

TOWARDS THE PANACEA FOR NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS: CAPACITY BUILDING OR MIRACLES?

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Abstract

This study considered both capacity building and miracles in the quest for the panacea for the Nigeria's Economic Crises. With the tool of the theories of multiple intelligence and divergent thinking adopted by this study: It was discovered that miracles will endorse laziness, enhance superstition, encourage counterfeit prophecies and launch the Nigeria's economy down the drain since it is not proactive. Capacity building will enhance creative intelligence and innovations, ability to adapt to any given vicissitude and making significance progress even in the midst of stressful circumstances. This study concludes that concerted efforts should be made by both the Nigerian state authorities and the church towards investing in capacity building and promoting it. The churches should direct their resources to building skill acquisition centers, affordable schools for talents discovery and mastery, manufacturing industries and the likes instead of building of more cathedrals, empty halls and embarking on projects that yields zero economic value. Primary and post primary institutions in Nigeria should restructure their academic syllabus to accommodate reflections on creative intelligence. This study adopted both the primary and secondary means of data collection. The required hypothesis and deductions were drawn strictly on the qualitative analysis and synthesis of the collated data made via culture centered and phenomenological approaches.

Key words: Miracles, Economy, capacity building, creative intelligence, panacea, innovation.

Introduction

There is no gain saying that Nigeria is in grave economic crisis. Various scholars, economic analysts and journalists like Icha (2023), Fasan (2023) and Mayeni (2023), are of the opinion that the Nigerian economy has gone into a full blown recession and thus is depressed; while others like the World Bank Reports (2020), Ibe (2023), and Lateef, Yauri and Muhammad (2020), are of the view that the Nigerian economy is dwindling; passing various strands of regression.

Various reports on the Nigerian economic stance in recent years is scary and totally discouraging. For instance: Nigeria Development Update (2023), reported that Nigeria in 2021 was in a challenging and deteriorating economic situation with lowered growth projections. In the details of the report; it was streamlined that the inflation then was already one of the highest in the world before the war in Ukraine, and was likely to increase further due to the rise in global fuel and food prices caused by the war: And that will likely push an additional one million Nigerians into poverty by the end of 2022, on top of the 6 million Nigerians that were already predicted to fall into poverty within 2022 due to the rise in prices, particularly food prices.

The World Bank (2023), recorded in respect of the Nigerian Economic overview that high oil prices since 2021 did not boost the performance of the Nigerian economy as usual. Rather, macroeconomic stability weakened, amidst declining oil production; a costly petrol subsidy was in place, which was consuming a large share of gross oil revenues; there were exchange rate distortions; monetization of the fiscal deficit and high inflation.

The economic crisis in Nigeria made some Christian adherents to resort to miracles as the solution. Aggrey (cited by Oguntola, 2012), Bishop Kuka (cited by Score Card, 2023) and Omotosha (cited by Premium Times, 2016), all affirmed that the channeling of energy, devotion of time and even resources

to prayers alone in expectation of miracles to salvage the Nigerian economic crisis by some Christians in Nigeria is a futile and irrational endeavour.

Toyo (1984), Fasua (2021), Uddin (2023), and Ibe (2023), all asserted that the incessant crisis in the Nigerian economy is caused by lack of expertise, corrupt substructure already endemic in the country, placing the entire nation's focus on crude oil as the only and major source of income, ignorance, and lack of adequate training of Nigerian Labour Force to be able to stand the challenges of the present epoch apposite particularly to climatic changes, subsequent natural disasters and the world of information and Communication Technologies (ICT) complaint. It behooves that Nigeria needs to re-strategise in her approaches in addressing economic issues in order to revamp the economy of the country.

In view of the foregoing, this study pondered on both miracles and capacity building in the quest for a panacea for the Nigerian economic crisis. The study, admonishes the Nigerian state to prioritise on capacity building as a means of improving the economic situation of the country.

Economic Crisis in Nigeria

The Nigerian economic crisis can be traced to the late 1960s. Onyekpe (2022), Mbah (2021), Obi (1984) and Adesoji (2020), are of the opinion that the incessant Nigeria economic crisis could be attributed to the Nigeria's neglect of the agricultural sector, low savings and fiscal leakages, inconsistent economic policies and political unrest, imperialism-continuous waste of resources from the country to the metropolitan world, lack of perspective macro-economic planning, the use of the state and its organs and agencies by the ruling political elites to plunder the resources of the state, and the appointment of those that are not qualified to serve as heads in public offices. Onyekpe, insists that the efforts directed at resolving economic crisis in Nigeria have always ended in disastrous failures because most of the blueprints are formulated by the metropolitan states and their agencies with the ultimate aim to keep the Nigerian state in unequal relations with the metropolitan states.

