in contemporary educational issues, problems and developments; enable all researchers in all countries to have equal access of study and make countries to learn the experiences of others thereby making the world to be borderless (1). It is essential for underdeveloped countries to learn from the developed countries when the underdeveloped countries want to establish their own TVET system, because of their mature experiences and long historical development in technology for over 100 years ago. However, each country has its own national circumstances, therefore, the underdeveloped countries should adopt the experiences of the developed countries, use them and fit them in their own circumstances (2). The researchers choose to analyze Nigeria philosophy and policy of education, the employability skills in the Nigeria TVET curriculum and economic developments in relations with Malaysia philosophy and policy of education, the employability skills in the Malaysia TVET curriculum and and economic developments because both Malaysia and Nigeria were colonized by Britain and received similar liberal education. They had similar Islamic education system in pandok and Allo (Quranic Slate) School prior to British Education System. More than 60% of their populations are Muslims and both Malaysia and Nigeria major areas were administered by sultans who were the spiritual and government leaders (3, 4).

METHODOLOGY

According to Phillips (2006), there are four methods for the study of comparative education, which include descriptive, evaluative, exploratory and analytical methods. These four methods are explained in Table 1.

Table 1: Methods of Study of Comparative Education

Methods of the Research | Definitions of the Research Methods | Purpose of the Research Methods
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Descriptive Method | Descriptive method is a technique that uses statistical data of countries education to explain educational phenomena. | Description of educational phenomena, conditions, and relations between variables.
Evaluative Method | Evaluative method is a technique that uses statistical data of countries education to explain educational phenomena. | Interpretations of educational phenomena.
countries education for decision making including merit and value judgment of any given program. Exploration of educational relationships and functions with the potential for in-depth research consisting of new hypotheses or questions generating.

Analytical Method is a method that compare the countries education and their social and economic development Description and consequences of cause and effect relations.

ANALYTICAL METHOD OF STUDY OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

In this study, analytical method of study was selected and used in this research because descriptive data of Nigeria and Malaysia education philosophies, policies, TVET curriculums and employability skills were collected. In addition, economic statistics of Nigeria and Malaysian were interpreted to understand their similarities and differences. The standard of comparison in this study was made based on the UNESCO and World Bank standards which stated that income growth alleviate poverty from a country, in other words income growth brings development to a country (6, 7). Education was emerged as the most statistically significant contributor to poverty alleviation for 40 developing countries from 1999 to 2007 (8) which enhance earning ability of people and help to alleviate poverty (9). TVET is integral part of general education which prepare people for the world of work and enhances their employability (10). Which means acquisition of sound TVET may likely contributes to human developments of a country while failure in TVET may likely contribute to poverty incidence of a country.

ANALYSIS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND NIGERIA

In this section, the descriptive data of Nigeria and Malaysia education philosophies, policies, TVET curriculums and employability skills as well as economic statistics of Nigeria and Malaysia were studied and interpreted to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

Comparative Analysis Between Malaysia And Nigeria Education Philosophies And TVET Policies

The National Philosophy on Education Malaysia (NPEM) was formulated in 1987 as stated by (4):

"Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal wellbeing as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation at large."

The main aims of National Philosophy on Education Malaysia were to produce good men. The philosophy describes good man as one who possesses strong belief; obedient, knowledgeable, living skills like TVET; high moral standard, responsible to his self, society and the country, contribute to the acceptable life of society and the country and have stable and balanced character.

These aims were reflected in Sixth Malaysia Development Plan which stated that development of human resources will be the thrust of the training and education. It stressed further the expansion of training and education not only on knowledge and skills acquisitions but also on strong ethical and moral values. This was initiated in the Fifth Malaysia Development Plan which stated that the major goal of training and education was the promotion of national unity of the country (4) which means strong ethical and moral values may likely promote national unity and development.

The current Malaysia policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) states that

Skills Malaysia aspires to raise public awareness and perception in the significance of skills training to enhance quality of the Malaysian workforce. Efforts to standardize the quality of training through rigorous participation of industries to overcome the duplication of training and certification activities and to intensify promotion of skills training will be undertaken to lift the competency level of the workforce to a higher level of performance and productivity (Prime Minister of Malaysia, January 2011 cited in (11)).

This statement of the Prime Minister marked the implementation of the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). The 10th MP was aimed at developing and retaining not only Malaysian but also first world talent base through integrated human capital and talent development framework for Malaysia. Three main strategies were adopted to achieve the plan for revamping education system to significantly raise students’ outcomes, ‘raising the skills to increase employability and reforming labour market to transform Malaysia into a high income nation (11).

