

## Functional Education: An Impetus for Creative Thinking and Sustainable Development of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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**Abstract.** The paper examined the issues in functional education as an impetus for creative thinking and sustainable development of Nigerian tertiary institutions. The paper further explained the concepts of functional education, creative thinking and sustainable development of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, since functional education is essential for creative thinking and sustainable development of Nigerian tertiary institutions the methods of integrative thinking into tertiary institutions programmes and problems militating against effective functional education are also identified. It was therefore concluded that for sustainable national development of Nigerian tertiary institutions, functional educational approach such as curriculum diversification, manipulative skills, should be used through questioning and activity and child-centeredness' oriented methods should be used in the schools system. Suggestions were preferred for the effective functional education practices to be used in order to enhance creative thinking for a sustainable development of Nigerian tertiary institution.

**Keywords:** Functional education, creative thinking, sustainable development and Nigerian tertiary institutions.

### 1. Introduction

Education is an instrument for effective social transformation and National development any nation that toys with educational provision for her citizen can never be ranked high among the development nations of the world. It should be

noted that Nigerian educational system had been looked down upon because of her inability to produce the expected products. Despite efforts of the three tiers of government in a bid to produce quality products for her national economy, there is high rate of people in the labour markets seeking for white collar job. The high rate of unemployment and under-utilization of the abundant resources in the country Nigeria is due to the faulty nature of the education provided for the Nigeria citizens. Ogundele (2008) noted that the educational provision for the Nigerian citizens are faulty because of over dependency on the paper qualification, low practical orientation and culturally bias. The problems however, enable the educational provision to the citizens not to produce societal expected products.

Now wonder that in Nigeria today, there are so many mechanical engineers who could not repair their personal cars, have baked medical doctors have killed many innocent people, unqualified teachers in the schools had ruined the life of innocent children. Many so called architects could not build single bedroom flat of their own unless they call on the road side mechanics and many political scientist trained in Nigeria universities landed in the helm of electoral malpractices by putting the country into national confusion and anarchy. The problem however emanated from the fact that the educational provision lack functional orientation rather they are characterized by theoretical in nature and poor orientation to technological, practical and non-functional approach. However for, Nigeria education to be

highly respected if creative thinking must be integrated through provision of functional education. It should therefore be noted that functional education enable individual to have creative thinking for a sustainable development of the tertiary institutions especially in Nigeria.

## 2. Concepts of Functional Education and Creative Thinking

Functional education is the methods of integrating practical activities to the educational system which will enable the students to perform the practical aspect of learning on their which in turn bring about creative thinking and mindset in the students. Enoh (1992) defined function education as kind of education in which the ability to perform tasks in more emphasized than knowing withstand the ability to person by oneself. The another cited example of the fact that the students does not only know certain abstract concepts they should be able to use the directions to develop or perform the concepts in a practical manners. It should be noted that everybody that is trained to perform certain tasks or skills such skill will be developed and encourage individual to use such skills to be creative using local resources in the future. With the skills acquired through functional education will therefore encourage job creations rather than job seekers. Functional education provided will raise the integrity of education to the highest level.

Creative thinking and mindset on the other hand is the ability of the students to make use of the knowledge acquired during teaching-learning process to develop or create certain materials that will be beneficial to the needs of the society. However, if sustainable development of any society is to be enhanced and the sustainable goals of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria are to be achieved, there is need to integrate functional education that will develop creative thinking in the mind of the tertiary institution students in Nigeria. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) stated aims of tertiary institutions as to develop and train the middle manpower personnel that will be relevant to develop the available resources to create needed materials for the members of the society. Functional education therefore becomes an impetus for the creative

thinking for sustainable goals achievement of Nigerian tertiary institutions.

