

UNIVERSITY OF JOS: FORTY YEARS OF HUMAN CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT¹

**Ezekiel Gomos, OFR
Jos Business School**

Protocols.

Permit me to give honour and glory to the Almighty God, our Creator for making it possible for us to be witnesses to this day and to partake in this special occasion marking the 40th anniversary of this great institution.

Attainment of forty years in the life of any institution is a remarkable achievement, a milestone that deserves huge commendation and loud acclamation. Great Josites!! Great Josites!!

I want to thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Hayward Mafuyai, the staff, students and the entire University of Jos community for the privilege of being selected as the Guest Lecturer at this *auspicious* event and to appreciate all of you for finding time to grace the lecture.

This paper has been structured into three sections; with the introduction as Section one. Section two discusses the link between human capital and socio-economic development. In section three, we look at the role of universities in human capital formation and the forty glorious years of human capital development by the University of Jos to Nigeria and by extension, its contributions to global development.

Before I go further, let me make a disclaimer: although I am delivering this paper in a University environment, it is not an academic research paper but a talk, and by someone who did not attend the University of Jos but who has for the past forty years interfaced and interacted with this University so much that when people mistakenly assume that I attended UJ, I simply nod my head*.

¹ Being a paper presented at the Fortieth Anniversary celebration of University of Jos held on 29th July 2015

2.0 HUMAN CAPITAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to Wikipedia, human capital is the stock of knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value.

Human capital has also been defined as a collection of resources— knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom possessed individually and collectively in a population. These resources are the total capacity of the people that represents a form of wealth which can be directed to accomplish the goals of the nation or state or an organisation.

Although Adam Smith had broached the subject of human capital as the useful abilities of all the human beings of a society as far back as the 18th century, it was studies of people like Schultz in the fifties and sixties, who highlighted that investment on human capital was the primary way to raise an individuals' wages, making it more effective when compared to other production inputs such as land, financial capital, and labor force (Woodhall, 2001).

A more fitting definition offered by the OECD states that human capital is the knowledge, skills and competencies embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being.

Drawing from these definitions, we can see an established connection between human capital, represented by the collective attitudes, skills, experience, intelligence, training and abilities of a people and output, performance and productivity.

Thus the term human capital is a recognition that people, in organisations and societies, is an important and essential asset that contributes to the growth and development of such societies, in a similar way as physical assets like machines, land and money.

The notion of 'human capital' became popular in development literature because physical capital alone was not sufficient to bring about long term development. The explanation is that without human capital, human progress would be minimal, as plants, offices, computers, automated equipment, internet systems and all other facilities that any organization may install remain unproductive except for human efforts and direction.

In fact, many economists, based on several research studies from various countries insist that human capital remains the most important factor that stimulates growth and development in the sense that with minimal physical capital, human capital could stimulate or cause substantial progress to happen.

For instance, the World Bank drawing from comparisons of GDP growth (proxy for economic growth) in several countries states that of the three fundamental factors required for fast economic growth; namely natural capital, physical capital and human capital, human capital

has a major share in generating economic growth -contributing 64 per cent (Ajibade Peters, 2011).

Harbison is more emphatic when he categorically stated that: *“Human resource, not physical capital, not income or material resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital; exploit natural resources; build social, economic and political organizations; and carry forward national development”* (Harbison, 1973)

Thus it is the quality and quantity of human capital that determines a nation's growth and development. It is the available human resources that mobilize and galvanize other resources for sociological, political, economic scientific and technological development. (Abdulkareem, 201)

Egbiremolen and Anaduaka, (2014) relying on studies of Nigeria by Sankay, Ismail and Shaari which investigated the impact of human capital development on economic growth in Nigeria during the period 1970 to 2008, revealed that human capital development has a significant impact on Nigeria's economic growth.

Before them, Adelokun (2011) had evaluated the relationship between human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria and using the GDP growth rate of Nigeria as a proxy for economic growth, confirmed the “strong positive relationship between human capital development and economic growth”

2.1 Role of Education

The underlying thrust of this argument is that investment in improving the quality of human capital goes on to generate improvements in productivity and performance which by extension, leads to higher level of output of goods and services in an economy.