Nigeria philosophy of education was changed from British education philosophy of intellectualism which emphasized on thinking and knowing to American comprehensive philosophy of pragmatism which emphasized on thinking and doing in June, 1973 (3). Nigeria made the following purposes of education as the national policy to be achieved through education: The development of each individual into effective citizen for development of the nation; The full integration of citizens into national development; Every Nigeria citizen shall have equal educational opportunities at primary, secondary and tertiary levels both in formal and non-formal school system and Comprehensive functional education relevant to Nigeria which contained practical and theory is highly needed (12).

The current national policy on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) from the Nigeria’s policy on education are to produce trained man power at craft, advance craft and technical levels in applied sciences, businesses and technologies; to provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development poverty alleviation and give training and impact necessary skills to citizens who shall be responsible and self-reliant economically (12).

When the above goals are achieved according to FGN (2004), the trainees that completed the technical college programs have three options: secured employment in private or government organizations; set up their own business, become self-reliant and employ others and pursue further education in advance craft or technical programs in polytechnics, colleges of education (technical) and Universities of technology.

In comparisons to Malaysian educational philosophy and policy, the Nigerian philosophy and policy of education lack clear vision because of the following observations:

- It is observed from the policy that the end goals of TVET in Nigeria is to make money through paid employment, self-employment and make more money through higher education
- It is observed that the policy lack concern to spirit. According to (13), there is no genuine search for knowledge without spirit. This is because peoples of the same religion are connected spiritually and morally while peoples of different religions are connected morally only. The morality is the backbone of unity and developments of all nations.
- It is also observed that no research skills written in the Nigeria Policy on Education. Therefore, no new creative and innovations Nigeria is needed from its education system.
Hence, the productions of graduates who are consumers and followers not producers and leaders were guaranteed by the National Policy on Education of Nigeria.

- It is also observed that the Nigerian Policy on Education has strong emphasis on cognitive domains and psychomotor domains but less emphasis on affective domains. Thus, Nigeria wants to produce competent labourers at both sub-professional and professional levels and not knowledgeable, competent and disciplined leaders who can take right action always.

Comparative Analysis Of Employability Skills In TVET Curriculum And Economic Consequences Between Malaysia And Nigeria

Employability skills are set of skills, knowledge and attributes that make individual likely to gain, maintain, obtain new employment if required and move between roles within the same organization (14, 15). There are three types of employability skills including core skills, generic skills and personal attributes. Core skills are technical competencies that comprise specific knowledge and capabilities to perform related specialized tasks with the use of equipment and tools efficiently (16, 17). Generic skills are soft skills competencies that help individual to obtain positive social relationships and contributes to the work environment (18, 19). Personal attributes are good attitudes and traits of an individual that are used to get, maintain and succeed in employment (20).

The curriculum designers in Malaysia considered three types of employability skills to reform the education curriculum in the country as follows: Schools must produce not only skilled and knowledgeable but disciplined, honest and dedicated workers; Schools must produce not only efficient workers but also be able to think and act morally and ethically. A rigid division of vocational curriculum in technical schools with academic social sciences was criticized. Hence science and technical students should be exposed to art and humanity and vice versa (4) as explained in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Analysis of Employability Skills in TVET Curriculum of Malaysia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Years Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years Lower Secondary School Under KBSM</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years Upper Secondary School or Technical Colleges Under KBSM</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Years Tertiary Institutions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: (21)

Table 2 indicates that the TVET curriculum in Malaysia has been incorporated with employability skills including core skills (the production of skilled workers), generic skills (knowledgeable and efficient workers in social sciences) and personality attributes (disciplined, honest and dedicated workers who can think morally and ethically). Malaysian graduates’ unemployment rate as at November, 2014 was 3.2%. In addition 46% of jobs vacancies required TVET graduates while only 22% job vacancies need universities qualification in Malaysia presently (11). Although there is no empirical analysis to support this axiom but observations of the National Philosophy, National policy on Education Malaysia and the TVET curriculum derived from it may likely contributed to the graduates’ employability and the development of life of Malaysian citizen from 1980 to 2012 as explained by UNDP Human Development Report in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Trends in Malaysia’s Human Development Index From 1980-2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: (21)

Table 3 reveals that the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita using 2005 Purchasing Power Parity (2005 PPP) of a Malaysian citizen has improved from $4,692 in 1980 to $13,676 in 2012. The life expectancy at birth, expected year of schooling and means of year of schooling of Malaysian citizens are developing from 67.4 to 74.5 years, 9 to 12.6 years and 4.4 to 9.5 years respectively from 1980 to 2012. Generally, Human Development Index Values has shown wonderful linear development from 0.563 in 1980 to 0.678 in 1995 and finally to 0.769 in 2012.

