



Adopting Meritocracy among the Youth for International Development in Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to highlight how meritocracy can be adopted to tap youth as a resource for development in Developing countries. This meritocratic perspective is based on the premise that one's talents are primarily derived from their inherent qualities (e.g., personality and general intelligence). As a result, a meritocratic environment is described as one that recognizes an individual's abilities and provides them with the environment and, opportunities they need to excel in their endeavors. This qualitative analysis is an integrative literature review based on the desk study of secondary data. The findings show that meritocracy is achieved through, talent-based careers, educational opportunities tailored to natural aptitude, and achievement as the foundation for social reward system in the society. The practice of meritocracy may be harnessed to build up an effective work culture and promote economic growth with social development. Nevertheless, what we can conclude from this study is that non-meritocratic culture currently practiced in Developing countries, especially neopatrimonialism, is considered to play an important role in hindering youth access to opportunities. Therefore, meritocracy is a strategy that policy makers should consider adopting if they want to succeed at jumpstarting economic development based on a capitalist market model.

Keywords: Meritocracy, Youth, International Development, Developing Countries

I. INTRODUCTION

Developing countries have the world's largest proportion of severely poor citizens. As a result, they continue to lag behind. However, these countries have the ability to grow economically because of their vast and young population, valuable natural resources, and proximity to most of the industrialized economies. Various schools of thought have been proposed to economically improve developing countries, including the introduction of a capitalist market-driven economy, trade, and increased foreign aid, among others. The problem of youth, on the other hand, has not been aggressively explored as a resource that can be exploited to bring about international development in developing countries.

About 80% of the population of most developing countries is under the age of 35 years, making it the most youthful people in the world. The burgeoning youth population is both an opportunity and a challenge. On the positive side, the population gives developing countries a chance to resolve long-term development problems. Although the natural resources are vital, the creativity and innovation of this youthful population can play a key role in the international economic transformation. However, this is not the case; deliberate actions are required, given that young people in developing countries are facing unemployment. For many young people, the informal sector is the default choice rather than the formal one. As a result, the full potential of the youth is not realized.

Frustration and hopelessness among the unemployed can have serious repercussions, such as incentive to join rebel groups and criminal gangs, among other things (World Bank, 2011). While everyone recognizes that young professionals in developing countries need to be prepared for potential positions as development leaders and reform agents, neopatrimonialism has taken root instead of meritocracy. Only by adopting meritocracy to tap youth as a resource can the ability of a young population be realized.

1.2 Problem Statement

In developing countries, the greatest impediment to youth development as a resource to unlock the economic potential is lack of meritocracy in the society: in fact, neopatrimonialism thrives. Since it combines corruption and clientelism, neopatrimonialism is characterised by the leadership employing personal patronage of some groups in the society in order to maintain power (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994). Neopatrimonialism is a political system that combines democratic government with patrimonial law (Bach 2011). It is essentially patrimonial practices taking place in the sense of a "modern" state, according to Hyden (2000). Patronage, clientelism, rent-seeking, and corruption are all characteristics of patrimonial activities (Dawson & Kelsall, 2011).



Corruption is a prominent feature of a neopatrimonialism political structure. Corruption is the use of public powers by politicians for private ends (Szeftel, 2007). Despite the fact that it is not exclusive to developing countries, it has remained a consistent feature of how things function at different levels in different countries (Médard, 2002). It is accomplished by combining the formal private and public sectors. It has remained influential because deep ethnic and family loyalties entrenched in the political and business sectors provide a strong incentive to do so (Bayart, 2009). This means that corruption, a symptom of neopatrimonialism, continues to be a powerful force dictating how things are done.

According to Pitcher et al., (2009), it is the cause of political and economic underdevelopment. Via exclusionary patronage regimes and clientelism, economic opportunities are reduced, while rent-seeking also has additional negative effects on the market, rendering it less attractive for investment (Chabal, 2009). Furthermore, patronage networks and clientelism are unmistakable continuities in neopatrimonialism regimes. They are the primary state-society connection, and patron-client politics pervades at all levels, twisting formal institutions to serve informal goals (Hyden, 2000).

This system of economic and political interaction has allowed leaders in developing countries to maintain power by offering benefits to clients and patronage networks (Chabal, 2009). Patronage/clientelism also takes the form of material gifts and providing employment in government to cement support (Ikpe, 2009). Furthermore, the patronage and clientelism nature of neopatrimonialism political regimes has entrenched ethnicity (Erdmann & Engel, 2007). As a result, merit plays a minor role in job recruitment; ethnicity, on the other hand, is a major factor (Hyden, 2000). For example, in Kenya, the two communities (Kikuyu and Kalenjin) that have been in power since independence dominate top jobs in government, embassies and chief executive positions in parastatals (PSC, 2020). This type of scenario cascades down to even private enterprises. As a result, casting doubt on the notion of workplace meritocracies.

Consequently, the young people in developing countries are caught up in this conundrum. This is in stark contrast to the industrialized world, where workplaces are thought to be meritocratic environments in which employees, regardless of their context, can transcend any disadvantaged circumstance. Workplaces are required to dissolve initial disparities in opportunities and rewards by providing opportunities and rewards based on employees' achievements, allowing social mobility and reducing or breaking deep socioeconomic stratification patterns (Pitesa & Pillutla, 2019). Theoretical review of literature suggests that the youth can be harnessed to play an important role in development (Ile & Boadu, 2018). Therefore, this study explores how by adopting meritocracy in both the public and private sector, the youth can be tapped as a resource for development in developing countries.

1.2 Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine how meritocracy can help to tap youth as a resource for development in developing countries.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To explain the concept of meritocracy
2. To discuss how talent-based careers can be used to tap youth as a resource for development in developing countries.
3. To discuss how educational opportunities tailored to natural aptitude can be used to tap youth as a resource for development in developing countries.
4. To discuss how achievement as the foundation for social reward system in the society can be used to tap youth as a resource for development in developing countries.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Meritocracy

Governments and organizations in most capitalist societies subscribe to the ideal that resources and incentives are the product of job success, which is, in essence, a function of an individual's capabilities (Schraeder & Jordan, 2011). Such performance-based incentive programs imply that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, has an equal chance of receiving opportunities and incentives. Despite the fact that members of traditionally marginalized communities have less resources and opportunities, this meritocratic viewpoint assumes that workplaces offer an atmosphere where only an individual's talents matter and that, with time, individuals will conquer obstacles.

This meritocratic perspective is based on the premise that one's talents are primarily derived from their inherent qualities (e.g., personality and general intelligence). As a result, a meritocratic environment is described as one that recognizes an individual's surplus of abilities and provides them with the environment and opportunities they need to



excel in their endeavors (van Dijk et al., 2019). As a result, the meritocratic viewpoint implies that an individual's talents drive success and decide the resources and incentives that accrue over time.

While this implies that disparities in the workplace accumulate over time, such inequalities are thought to be centered on individual differences in skills rather than social economic status. Indeed, given that skills are spread fairly among social classes, the meritocratic viewpoint assumes that, over time, workplaces can lead to social equity by offering resources and incentives based on talents and performance levels, regardless of initial social inequality. The exception is socioeconomic disparity between those with higher and lower educational qualifications, which is called merit-based because educational qualifications are meant to represent disparities in skills (van Dijk et al., 2019).

According to Yair, (2007), there are three components that make up meritocracy. They include, talent-based careers, educational opportunities tailored to natural aptitude and achievement as the foundation for social reward system in the society. The first concept of meritocracy represents the need to employ those who demonstrate ability rather than appointing people based on nepotism or bribery, for example. The second aspect is the method of evaluating and selecting children with the greatest potential for admission to the best schools and, ultimately, universities (Stevenson & Stigler, 1994). The third component of meritocracy is achievement, which leads to the functionalist notion that ascription must be replaced by achievement. In this view, in order for society to function at its best, various levels of achievement should be rewarded differently (Davis & Moore, 1945). As a result, meritocracy establishes a foundation for the distribution of opportunities.

III. METHODOLOGY

The method adopted for this qualitative analysis is integrative literature review based on the desk study of secondary data.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Talent-Based Careers Can Be Used to Tap Youth as a Resource for Development in Developing Countries

Job Success, Which Is A Feature Of An Individual's Skills, Determines Opportunities And Incentives. Rather than believing that skills are solely a product of an individual's inherent characteristics, talents may also be learned. Since multiple opportunities and rewards, such as promotion and training, contribute to the creation of skills, those who have more initial opportunities and rewards are more likely to accumulate more capabilities and, as a result, more subsequent opportunities and rewards (Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993).

As a result, developing countries must hire young people based on merit in fields like science and technology, athletics, and the arts. Developing countries will generate explosive wealth that will translate into meaningful growth by using its untapped youth as tools and implementing successful policies. The key to science's success and nations' development is basic but profound: ideas. This is the most critical secret of the industrialized world's riches. And the never-ending pursuit of the economic and military advantages and supremacy that scientific invention and technology confer is a necessary component of a worldview that alters reality on the ground (ASTII, 2014).