Many authors have concluded that the differences in the level of socio-economic development across nations is attributed not so much to natural resources and endowments and the stock of physical capital but to the quality and quantity of human resources (Dauda 2010).

Even the World Bank (1995) agrees that the causal factors responsible for the remarkable performance of the economy of most of the developed and the newly industrializing countries is an impressive commitment to quality human capital formation – **investments in education and innovation and quality of life of their people.**

In other words, investing in human capital development ie the conscious and continuous process of increasing the number of people with **requisite knowledge, education, skills, expertise and experience** in a country, goes a long way to increase that country's economic output.

2.2 How do societies improve the quality of human capital?

The most well-known process by which a nation can increase its quality and quantity of human capital is by investing in education and job skills training, research and innovation.

This position is predicated on several schools of thought built on the theories of human capital, but for the purpose of this discussion; we shall focus our attention on two schools of thought; namely the basic human capital theory and the modernization theory.

First, the basic human capital theory which was made popular by people like Shultz, suggests that education leads to increase in productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills, and therefore any investment in education will increase the stock of human capabilities. It goes on to explain that the provision of education enhances basic literacy, which boosts the productivity of workers. Proponents of this theory further advocate that instruction, which demands logical and analytical reasoning, provides technical and specialized knowledge thereby increasing the marginal productivity of workers in high skill jobs or professions. It sums up that the greater the provision of quality schooling in a society, the greater the potential of increase in national productivity and economic growth.

On the other hand, the modernization theory, says that education transforms an individual's values, beliefs and behavior, and that exposure to institutions of modernization such as schools and mass media inculcate modern values and attitudes like openness to new ideas, independence from traditional beliefs, willingness to plan and growing sense of personal and social efficacy.

According to the modernization theorists, these normative and attitudinal changes lead to the shifting of the individual's relationship with the social structure and the greater the number of people exposed to modernization institutions, the greater the level of individual modernity attained by the society.

It goes on to conclude that once a critical segment of a population changes in this way, the pace of that society's modernization and economic development quickens. Thus, through expansion in education, and by extension, changing individual values, sets in motion the necessary building blocks for a more productive workforce and a more sustained economic growth.

What these two thoughts and other theories seek to advocate is that education is about the most powerful and dynamic instrument for social-economic, political, scientific and technological change and by extension the development of nations.

Flowing from all these, it can be summarized that education contributes to economic growth by imparting general attitudes and discipline and specific skills necessary for a variety of workplaces. It also contributes to economic growth by improving health, reducing fertility and by contributing to political stability. Investing in education ultimately raises per capita Gross National Product and reduces poverty.

Coming home to Nigeria, Oluwatobi and Ogunrinola (2011) have cited several studies that have examined the causality between human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria. These include: Awe and Ajayi, who have extensively examined the contributions of human capital to economic growth in Nigeria (Ogujiuba and Adeniyi, 2004; Omotor, 2004); and the role of human capital in Nigeria's economic development (Dauda, 2010).

These studies provide both theoretical and empirical foundations that buttress the role of education contributions of human capital to economic growth.

Going further, in their study of impact of human capital development on economic growth in Nigeria, Egbiremole and Anaduaka, (2014) and Adawo (2011) provide empirical data to argue that Nigeria's low level of economic development despite huge natural resource endowments can be traced to the low investment in education.

Their position is supported by Leonard - Fwa (2014) who categorically states that the economic growth of Nigeria has remained low, because there is little investment in human capital and the efforts of Nigerian government to achieve economic growth has been hampered by this inadequacy of human capital.

Data from other studies have also revealed that raising the general level of educational attainments in relatively (resource) poor countries interacts positively with other forces e.g. the accumulation of complementary physical capital and the application of new technologies, have led to rapid economic growth and development, thus supporting the view that higher investment in education leads to faster human capital accumulation, thus enhancing growth in the economy.

The case of Vietnam is particularly instructive: having realized that as a country with virtually no natural resource endowments, and having been ravaged by decades of internecine war, a deliberate policy of substantial investment in education represented the best vehicle for the socio-economic transformation of the country. For Vietnam, investment in human capital formation through education was an inevitable escape route from poverty. For instance, between 1990 and 2010, over 20% of its annual budget and 10% of its GDP was invested in education.