## 3. Functional Education for Developing Creative Thinking in Nigerian Tertiary Institution Students

The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria demands the intervention of functional education that will aid creative thinking among Nigeria tertiary institution students. The integration of functional education will aid sustainable goals achievement of Nigerian tertiary institution. However, the following are the methods of integrating education for developing creative thinking in tertiary institutions.

**Teaching-learning process should be on activity oriented:** the lecturers should introduce series of activities that will encourage do it yourself critical thinking and creative thinking. The teachers should make use of questioning methods, assignment, field trip, characterization demonstration methods and all those activities that will allow the students to perform certain skills on their own both in the school or from homes. The activities orientation during the teaching-learning processes will aid creative thinking and the certificate acquired will be acquired with high respect. Awoniyi (2008).

**Encouraging entrepreneurial skills acquisition:** in order to develop creative thinking among Nigeria tertiary institution students, every student should be enforced to acquire certain skills of their choice before a tertiary education certificate could be awarded. For instance before the end of the course, every student should be sent out to go and learn certain skills of their choice the skills acquired and functionally practice will be partial requirement for the award of higher educational certificate. The practice will therefore aid creative mindset among Nigerian youth Ogundele (2013) school environmental resources utilization for developing local products: since school environment are endowed with various environmental resources such as relief, soil, climate, drainage and vegetation. The teachers can integrate functional education to develop creative thinking in agricultural products, furniture making, fishery, poetry, chalk, soap, textile, dye etc. can be integrated into the school

programme to extent that the students will develop job seeking will be a thing of the past and the sustainable goals of the tertiary will be achieved especially in Nigeria.

**Curriculum diversification:** to develop functional for creative thinking and mindset for sustainable goal achievement of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, there is the need for curriculum diversification. The curriculum to be implemented should be flexible so that all the curriculum activities should be tailored towards creative thinking development. The flexibility of the curriculum will enable individual to acquire more than one skill and be able to strike to one at the later years.

**Strategic Planning Process should be based on the Societal Needs:** teaching-learning process should be closely related to immediate situation and experience in the society. In order to integrate functional education for developing creative thinking among the tertiary institutions, situational approach should be taken into consideration. The teaching-learning activities should be conducted wherever the certain behaviours or skills to be learnt will be relevant to the students. For instance it will be appreciated if irrigation farming skills are taught practically during the dry season, animal husbandry is taught close to the Eid'el Kabir anniversary poultry farming close to Christmas celebration. Farming is best practiced during the rainy seasons.

Functional education is geared towards vocational development, creativity, character development and culturally appreciated. Any teaching-learning process that divides the above mentioned, such education cannot be respected in the society. No wonder, that Adeyemo (1998) that any educated person that does not have respect for the cultural value of his society is not worthy to be called educated man but rather stark illiterate. Therefore to enhance creative thinking in the school system, functional education must be adequately integrated into the school programme.

**Positive Use of Social Media should be introduced:** functional education can also be integrated through the integration social media

usage which can enhance web-design, e-experiment, e-learning, e-jobs, e-skills acquisition etc.

#### **4. Problems Militating Against Functional Education for Creative and Sustainable Goals Achievement of Nigerian Tertiary Institution**

The integration of functional education that can enhance creative thinking is being faced with series of challenges which include:

**Over-dependency on Paper Qualifications and Mere Certificates:** The education of the graduates of tertiary institution is just to bag a particular certificate of their interest without necessarily having practical skills or creativity mindset. A good certificate is believed that it is to will earn them white collar job without any manipulative creative skills. The problem however affects the integrative functional education into Nigerian educational system Ogundele (2016).

**Inadequate instructional facilities:** also, inadequate instructional facilities and equipment that will aid practical orientations towards activity and creativity in the teaching and learning processes Moronfoye and Ogundele (2012).

**Truncated School Calendars in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions:** The truncated school calendars are caused by incessant strikes and institutional crises. However the instable school calendars discouraged the teachers to introduce functional educations and creativity to the teaching in the tertiary institution.