In comparisons with Malaysia, the TVET curriculum derived from the policy on education, Nigeria is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Analysis of Employability Skills in TVET Curriculum of Nigeria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Years Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years Junior Secondary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Years Senior Secondary School or Technical Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Years Tertiary Institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (22)
Table 4 indicates that there is rigid division between vocational curriculum in technical schools with academic social sciences and vice versa in Nigeria. So the TVET institutions produce skilled but not knowledgeable graduates in generic skills. The personality attributes and traits as moral and spiritual components were taught in one religious subject in primary, secondary and technical colleges which is presently optional for students at these levels. No personal attributes (moral or spiritual) course is taught in TVET departments at Polytechnics, Colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities of Technology in Nigeria except in the department of religious studies (22). To Aristotle, the purpose of education is to discover what is good for people (23).

Table 4 indicates that all Nigerian graduates at Primary and Secondary levels are TVET graduates because of the inclusion of TVET as core subject at these educational levels while skills are trained in schools and six month students’ industrial work for Polytechnics students and one year for university students. Communication and computational skills were compulsory while personal attitudes and traits were optional skills.

It is shows that TVET curriculum in Nigeria has not been incorporated with employability skills. This observation was supported by Oresanya et al., 2014 and Idris and Rajuddin, 2012 who earlier found that employability skills including core skills, generic skills and personality attributes were not integrated in Nigerian education and recommended for the integration of the skills in TVET institutions. As such,

- Schools produce only skilled but not knowledgeable, disciplined, honest and dedicated workers.
- Schools produce only efficient workers who cannot think and act morally and ethically.
- There is rigid division of vocational curriculum in technical schools with academic social sciences. Hence science and technical students are not exposed to art and humanity and vice versa.

Nigerian unemployment rate as at 2013 was 55.8% (24) and the graduates’ unemployment rate (24.6%) was the highest among all educational levels (25).

Although there is no empirical analysis to support this axiom but observations of the Nigerian National Philosophy on Education, National Policy on Education and the TVET curriculum derived from it may likely contributed to the graduates’ unemployment and the poverty incidence in Nigeria from 1980 to 2014 as explained in Table 5.

Table 5: Poverty Incidence of Nigerian Population from 1980-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Incidence in Millions of Poor Citizens in Nigeria</th>
<th>Percentage of Nigerian Citizens in Poverty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Nigerian Citizens</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millions of Poor Citizens</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Poor Citizens</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that the number of Nigerian citizens in poverty increases with the increase of total population of the country even though the percentage of the citizens in poverty in 1985 (43.6%) was higher than in 1992 (42.7%) where the actual number of the citizens in poverty in 1985 was 34.73 million which increased to 39.2 million in 1992. In 1980, the statistics describes that out of 65 million of Nigerian population 17.1 million (27%) were in poverty. The number increased in 2014 where out of 178.9 million population, 125.4 million (76.2%) were in poverty. It appeared that poverty has not reduced from 1980 to 2014 (25-28).

The poverty in Nigeria has indeed assumed a crisis dimension. Records from the National Bureau of statistics show that 69% of Nigerians in 2010 which was projected to 76.2% by the (27) and (29) live below the poverty line. The data further reveal that only 50% of the population gain access to safe drinking water, while 38% cannot benefit themselves of primary health care. It is estimated that about 76.2% of Nigerians consume less than 1/3 of the minimum protein and vitamin intake due to low purchasing power. This statistics shows the very depth of poverty in Nigeria.

It also shows that poverty has not reduced in Nigeria after 30 years. The technical and vocational education established 30 years ago is expected to reduced or totally eradicate poverty from the Nigerian citizens (12). It appeared that poverty has not reduced in Nigeria from 1980 to date and will likely increase in future (28).

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implications of these findings include the reexamination of Nigeria education philosophy and policy, and Nigeria should integrate employability skills in TVET curriculum for graduate employments and poverty alleviation. It is recommended that Nigeria philosophy and policy of education should be intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced based on firm belief and devotion to God to produce not only skilled and knowledgeable but disciplined, honest and dedicated workers; to produce not only efficient workers but also be able to think and act morally and ethically. Nigeria TVET curriculum should be equipped with employability skills including core skills, generic skills and personal attributes. Rigid division of vocational curriculum in technical schools with academic social sciences should be abolished to expose science and technical students to art and humanity and vice versa.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that education philosophy and education policy of Malaysia is intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced based on firm belief and devotion to God while Nigerian education philosophy and policy are limited to intellectual and physical development (4, 12). Malaysia TVET curriculum is equipped with employability skills including core skills, generic skills and personal attributes which are likely contributed to Malaysian human development and full employment of TVET graduates (4, 11). Malaysia has recorded increments in human and economic developments from 1980 to date (21) while Nigeria TVET curriculum has not been integrated with employability skills which are likely contributed to Nigeria’s poverty incidence and high Nigerian unemployment rate across all educational levels including TVET graduates at both secondary and tertiary levels (10, 22). Nigeria has recorded steady increase of poverty incidence from 1980 to date (25, 27).

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