The results? Vietnam's GDP per capita rose from less than \$300 in 1990 to over \$2000 in 2010.

In other words, higher investment in human capital, through education enables countries to accelerate their productivity growth rate and narrow the relative size of per capita income gaps, not only among their citizens but also the gap separating them from the developed economies.

Education is therefore universally recognized as an investment in human capital, which in turn yields economic benefits and contributes to a country's future wealth by increasing the productive capacity of its people

Development organisations like the World Bank and UNESCO have consistently emphasized the need for nations to invest in the education of their citizens if such nations desire to generate economic growth and development.

“Clearly, a nation which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else” (Peters, 2012)

3.0 UNIVERSITIES AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

All over the world, universities are acknowledged not just as the citadels of knowledge but pipelines for human capital development. The acceptance of and confidence in the value of university education as a driver of human capital formation and invariably, global development cannot be over emphasized.

It is in realization of this that governments at Federal and sub-national levels, religious organisations and individuals have been pursuing the establishment of universities in Nigeria beginning with the University College Ibadan (now University of Ibadan) in 1948.

Since then, the number of Universities in Nigeria has topped 150, with the last decade witnessing the fastest growth rate in University establishment.

In addition to the regular degree programmes offered by our universities, most of them also engage in non-degree and certificate programmes all aimed at providing education to the people to either enhance employability or improve capacity.

The bulk of activities and curricula of Universities is usually targeted at teaching in order to produce graduates in diverse fields, but they also undertake substantial research that helps to push the frontier of knowledge and thereby the quality and quantity of human capital.

3.1 Forty Years of the University of Jos

What began as a campus of the University of Ibadan in November 1971, through the foresighted efforts of the late J.D Gomwalk (who was initially rebuffed by the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria), the University of Jos became a full-fledged University in October 1975, joining the crop of universities commonly referred to as second generation universities.

Established with the vision of being an innovative institution with great interaction between 'town and gown,' the University has grown to be one of the most sought after destinations of learning especially for courses like Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, Biological Sciences, and Management Sciences.

Starting with a modest intake of initial of 575 undergraduate students in 1976, and by 2003, the undergraduate enrollment had grown to over 10,000 students, while post graduate enrolment jumped from less than 40 students to 1331 during the 2002/2003 academic year.

At the end of the 2007/2008 academic session, the student population of the University of Jos was 18,000 and today the University's undergraduate student population is over 23,000 full time students, 5,260 part time students and about 8000 post graduate students.

After forty years, the University has grown to 12 faculties, 87 departments, a School of Postgraduate Studies, a teaching hospital, several academic units and directorates, operating on four campuses which are sure, was not but choice by due to circumstances beyond its control. The four campus system has bestowed on the University the odd distinction of being the only University in its class and generation that has had to operate mostly from a temporary site.

In terms of staffing, the University of Jos has a total of about 1250 academic staff, out of which 225 are professors and readers, and about 1200 non-academic staff making it one of the best ratios of academic to non-academic staff among Nigerian universities.

Although I could not get any accurate record on the total number of graduates that have been produced by this great institution since its establishment forty years ago, suffice to say that the number is between 70-100,000, comprising Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike.

Going more specific, over 5000 pharmacists, 10,000 lawyers, and about 3000 medical doctors have been produced by the University of Jos since its inception forty years.

In the process, these graduates have significantly widened the knowledge and skills base of Nigerians who have gone on to become more productive, more competent and in the process contributed significantly to the economy of Nigeria.

Conventional approaches to appreciating the contributions of universities to human capital formation often focus on the number of graduates produced by our Universities.

To that extent, the University of Jos can be rated consistent high among Nigerian universities that have significantly contributed to the process of human capital formation in Nigeria; developing high-level manpower who have changed the human capital landscape in Nigeria, both in quality and quantity.

In the field of research and innovation, the University has recorded several milestones and has an impressive record of collaboration with other national and international institutions including affiliations with Nigerian Research Institutes and international bodies such as A.P Leventis Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, and the Carnegie Foundation etc.

