



**ADOPTING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
AN INTEGRATED POVERTY ALLEVIATION
STRATEGY IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN
NIGERIA**

Ma'aruf Tijjani & Dr Yusuf Mudi

Department of Educational Foundations,
School of Education,
Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education Kumbotso, Kano

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This paper presents an opinion on and an appraisal of poverty alleviation strategies used in Nigeria and how same could be integrated with the concept of Transformational Leadership to attain educational transformation. This was perceived within the domain of the integration and analysis of the roles of the private sector and government and civil society organizations. It is advanced that educational transformation, using transformational leadership and poverty alleviation strategies, must encompass private sector enterprises and social entrepreneurs. It is opined that with the integration of Poverty Alleviation Strategies

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This paper presents an opinion on and an appraisal of poverty alleviation strategies used in Nigeria and how same could be integrated with the concept of Transformational Leadership to attain educational transformation. This was perceived within the domain of the integration and analysis of the roles of the private sector and government and civil society organizations. It is advanced that educational transformation, using transformational leadership and poverty alleviation strategies, must encompass private sector enterprises and social entrepreneurs. It is opined that with the integration of Poverty Alleviation Strategies

with transformational leadership in the education sector, the greatest impact of education as a social enterprise is reducing poverty by creating productive jobs for individuals. The paper recommends that poverty alleviation and transformational leadership should be used in theory and practice in all educational settings to pave a way for efficiency in theory and practice in the processes of teacher preparation. Furthermore, the proposed integration should be seen as having the potential to prepare the necessary enabling circumstances for the production of less-poverty-stricken teachers and learners. Efforts that represent a consensus from a diverse group of education stakeholders at all levels should be put in place with an agreement that a dramatic transformation in the education is necessary.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation, Transformational Leadership, Educational Transformation, Integration

Introduction

Discussing issues related to poverty and its alleviation has become very familiar and is no longer a new discourse in Nigeria. Much has been said about poverty and its causes and strategies to ameliorate it in varying circumstances. Equally important is the yearning and aspiration for better and qualitative leadership that is obtainable only through educational

transformation. However, focusing first on poverty, Khalid (2013) observed that one of the most notable features of the development experience during the past fifty years is that poverty in many 'developing' worlds remains widespread. Thus, one quarter of the world's people continue to live in absolute poverty, unable to meet their most basic needs and survive on less than a dollar a day, the World Bank's international poverty line. Mc Kague et al (2010) highlights that in high-income countries, decades of sustained market-based private sector-led economic growth underpinned by enabling social and political institutions has created levels of wealth and standards of living unprecedented in history. According to Fligstein (2001), although recently Nigeria as a middle income developing country sees its national, social and economic indicators as rekindled and moving in positive directions, there is a need to make giant changes in transforming its educational institutions through different economic and social transformations.

It was observed by Arogundade (2011) that poverty has been a serious challenge to governments in Nigeria. Its effect, which includes lack of and deprivation in the basic necessities of life, including education, is glaringly and naturally worrisome. For this obvious reason, the governments always strive to ensure that adequate structural programmes are entrenched to see that poverty, if not eradicated, is reduced. Its causes lie within the concept within which it is defined. As such, there are many dimensions on the cause of poverty, ranging from religious

beliefs to some sociological factors, such as lack of adequate spiritual guidance, which breeds corruption, bad governance, unemployment, low productivity, burgeoning population growth, etc.

On the other hand, educational transformation is to be seen as nothing less than the positive and purposeful transformation of every aspect of education and the individual who is involved in education. The transformation of education is really about transforming the entire system, which should encompass encouraging the growth as well as the awareness about the challenges and demands of transforming an entire system. This is not something that can be accomplished quickly. It is a continuing process. Therefore, it involves shifting from morbidity to revivification, as such moving and improving. It is necessary to highlight that any purposeful transformation hinges on some key elements for it to work. This has to do with the design, efficacy, social orientation and delivery of such transformational package.

The Causes of Poverty

Considering the fact that there are some spiritual connotations to the concept and meaning of poverty, it is noteworthy that we cannot only rely on human definition of poverty or regard any 'line' as a benchmark. Indeed, the creator of mankind has explicitly made it clear that "*Surely, your Lord makes plentiful the means of subsistence for whom He pleases and He straitens (them, means of subsistence) for whom He wishes. He is ever*

aware and seeing his servants” (Qur’an 17:30). It could be said that the main causes of poverty in Nigeria are very low spiritual guidance, leading to the dismal practice of religious commandments causing moral inversion. Others include the materialization of the value system evident in social/environmental degradation and unemployment. It should be added that, even though alternative occupations like traditional crafts and petty trading do exist in most villages, yet investigations have shown that incomes realized from these occupations are as low as those realized from farming (Williams, 1984).

Some Elements of Goal-oriented Transformational Leadership

There is the need to consider some strategic issues, having defined transformational leadership in education as a deliberate and conscious effort put in place to achieve a rational, operational and sustainable strategies aimed at the realization of a less poverty-stricken educated population, thus enhancing productivity. However, for any meaningful transformation in education, some strategic issues may be conceived in relation to the current developments in the Nigerian education system in the light of dwindling resources for teaching and learning. There seems to a feeling for the need for reforms to counter the negative trends, as is suggested here, which should constitute the framework of any purposeful and goal-oriented transformation. These elements include the Design, Efficacy,

Social Orientation and Delivery of a conceived and articulated programme, which is concurred by Intel (2014).

1. The Design: As we explore the learning target, we reflect on the culture in which we live and work as the basis for our design. Some educational designs don’t seem to emphasise some peculiar sociological and cultural affinity of the learner in Nigerian societies. These include geographical and economic indices, such as population growth, which ultimately has a positive bearing on the demand for education. For example, a greater part of the Nigerian curriculum design does not incorporate in clear terms the peasant cultural practices in farming. It rather emphasizes introductory technology in the western sense and application. This puts a challenge on the capacity for creating a purposeful arrangement of instructional environment, materials and experience. Therefore, designs must ensure specific ways that respect beliefs on the basis of sociological, goals and identities. Any conceivable design should be based on contexts, value, relevance and consistency.
2. Efficacy: in order to measure outcomes in relation to set objectives, educational transformation should be based on well-founded beliefs in the capacity for change and making a difference. There should be an enduring commitment because success depends on our efforts and willingness to take responsibilities. This is the only way to

validate learning and performance and be able to internalize successes.

3. Social orientation: educational transformation must be seen as an investment, interdependent and made a responsibility throughout community. Ethics and values of self-sufficiency and interdependence and sharing responsibility and accountability are very necessary. However, there has to be room for competition and professional work ethics. Students are to be oriented on doing what they could do for themselves rather than being done by the teacher. However the learning expectations of students must be maintained even in adverse teaching and learning circumstances.
4. Delivery; this concerns the means by which information/knowledge is conveyed to the learners. It also embodies the format and methods of knowledge dissemination and general classroom interaction. There is the need for ample learner-centred activities with pressures for assessment using the traditional lecture, as well as other methods. It should also be recognized that, in effective delivery, using appropriate teaching methods, when students have a question, they are signaling some interests, which should be used to drive them to additional thinking, learning and exploration. The more 'real' learning is, the more likely it is to be internalized. There should be opportunities for students to prove out or verify

principles and tendencies rather than just sharing them through rote learning. All these are based on the strength of the fact that curiosity motivates learning and that discovery is part of the expected outcomes of learning. The delivery system in educational transformation must ensure that students reach out to and actively seek for knowledge.

Using Transformational Leadership for Educational Transformation

Leadership is more than just a title or job function. Transformative Leadership would be incomplete without a responsibility for social justice and sustainability. Again, Intel (2014) sees leadership is not just confined to a role or title but that leadership in education and in general begins with respect for everyone and everything and is normally responsive to culture in the path to transformation. It should also address issues of equity and sustainability, particularly with regard to cultural and environmental sustainability.

Context is important in leadership considerations. There is the need to be conscious that contexts vary and are circumstantial. Implicitly, not every leadership situation requires the same thing. What might work in one context may not work in another. Equally worthy of consideration is authenticity, which requires consciousness, knowing who you are and understanding and responding to the needs of the situation, yourself and those around you. Leading by example is an action that brings greater

positive changes than otherwise. While values form the foundation of leadership, so too does humility. This is an integral aspect of leadership and transformation.

Educational transformation must be authentic and, while there isn't any one path to transformation, it usually requires every effort and aspect of an individual or organization. Transformative leadership comes from knowing the value and essence of higher purpose and spiritual self. It helps to have an easy-to-state, clear purpose and mission. In general, your leadership purpose should be boiled down to one word. For instance, the one word that illustrates transformative leadership might be result-oriented Transformative leadership is, therefore, to be seen as a process of continuous growth fostering creativity, innovation and imagination. .

The Integral Approach to Educational Transformation Through the Integrated Poverty Alleviation Program: The Role of Government

In some cases, inappropriate and inadequate public policy or government involvement can be of less benefit to the interests of the poor. An integrated framework for any educational transformation has to envisage a key role for government policy, institutions and practices, even though governments may be weak or constrained in certain cases to wield their influence. In the long term, the education system cannot function efficiently and in ways that will include and benefit the poor without governments living up to their roles in specific terms. Therefore,

Government institutions that are missing or weak should be strengthened rather than ignored. This is true in industrialized economies and even more so in the lowest income countries. Governments play a key role in facilitating the four main areas of responsibility: infrastructure, providing public services, facilitating job creation and functional education

Secondly, governments can help private sector actors reduce poverty by taking part of the responsibility for the provision of basic public services such as education and public health, low levels of education, lack of access to training opportunities and commitment to responsive and transformational leadership. A good measure of well-intended corporate philanthropy or civil society activity can begin to address the need for the broad provision of basic public services among which education ranks high. Providing basic public services not only can help the lives of the poor, but make opportunities for social enterprises, such as education thrive. Thirdly, governments can assist the private sector in facilitating job creation by reducing the costs of acquiring education. This allows the effects of public policy reforms to be measured. The state has an essential role to play in redistributing wealth for the common good through functional education and sound fiscal and social policies.

The role of the Civil Society

The most important roles for the civil society sector is that of complementing the role of the government alongside the private sector in poverty alleviation through educational transformation

by acting as a catalyst for positive change and an advocate to protect and maintain progress. Civil society organizations often have the knowledge, legitimacy and understanding of local needs that can help make their activities or their partnerships with other organizations work (Austin et al. 2005).

By civil society organizations, we include local and international non-governmental organizations concerned with poverty alleviation and educational development. In practice, the strength of the civil society sector in developing countries, including Nigeria, can vary according to a number of factors one of which is the nature and strength of the state itself. However, civil society organizations often lack the requisite outreach and scale to reach the entire population that needs to be served, despite the fact that they may inadvertently reduce pressure on the government to ensure that everyone, including the poor, benefit from basic infrastructure and services. Similarly, civil society organizations are unlikely to reach the economies of scale needed for the provision of productive employment for a large number of poor people, either directly or through microenterprise development (Karnani, 2011).

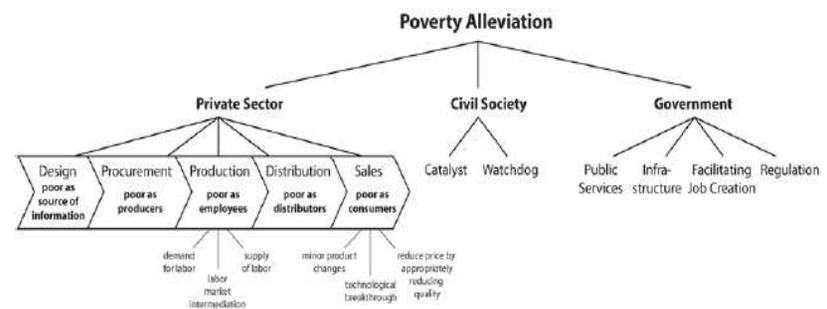
Adopting an Integrated Poverty Alleviation Program Framework and Transformational Leadership for Educational Transformation

In the light of the current developments in Nigeria’s educational set up and the emerging need for meaningful transformation through poverty alleviation, McKague et al (2010) suggested a comprehensive framework, which

focuses on a wider range of a simultaneous involvement in cooperative and active integration between the government, the private sector and civil society that can be adapted to achieve poverty alleviation, on one side, and is proposed for the integration alongside transformational leadership concepts, which will combine to enhance greater educational transformation

Figure A, as suggested by McKague et al (2010) below, maps out the roles of the private sector, government and civil society in advancing an integrated strategy for poverty alleviation, which, in turn, could be adopted for greater advancement in making meaningful transformation in education, using the combined elements in Figure B. The arrow in the middle is suggesting the harmony between the integrated PAP and the Transformational leadership concepts

Figure A: Integrated Poverty Alleviation Programme



Source McKague et al (2010)

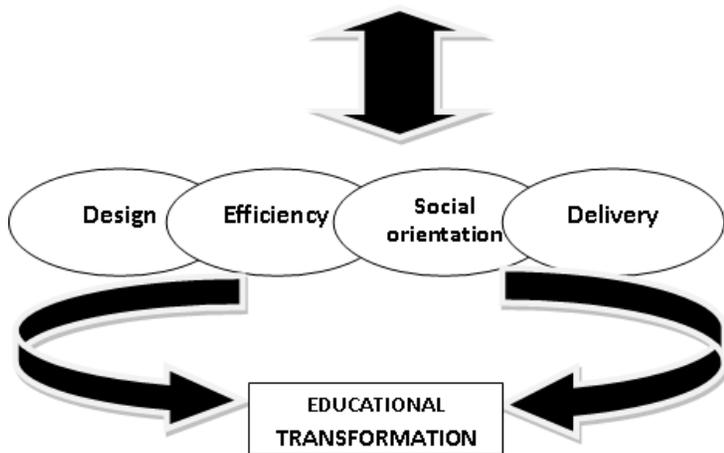


Figure B: Proposed Transformational Leadership Concepts

The effective and simultaneous interplay of these components could have a transformational impact in education. Apart from reducing poverty, a sustainable and well articulated transformation package that binds the activities of the government in terms of policy formation and implementation, private sector activities in terms of economic transactions and civil society activities in terms of serving as a catalyst and watchdog on policy implementation is a sure way of realizing a strong and vibrant education system.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Poverty alleviation and transformational leadership should be used in theory and practice in all educational designs to pave a way for efficiency in theory and practice in the processes of

teacher preparation. A national strategy must be evolved to prepare the necessary enabling circumstances for the production of less-poverty-stricken teachers and learners. Efforts that represent a consensus from a diverse group of education stakeholders at all levels should be put in place with an agreement that a dramatic transformation in the education is necessary. The concurrence among these combinations must be tied to improved student learning. In addition, there appears to be a gap currently in Nigeria between how educators are prepared and what students actually need in the classroom in terms of sociological attributes and learning dispositions. The student population is more diverse in learning abilities. Therefore, it has greater learning needs, is more technically challenging and savvy than ever before and course works in many disciplines are not translating into actual classroom practice.

Recognizing that teachers are the most important in-school factor in the enhancement of student success, which, in turn, could lead to societal growth and development, ‘seismic changes’ are necessary in the training and production of teachers. Noting that teacher education must shift to programs that are fully grounded in principle and practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses, this is not realizable under poverty stricken circumstances.

As far as transformational leadership is concerned, we must move to multiple solutions in all our approaches. In addition,

teacher education programs through transformational leadership, must work in close partnership with schools and curriculum designers to redesign teacher preparation to better serve prospective teachers and the students they teach. This should include shared decision making and oversight on candidates' admission, so that preparation and accountability could be aligned.

Additionally, all the candidate admission and placement processes must be strengthened and expanded to include more diverse cohorts of students along with consideration of academic achievement and key attributes that lead to producing and leading effective teachers. Prospective teachers must have the opportunity to teach along with access to effective mentors and coaches.

It is also time to fundamentally redesign the curriculum of teacher preparation programs along with significant changes in the reward structure and staffing. New state policies must be drafted to support partnerships between higher education and below the system and any inhibiting legal or regulatory barriers should be removed. Lastly, expanding the knowledge base to identify what works and support continuous improvement should be developed.

The federal state and local government and NGOs should invest in new research to support the development of new models to help determine ways, which are the most effective in the

integration of poverty alleviation strategies with a responsive and transformational education system. Making these changes will go a long way toward improving how the nation delivers, monitors, evaluates, oversees and 'incubates' a whole new form of education.

There is an ardent need to create a multi-stakeholder education transformation programme in Nigeria to develop a strategic plan for financing and research on the sufficiency and efficiency of administrative of workforce and specialty issues.

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