Kenya, for example has fallen behind because, despite its historical scientific prowess, its people have not done so in a meritocratic manner. For example, science and technology, (S&T) are an integral part of Kenyan culture, which heavily influence our everyday lives. S&T is described as a key foundation in Kenya upon which the economic, social, and political pillars are built as envisaged by the Kenya Vision 2030, Government of Kenya (GoK, 2008). It is well anchored in ST&I policy that is pegged on the Kenya constitution (GoK, 2010). According to GCI, (2018), Kenya has continuously improved significantly in innovation pillar and technological readiness over the years. However, R&D intensity is still low. This has been exacerbated by the fact that the best minds in science and technology are the youth wallowing in unemployment. Therefore, the governments should devise deliberate policies that promote meritocracy in the workplace, ensuring that the best talent is recruited and nurtured to invent and innovate. This will push science and technology into the country's development pedestal.

4.2 Educational Opportunities Tailored to Natural Aptitude can be Used to Tap Youth as a Resource for Development in developing Countries

The educational system has an inherent selection feature in addition to an educational function (Jury et al., 2015). The school system's selection feature refers to the fact that it has been entrusted with the task of assigning pupils to various roles (Bellat & Tenret, 2009). As a result, school grades and degrees are regarded as "merit certificates" that heavily influence one's future social status. Higher-status students are typically oriented toward higher-status positions,



while lower-status students (or those with no degrees) are typically oriented toward lower-status positions. As a result of the high stakes associated with school achievement and failure in deciding one's future, society's perceived justice is inextricably linked to the perceived fairness of the educational system. To put it another way, individuals in such a system must assume that the selection process is fair—that their degrees, ranks, and grades are solely the product of their efforts and merit.

Because education and training form the backbone of economic development, meritocracy, should be enhanced in developing countries to select the best students and reward them with scholarships to join well-funded universities. Such young people are likely to pursue such fields as science and technology and in so doing bring about scientific revolution that will jump start economic development in the region. This group of young should also benefit from customized training, in the developed world or other appropriate settings, so as to upgrade their capabilities. Development of specific human resources based on meritocracy must be at the top of the priority list if governments in the region.

4.3 Achievement as the Foundation for Social Reward System in the Society Can Be Used to Tap Youth as a Resource for Development in Developing Countries

Around the world organizations are increasingly recognizing the need to strike a fair balance between the employee's contribution to the company and the company's contribution to the employee. One of the key reasons to compensate and recognize workers is to achieve this balance. Compensation, incentives, and appreciation are the three key components of an incentive scheme that organizations that take a systematic approach to achieving this balance focus on (Deeprise, 1994).

According to studies on the topic, the most common issue in today's organizations is that they overlook the critical component of acknowledgement, which is the low-cost, high-return ingredient in a well-balanced incentive scheme. The aim of appreciation is to make workers feel respected and appreciated (Sarvadi, 2005). Employees who are recognized have higher self-esteem, more confidence, are more likely to take on new challenges, and are more excited to be creative, according to research (Mason, 2001).

A successful reward and recognition system will clearly contribute to people's happiness as well as their ability and motivation to learn and develop their skills, resulting in higher retention. People's levels of happiness are heavily influenced by the types of incentives and appreciation they get. The more well compensated and recognized people are, the happier they are with their work and their lives. Employees who are happy are less likely to leave, change jobs, join unions, or miss work. In conclusion, businesses benefit when employees receive a degree of compensation that makes them feel at least marginally happy (Lawler, 2003).

Incorporating and using youth's skills and talents necessitates deliberate government policies that provide an atmosphere in which young people can use their skills and talents (Hennessy, et al., 2010). Establishing a more meritocratic workplace does not necessitate a significant amount of time or money. It comes down to defining specific procedures and qualifications for employee selection and evaluation or any employee career decision. It's also a matter of tracking and reviewing the results of those organization processes, as well as entrusting the duty, capacity, and authority to ensure that such structured processes are equal to individuals or groups within the organization. The collection and analysis of data on people-related processes and results, known as "people analytics," is critical in this case, allowing organisations to recognize and correct workplace biases (Castilla, 2016). If adopted, reward and appreciation could be used to tap youth as a source of growth in Africa. According to the literature, meritocracy requires recognition and performance reviews. As a result, both public and private organizations could use the meritocracy mechanism to integrate youth into the region's mainstream economic agenda.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study looked into how meritocracy is implemented in society. According to the research, meritocracy can be used to create an efficient work culture and encourage economic growth while also promoting social progress. Furthermore, its implementation is likely to foster a more meritocratic culture and aid in the society's economic transition. Nonetheless, the study concludes that non-meritocratic culture, especially neopatrimonialism, is thought to play a significant role in limiting youth access to opportunities in developing countries.



5.2 Recommendations

The concept of compensating people based on their ability is still relatively new in developing countries. As a result, policymakers should think about using meritocracy as a way to kick start economic progress in a capitalist market paradigm. To foster meritocracy in society, concepts and practices such as results-based culture of performance and accountability, as well as clear and open communication, must be implemented.

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