**Inadequate funding:** for a sustainable, development and creative thinking to be embraced in the policy implementation in Nigerian tertiary institutions, huge amount of money should be made available at disposal. Kolawole (2005) noted the functional education required capital and recurrent expenditures capital expenditure according to Durosaro (2000) is the expenditure patterns made to the provisions of the capital projects like building equipment, transportation, instruction Medias, and every resources that could aid functional educational and creative thinking in the school

system. While the author defined recurrent expenditure as those funds that are expended on the manpower that are used during the teaching-learning process. It should however be noted the manpower need to satisfy with the job if effective functional education and creative thinking are to be embraced in the Nigerian tertiary institution. As Ogundele (2015) stated that a satisfied workers are happy workers. When the teachers' morale is highly enhanced in the schools, the introduction of functional education for the creative thinking and development will not be a problem. Financial expenditure Nigerian education are grossly.

**Inadequate power and energy supply:**

Inadequate power and energy supply constitute a threat to the provision of functional education. Irregular power and energy supply made the use of electronic equipment to be dysfunctional. Unstable electric power supply made the use of electronic gadgets and facilities difficult. Its difficulty made the integration of equipment and electronic media difficult to operate. Jimba and Ogundele (2014) observed that the irregular supply of the power and energy constitute threat for the development of virtual classroom for creativity and critical thinking in Nigerian schools. Also, parental negative attitude to creativity and functional education hampered the integrations.

Parental factors: many parents do not allow the schools to train the children in the necessary skills acquisition. Many parents only encourage the children to be able to read and write and be able to speak English language like parrots. So for a child is able to bag the needed certificate, the future of functional education therefore become an issue of the past by many parents.

**School environmental factors:** Finally, schools environment made the integration for functional education and creative mindset difficult. Many schools are located in an unconducive school environment such as marshy flooded, riverine, forestry areas and the equipment to make use of the school environmental resources are not available for the schools.

**5. Conclusion**

It is an undisputable fact to note that for sustainable goals of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the stakeholders in higher institutions need to explore the various opportunities that will enhance creative thinking in all the instructional activities among students and lecturers. It was however noted that creative mindset can never be acquired without functional education. Functional education is very essential for developing creative thinking in the tertiary institution students that with the development of critical thinking sustainable goals of the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**6. Suggestions**

Based on the problems militating against functional for sustainable goals achievement of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the conclusions made, the following suggestions are proffered:

Diversification use of methodological approach during the teaching-learning processes.

Practical activities and assignment should be used in the institutions. The instructional activities should be practically oriented through improvisation of the instructional materials, do-it-yourself should be encouraged by the teachers and instructors when teaching the students.

Dismantling and reconstruction of readymade or original materials. The students should be encouraged to study the readymade materials and able to reconstruct some using local environmental resources.

Avoidance of paper qualification base on theoretical orientations in the employment markets. Practical test and assignment should be given to the candidates during the employment interview. The approach will enable the students to develop creative thinking while in the schools.

Integrating practical creativity into the National youth service corps and student industrial working experience services. The commandment of the NYSC and SIWES should allow the candidate to go and acquire skills of their interest during the NYSC service years. The efforts will enable the individuals to develop a creative thinking and sustainable goals achievement of the various tertiary education acquired. It will therefore reduce high rate of unemployment among the graduates of the institutions.

Adequate instructional facilities be developed in the tertiary institutions it is important to note that when adequate working equipment and facilities are provided in the schools; creative mind will be encouraged among the lecturers and the students.

Formation of various clubs and association that will creative thinking in the mind of the members such associations and clubs are young farmer clubs, young caterers, dramatic society, tailoring association, young barber clubs. Etc. the clubs and societies in the schools will definitely help in developing creative thinking for sustainable goals achievement of the tertiary institution.

Finally, conditions that will bring about transfer of learning should be explored. The knowledge gained from the skills acquisition in the schools can be transferred from the home life.

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