3.2 So what?

Apart from individual success by these graduates going on to secure employment and provide manpower to all sectors of Nigerian society: military, security, civil society, public service, private sector, arts and entertainment, the contributions of the University of Jos to Nigerian and global development also lies in another broader sphere.

The actual contributions of the University of Jos for the past forty years are found in the multiplier effects of the knowledge, skills and abilities that have gone on to produce indirect and induced outcomes.

Apart from the influence it exerts on its immediate environment in terms of geo-spatial changes induced in property values, the setting of the University in Jos has been one of the

most significant drivers of socio-economic change in Jos and other neighboring towns like Lafia, Bauchi etc, even when these towns have their Universities.

Because of the cosmopolitan composition of its staff and students right from inception, and due to the fact that more than any other Nigerian University, the University of Jos has the most diverse population – representing the real Nigeria, in a way reflecting what the city of Jos has always been known for.

The University of Jos is perhaps the only University in Nigeria that if a visitor comes into the campus, he/she will find it difficult to pick one ethnic group that is dominant in terms of student population. To that extent, I make bold to say that in forty years, it has evolved to be the true “Nigerian” university.

Now when graduates of the University enter the Nigerian society, their influence is not so much in the knowledge, skills and talents that they obtained from the University but in how they interact with others, showing real cosmopolitan culture with exceptional people skills honed from co-existing with Nigerians of all ethnic colourations.

This reminds me of the concept of emotional intelligence, which emphasizes that knowing how to relate to others through people skills is a more fundamental driver of success in any society than just acquiring knowledge.

Today in Nigeria, more than at any other time, we need to relate to one another, to have strong interpersonal skills; if we re live and work successfully because of our social, ethnic and religious differences. And consciously or unconsciously, the University of Jos has been able to produce a large number of graduates whose ability to mix with other people of different extractions is commendable. Therein lies on of the most important contributions of this great institution to global development.

So within forty years, the University of Jos has not only become a leading Nigerian institution, and its staff and students, amongst the best of their generation, but has influenced its immediate and wider environment in ways that many have probably overlooked.

3.4 Going Forward

I want to conclude my discourse with a few suggestions to the University as you begin the march into the next forty years.

- Although I have argued that the University’s cosmopolitan nature has significantly impacted its local and wider community, there is need to sustain this cosmopolitan DNA of the University and take this influence to a consciously positive direction. How can this same cosmopolitan DNA permeate the University’s immediate neighborhood, the metropolis of Jos and the entire state; to assist in tackling the persistent ethno-religious crises in the State? In other words, as the State and Federal authorities grapple with the persistent outbreaks of crises in some parts of Plateau State, how can they leverage on the University to solve this problem?

- Although many Nigerian Universities are racing for growth in size –egnumber of faculties, numbers of courses etc- I still think that spreading the butter too thinly on the bread will make it loose its taste. Focusing attention and resources on the current number of faculties and departments and growing them into world class institutions will serve the University better going forward.
- That the global economy is dominated by knowledge capital is no longer news. For the University to continue to be relevant, it must to pay more serious attention to growing its research and innovation activities especially in areas of ICT.Some universities are already preparing for tomorrow’s world that will likely be dominated by artificial intelligence. What is the University of Jos preparing for?
- Although the multi-campus system which was forced on the University by circumstances outside its control is equally practiced in other Universities, going forward the University should re-examine this situation within the context of the current security and other challenges that are unique to the University’s immediate environment. There is probably more economic sense in selling out some of the campuses like the one on MurtalaMohammed Road and using the proceeds to build more structures on the permanent site.
- There is need to increase the interface between “town and gown” in terms of collaboration between the University and the local business community. How much relationship is there between the University and organised private sector players in the immediate environment like SWAN, NASCO, Grand Cereals and the thousands of entrepreneurs in the State is something I will like to know, but going forward, we look forward to a more robust relationship between egthe Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and the thousands of MSMEs on the Plateau not just in terms of capacity building but providing simple solutions resulting from research and innovation.
- Nigeria has entered a new normal; with the low crude oil price being something that will last a long haul rather than a glitch. Consequently, public sector institutions that usually depend on transfers from the Federal purse will be severely impacted. Reducing budgetary allocations will be part of this new normal. Going into the next forty years, the University of Jos will need to be exceptionally creative and innovative in finding ways of doing more with less.