Mba (2021) observes that the Nigeria's GDP have plunged to negative growth rate for three consecutive quarters in 1967, 1975, 1981, 1982, 2016 and 2020. Adesoji (2020), on the other hand, exposed that the Nigeria's economy only grew at an average rate of 3.33% between 1982 and 2020. He exposed that since Nigeria switched to oil exploration as the mainstay of the economy, export earnings from the commodity have risen to over 90%. However, the dependency on oil is actually doing more harm than good since the growth of the economy remains on the ebb.

According to another observation made in this Day Live (2016), prolonged year of military misrule is another factor that helped in plunging the Nigerian economy into her current deplorable state. It underscored, for instance, that the Nigerian economy suffered severe blows during the prolonged years of military regimes of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, Sani Abacha and Abdulsalami Abubakar.

The inception of the civilian regime bought hope and thus a period of relief was experienced. However, the later part of year 2000 witnessed a drastic increase in the naira-dollar exchange rates. At this period up to the second half of year 2000, one dollar was exchanged for N35.00. This posited a decrease of about 50 percent in the value of the naira then: Today it is becoming worst as one dollar is exchanged for N925.00 as recorded by Ogwu, Oloyede and Alade (2023).

Ekott (2020) registered that in 2020 during the Buhari regime, the Nigerian economy slipped into its second recession in five years as the gross domestic product contracted then for the second consecutive quarter. It was recorded by the National Bureau of statistics (cited by Ekott), that Nigeria's GDP reckoned a negative growth of 6.10 percent contraction in the second quarter and 3.62 percent in the third quarter of 2020. This was noted as the Nigeria's worst economic decline in almost four decades according to Ekott.

The Nigeria's economy suffered multidimensional inflation amidst economic depression during the Buhari led regime as Fashua (2021) explicated. The economic crisis that followed the naira redesign policy of 2022/2023 by former president Buhari, plunged Nigeria and her citizens into an inexplicable

hardship. Furthermore, the manufacturing sector in Nigeria suffered severely within the 8 years of Buhari administration. Ibe (2023) lamented that the challenges of Buhari's 8-year tenure for the manufacturing sector will, perhaps, haunt the economy of Nigeria for subsequent years to come. Ibe streamlined that the macro-economic induces as exposed by some stakeholders, like, the power infrastructure, manufacturing, oil and gas and security which have great implications for the domestic economy suffered great deficit under Buhari's regime. Buhari's regime according to Ibe left behind more than 23.2 million unemployed people, the highest in at least 13 years, and the second highest rate in the world then: And equally left a debt burden of about N77 trillion.

The problem facing the present administration in Nigeria is the rush in removing the fuel subsidy without making contingency plans: Another repetition of a national gross mistake. There is rarely a contingency plan in place in Nigeria. No administration ever saves for the dooms day. Hope is, however, channeled on the incumbent president's establishment of a robust accountability framework to curb misappropriation and mismanagement of the funds that will be realized as well as saved from the fuel subsidy removal. Taiwo (2023) indicated that the benefits of fuel subsidy removal will be very great. It will definitely launch Nigeria into the limelight if properly harnessed.

Theoretical Framework

The theories of Divergent Thinking and Multiple Intelligence adopted as appropriate for this study will be posited here in the mode pertinent to the aim of this study.

The Theory of Divergent Thinking

According to Tejada (2021), this theory was propounded by J.P Guilford in the 1960s. In simple terms, this theory entails the employment of creativity and the free-flow of ideas to examine a problem and arrive at a solution. This is often accomplished through the use of brain-storming and stream of consciousness. This theory equally includes the propensity to think outside the box in order to arrive at answers and positive results. It actually has to do with risk-taking, curiosity, nonconformity, and resilience or perseverance.

Runco (2011) posited that divergent thinking represents the potential for creative thinking and problem solving. Divergent thinking is often referred to as Lateral Thinking. Multiple and unique solutions are created in divergent thinking through spontaneous, free flowing thinking. This theory is pertinent in solving the Nigerian Economic Crisis because it will enhance creative intelligence, employment of the best qualified for positions and disentanglement from the vicious circles of inflation, economic depression cum recession that Nigeria had been in its bondage since the late 1960s. With the tool of this theory, the Nigerian citizens and labour force will be delivered from survival mentality and archaic stereotypical mindset that keeps the Nigerian economy in deadlock of repetition of clueless and failure oriented policies.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligence

Gardner (1983), who propounded this theory, postulated that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on intelligence quotient testing, is far too limited. He proposed eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in both children and adults. These intelligence includes; Linguistic Intelligence (word smart), Logical-mathematical intelligence (number and reasoning smart), spatial intelligence (picture smart), bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (body smart), musical intelligence (music smart), interpersonal intelligence (people smart), naturalist intelligence (nature smart), and existential intelligence (life smart): Armstrong (2023) and Kendra (2023), added that Gardner later suggested the possible addition of a ninth intelligence known as "existentialist intelligence".

Armstrong (2023), expatiating on Gardner's theory, explained that Mankind's educational institutions and culture focus most of their attention on linguistic and logical- mathematical intelligence. They only exult the highly articulate or logical people of contemporary culture. Hence equal attention should be placed on individuals who show gifts in the other intelligences; like the naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists and entrepreneurs. Gardner complained that many individuals who have these gifts seldom receive much reinforcement for them in institutions of learning.

Kendra (2023) and Armstrong (2023), both streamlined that the theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major transformation in the way institutions of higher learning are run. It suggests that teachers in primary and post primary institutions should be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways to accommodate individuals with various and diversified potentials.

The theory of multiple intelligence if effected in Nigeria will offer Nigeria the opportunity of exerting diversified job opportunities that will meet individual's natural talents and specifics. Citizens will not be stranded and frustrated in the deadlock of limited job cum career opportunities. Those in the field of economics will wield multidimensional options in addressing the economic crisis in Nigeria. This was why, Gardner (cited by Mirenus, 2023), defined intelligence pertinent to this theory as "a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture"(p.1). Intelligence is not cramming outdated, irrelevant theories from dead men's brain.

Capacity Building and Its Propositions

Maiese (2005) indicated that irrespective of the fact that capacity building involves the provision and availability of fundamental human needs. He elucidated that capacity building also hinges on development at all levels of society including institutional development, community development and economic development: Capacity building includes the pursuit and the strategic plan and strive to actualize as well as the availability of the central assets that individuals, organizations, communities, and governments need in order to achieve their full potentials like knowledge and technical skills, institutional and organizational capacity, and the ability to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

The United Nations Academic Impact (2023) defined capacity-building as the process of developing, strengthening and enhancing the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organization (or a nation at large), and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world. They postulated that the essential ingredient in capacity building is transformation that is generated and sustained over time from within; transformation of this kind goes beyond performing tasks to changing mindsets and attitudes. The two expositions posited so far portrayed that capacity building promotes perfection, enlightenment and professionalism, equips humans in a given habitat with the tools to keep meeting up with the challenges of the changing world as well as illuminating individuals mindsets to be positive inclined, result oriented, optimistic inclined, valuable and relevant in all spheres.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1991) elaborated that capacity building reflects the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; institutional development, including community participation, human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems. This posits that capacity building is like a big vehicle that conveys every individual in any given state unto excellence and significance.

Miracles and Its Significance

Grudem (1994) defines miracles as any kind of activity where God's mighty power is evidenced. Berkhof (2003), on his part, maintains that miracles occur without the aid of natural effects. It is a supernatural intervention on the courses of nature and man's endeavours. Pertinent to Berkhof's assertion, Omoregbe (2002) averred that "A miracle is an unusual occurrence which defies any scientific explanation in terms of the known laws of nature". (p. 220). Miracles then are acts of God that is devoid of human or natural assistance.

Mccain (2004) and Onwu (1991) affirmed that miracles were performed by God using human beings as vessels. They insisted that Jesus Christ on whom all the essence of creation and salvific work hinges on effects miracles to accredit His message and to express His compassion. They espoused that miracles are limited amongst other factors by unbelief. They delineated that Jesus never performed any miracle for personal reasons, to impress people nor to sanction laziness and redundancy. This posits that for miracles to occur, there must be a genuine positive reason which is geared towards salvaging man's impotency and weakness over his affairs, sickness, nature and evil forces.

The Implications of Resorting to Miracles as a Panacea for Nigeria's Economic Crisis

Apostle Paul in 2nd Thessalonians 5:10-13 declared that human kind ought to be industrious. He insisted that anyone that refuses to work should starve. He was a tent maker and a legal luminary by profession. Paul did not depend on miracles to fend for himself. The Bible in Proverbs 14:34 stressed that righteousness exalts a nation, whereas sin is a reproach to any nation that highly indulges in it. Righteousness here implies good works, human development and sincerity which are implied in capacity building. Spending countless hours in the church, praying in expectation of miracles, fosters laziness and positing oneself unemployable: Which actually is sinful. It is righteousness and not empty prayers that lifts a nation to the limelight.

If everyone in Nigeria including teachers, medical doctors, security personnel, traders and so on resorts to praying for miracles and spending countless hours in the church for God's intervention in the Nigerian economic situation; the worst will definitely befall the Nigerian state. Irrespective of the fact that this work does not oppose the reality and authenticity of miracles; it does establish that miracles can only occur when one is completely powerless after one must have exhausted all necessary efforts and options available and known to such a person, as well as for God to show His might and bestow His mercy on whomsoever He chooses as attested in Romans 9:15-16.

Miracles, as seen in the course of this peculiar study, does not happen for fun. Miracles are not magical manipulations. Little wonder Kukah (cited by score card, 2023), Abati (2016), Aggrey (cited by Oguntola, 2012), and even Charly Boy (cited by Ajose, 2016), seems to jointly be of the same view that miracles cannot save Nigeria but hard work. God blesses men's effort and not men's empty prayers. The most progressive and advanced countries in the world are not entirely Christian nations.

Capacity Building: The Panacea for Nigeria's Economic Crisis

This study advocates for the capitalization on capacity building by the Nigerian government for the following reasons:

- **Capacity building will enhance creative intelligence and effect complexity:** This involves training, graduation and presentation of experts that can visualize various complicated and multifaceted concepts; effecting the generation of new possibilities for the Nigerian state towards economic growth.
- **It will aid in triggering the curiosity of economic experts, directors and heads in various socio-economic parastatals in Nigeria:** They can now often ask the right questions and then delve deeper into the ideas of nation building without deploying all their wits, intelligence and resources on crude oil.
- **It will facilitate originality:** Improvement on imaginations towards coming up with nascent concepts or creation of new concepts devoid of foreign assistance.
- **Capacity building will institute flexibility:** It will aid in producing flexible labour force in Nigeria. A workforce that will be able to perceive problems as "challenges" and approach them from several unique vantage points.
- **Capacity building will foster elaboration and fluency:** This will quicken the public and civil servants in Nigeria with the ability to carry out the details of each new concept; examining implications critically in order to create multiple solutions. This will avert launching into policies without putting alternative measures in place as well as steps to alleviate unexpected adverse effects.

Conclusion

The various indices of the economic crisis in Nigeria have been posited in this study. The factors that facilitate these economic crisis have equally been delineated. Some Christian's misconception and the faulty and futile premise of depending on miracles as the solution to the economic crisis in Nigeria have equally been streamlined. The obvious measure to addressing the economic crisis in Nigeria is embarking on capacity building since it equally includes the provision of basic social amenities to the citizens as well as infrastructural developments.

This work does not, in any way, question the validity and authenticity of miracles. The emphasis is that miracles only occur when men are powerless and helpless; as well as for God to show His might and unleash His mercy on whomsoever He wills. The economic crisis in Nigeria is artificially generated. It is as commonly proclaimed, "A Nigerian factor". Thus only Nigerians can resolve it. This will be actualized through capacity building.

Recommendations

This study admonishes Christians that spend so much time in prayer houses in search of miracles to understand that their time is not properly being invested. Time becomes valuable when creativity is attached to it. Time is resourceful. Even the economy of Israel is not flourishing because of miracles. They are resilient, strategic and purpose driven as a nation.

This study reaffirms that the church should equally be involved in capacity building. They should resort to building projects with economic value as against building of empty halls and big cathedrals. They should desist from building academic institutions that the average members taxed in building it cannot afford to send their children therein.

Public office holders in Nigeria should build and emphasis on team work. Increased team morale will encourage members of peculiar administrative strata to think outside the box; thus exercising their creativity as well as comparing their ideas. Such collective effort will boost the economy of the nation and lunch it back to the limelight. This is one of the prospects of Divergent Thinking Theory.

Finally, the Nigeria state must desist from laying emphasis on only the stereotypical form of education that have been in place since the colonial period. Learning of high income skills like nursing, cloud computing, block-chain engineering, mining, artificial intelligence, web design, coding, programming, ethical hacking and analytics should be encouraged and promoted even from one's cradle.

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