Chapter 16

Human Capacity Building Through University– Industry Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

The reality in the digital age is that knowledge is perishable, which suggests the need for continuous updates of skills, knowledge, and competency framework for sustainable development. Human capacity building through university-industry collaborative efforts is fundamental for sustainable development. This chapter examines capacity building through university-industry collaboration strategies for sustainable development in the digital age. A desktop research approach was adopted to investigate the influence of human capacity building through university-industry collaboration on sustainable economic growth and development in recent times. This chapter holds that a synergy between conventional and corporate universities is fundamental for skills updates, as well as advancing research and development in the digital age. Therefore, human capacity building through university and industry collaboration is essential in developing green talent and providing green opportunities for sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is an essential intangible asset for a productive workforce and the development of a nation. The reality in the digital age is that knowledge is perishable, which suggests the need for continuous updates of skills, knowledge and competency framework for sustainability in the digital age (Njoku & Onyegbula, 2017). Human capacity building through university-industry collaborative efforts is fundamental for sustainable economic development. In 2015, one hundred and ninety-four (194) member states of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote a sustainable economy. A proactive way of promoting a sustainable economy by individual states is an investment in

human capacity building. The human capacity building or development can be defined as those activities geared towards improving knowledge, sharpening the skills, instilling values, and encouraging the behaviour necessary to actualise the potentials of staff of the organisation (Alo, 2000; cited in Njoku & Onyegbula, 2017). Since most of the sustainability issues worldwide are resultant effects of human and industrial activities, it is necessary to offer learning and development through the university-industry collaboration for sustainable development (Atiku, 2020). The objective of such collaborative strategies is to update knowledge and instill values that encourage pro-environmental behaviour at all levels to actualise sustainable development goals.

Human capacity building is vital to the growth and development of an economy (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2017). Appropriate investment in human capacity building and utilization of human resources is profitable to the individuals, organisations and the society at large (Nafukho, Hairston & Brooks, 2004). Human capacity building through university-industry collaboration in the digital age must be adequately aligned with sustainable development goals. Hence, there is a need to put in place human capacity building strategies for a sustainable economy.

The objective of this chapter is to examine human capacity building through university-industry collaboration strategies that are essential for sustainability in the digital age. This chapter examines the relationship between human capacity building strategy and sustainable development. The unit of analysis relates to the pillars of sustainability, which are economic, social, and environmental sustainability. This chapter refers to human capacity building as a strategy for sustainable development.

This chapter adopted a literature approach by examining the 'textual data" and showing the place of human capacity building in ensuring sustainable development in the digital age. A critical examination of literature was engaged in tracing the background of sustainable development and tackling the challenges of sustainable development through human capital development. For example, most economic recoveries recorded after the Second World War came as a result of human capital formation in the areas of science and technology. It is by the foregoing that this chapter explores human capacity building through university-industry collaboration strategies for sustainable development in the digital age.

BACKGROUND

Sustainable development focuses on the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without jeopardising the existence of future generations (Brundtland Report, 1987; cited in Du Pisani, 2006). The concept 'sustainable development' emerged due to a growing awareness of an imminent ecological crisis, which was one of the driving forces across the globe towards the end of the 20th century (Du Pisani, 2006). Accordingly, the propagation of different ideas about progress, sustainability, growth, and development could be traced to the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a concept, it became more popularised and widely used in the 1980s. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987, p.43; cited in Du Pisani, 2006). Hence, the ongoing tension between economic development and environmental protection dates back to the 1980s. Therefore, sustainable economic growth will require societies to create conditions that allow people to have quality jobs that stimulate the economy while not harming the environment (United Nations, 2015). Human capacity building is an antecedent for a productive workforce and sustainable development (Hansmann, Mieg & Frischknecht, 2012).

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