4.0 Final Words

Starting as a campus of another University, almost like a rebellious statement to say, “*we too can do it*”, the University of Jos has evolved into not just a center of academic excellence but a major agent of socio-economic change.

Apart from producing graduates in diverse fields that have gone on to swell the manpower and productive capacities of public and private sectors organisations in Nigeria and beyond, the multiplier effects of academic activities, research and scholarship have been felt not just in Nigeria but globally. Above all, drawing heavily from its cosmopolitan roots, the University of Jos has grown into an institution that all of us, whether alumni or not can be very proud of.

Going forward, I want to urge the University to continue to produce graduates who are not just mentally and intellectually prepared to tackle the challenges of our rapidly changing world, but who are broad-based, pluralistic and emotionally intelligent enough to succeed in our tough globalized environment.

You have proved that you can do it!

I believe that you can still do it!

For the sake of Plateau State, Nigeria and the global community, you MUST do it!

Thank you for listening.

REFERENCES

1. Adawo, M.A. (2011). Has education (human capital) contributed to the economic growth of Nigeria? *Journal of Economics and International Finance*, 3(1), 46-58
2. A. Y Abdulkareem: Nigerian Universities and the Development of Human Resources
3. Dauda, R.O. (2010). Role of Human Capital in Economic Development: An Empirical Study of Nigerian Case. Oxford: Oxford Business and Economics Conference Program.
4. Eigbiremolen, G.O and Anaduaka, U.S (2014): Human Capital Development and Economic Growth: the Nigerian Experience, *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences Vol4, No 4*
5. Fitzsimons, P. & M. Peters (1994) "Human capital theory and the Government's Industry Training Strategy", *Journal of Education Policy*, 9, (3): 245-266.
6. Fitzsimons, P. (1997) "Human capital theory and participation in tertiary education". In K-M. Mathews & M. Olssen (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Education Policy For the 1990s and Beyond* (pp. 107-129). Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press. Foray, D. & B
7. Gupta, M. R and B. Chakraborty (2004) "Human Capital Accumulation and Endogenous Growth in a Dual Economy" Economic Research Unit. Indian Statistical Institute. Kolkata-700108. West Bengal, India
8. Harbison, F.H. (1973). Human Resources as the Wealth of Nations. New York: Oxford University Press.
9. Leonard-Fwa, S (2014). Nigeria Beyond Oil: Human Capital Development, the Panacea. Paper presented at the Conference of the Chartered Institute of Human Capital Development of Nigeria,
10. OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. *The knowledge-based economy*. Paris: OECD, 1996
11. Ogujiuba, K. K., & Adeniyi, A. O. (2004). *Economic Growth and Human Capital Development: The Case of Nigeria*. Nigeria: CBN
12. Oluwatobi, S.O and Ogunrinola, I.O (2011) Government Expenditure on Human Capital Development: Implications for Economic Growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development. Vol 4 No 3*
13. Omotor, D. G. (2004). An Analysis of Federal Government Expenditure in the Education Sector of Nigeria: Implications for National Development. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 105-110.
14. Peters, Ajibade (2013) Building Human Capital for Sustainable Development: Role of Universities, Paper Presented at 2013 University of Ibadan Registry Discourse
15. Romer, P. M (1990). "Endogenous Technological Change", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 94 (October), pp. 1002-1037
16. Sankay, O.J., Ismail, R. and Shaari, A. H. (2010). The impact of human capital development on the economic Growth of Nigeria. *Prosiding Perkem V, Jilid 1, 63 – 72*.
17. Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in Human Capital. *American Economic Review*, 51, 1-17.

18. The World Bank. (1995). Beyond Economic Growth: Growth of the Service Sector. The World Bank.
19. The World Bank. (2010). Knowledge, Productivity and Innovation in Nigeria: Creating a New Economy. Washington D. C.: The World Bank
20. Woodhall, M. (2001). Human capital: educational aspects, International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences