

Knowledge Economy and Nigeria's National Security

Essays in Honour of
Basorun Seinde Arogbofa, *PEN, OFR*

Edited by

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Contents

Notes on Contributors	viii
1. Introduction: Knowledge Economy and Our Collective Security – <i>Isaac Olawale Albert and Babajide O. Ololajulo</i>	1
2. Seinde Arogbofa and the Dream of Nigeria as a Knowledge Society: A Man and his Mantra – <i>Peter Adebayo Aborisade</i>	9
3. Rethinking Security Education in a World of Asymmetric Warfare – <i>Isaac Olawale Albert</i>	19
4. The Imperatives of Formal and Informal Security Education in Nigeria – <i>Pius E. Adejoh</i>	31
5. The Relevance of Intelligence Sharing in Counter-insurgency – <i>Samuel Unenwojo Odoma</i>	52
6. The Social Media and (Counter-) Terrorism in Nigeria – <i>Emeka Thaddues Njoku</i>	65
7. Critical Issues in Building Capacity for Reporting Election in Nigeria – <i>Muyiwa Popoola</i>	85
8. Terrorism and Economic Challenges: Thinking Outside Security Box – <i>Oyesoji Aremu and Linus Terry Dzever</i>	99
9. Knowledge Economy and Security: The Nigerian Situation – <i>Rotimi A. Animasahun</i>	107
10. “Yahoo Boys”: Disoriented Knowledge and National Security in Nigeria – <i>Babajide O. Ololajulo</i>	114
11. The Question of Home Training and Public Morality in Nigeria: Some Reflections – <i>Babatunde J. Omotoso and Olukunle Omotoso</i>	130
12. Knowledge-based Economy, the Home Training Question and Public Morality in Nigeria – <i>M. T. Fatoba</i>	141

13.	From Insurgency to Cultural Diplomacy: Education and the Transformation of Gani Adams' O'odua Peoples' Congress – <i>Aderemi Suleiman Ajala</i>	145
14.	Knowledge Industry and the Development Crises in the Niger Delta Region: An Examination of the Place of Environmental Education – <i>Benjamin Okaba</i>	156
15.	“What Political Leaders Teach Their Followers”: Knowledge of Politics and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria – <i>Babajide O. Ololajulo</i>	179
16.	Impact of Visual Images on the Communication of National Security Messages to Nigerians – <i>Ayo Elebute</i>	191
17.	Curbing Insurgency and Terrorism in Nigeria: The Role of Education – <i>William O. Olu-Aderounmu</i>	209
18.	Teaching Peace Education in Nigerian Primary Schools: Prospects and Challenges – <i>'Gbade Ikuejube</i>	218
19.	Peace Education as a Strategy for Maintaining Peaceful Co-Existence among Secondary School Students in Nigeria – <i>Olufemi Onweazu Okoji</i>	224
20.	Rethinking the High Rate of School Dropouts in Nigeria – <i>Olusola O. Isola</i>	231
21.	Rate of School Dropouts in Nigeria: Factors and Effects – <i>Abiodun Olumide Ayeni</i>	240
22.	Religious Knowledge and Knowledge of Religion as Factors of National Security in Nigeria – <i>Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo</i>	251
23.	Paradox, Knowledge and Religious Violence in Nigeria: A Case for Reverse-Thinking – <i>Benson O. Igboin</i>	266
24.	“A Continent Without a History”?: Rendering Africa Visible in Recent Church History Textbooks – <i>Ken Sawyer</i>	282

25.	Gender in Peacekeeping Training – <i>Naomi E.N. Akpan-Ita</i>	294
26.	Gender and Knowledge Economy in Nigeria – <i>Omolara D. Olatubosun</i>	309
27.	The Knowledge of Nonviolence as a Social Parameter for Peacebuilding – <i>Blessing O. Omoroghomwan</i>	320
28.	Rethinking Wealth Creation in Nigeria: Exploiting Open Data as the “New Oil” – <i>Adegboyega Ojo and Sope Williams-Elegbe</i>	331
29.	Rethinking Wealth Creation in the Context of Nigerian Educational System – <i>Adeboye Adeyemo</i>	352
30.	The 1999 Constitution and the Dynamics of the Indigene-Settler Crisis in Jos, Plateau State – <i>Ekundayo O. Babatunde</i>	364
31.	Rethinking Knowledge Economy in Kano State – <i>Nathaniel D. Danjibo</i>	375
32.	An Exploration of Multimodal Discourse Analysis and its Relevance to Language Studies – <i>Kayode Samuel Ariyo and Ayodeji Olowu</i>	395
33.	Survival is Not Enough: Building Capacity of a Thriving Civil Society in West Africa – <i>Charles Kojo Vandyck</i>	409
	Index	417

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CHAPTER NINE

Rotimi A. Animasahun

Knowledge Economy and Security: The Nigerian Situation

Introduction

The whole world has gradually become a global village whereby everybody relates in terms of communication, trade, exchange of ideas, increase in job mobility, improved GDP, etc. The driving force behind this great advancement is knowledge-based economy. A knowledge economy is one where organisations and people acquire, create, disseminate and use knowledge more effectively for greater economic and social development by providing more efficient ways of producing goods and services and delivering them more effectively and at lower costs to a greater number of people (News Knowledge Economy, 2014).

Wealth creation through conscious application of human knowledge and creativity is steadily out-pacing wealth creation through extraction and processing of natural resources. Therefore, knowledge has increasingly become an important means for value creation and has also become a vital commodity to countries, businesses and individuals in the 21st century age of knowledge-based economies (Ghirmai, 2010).

Knowledge economy is the current phase in the evolution of human endeavour, which has progressed rapidly through the industrial age, the technological and information age to the present focus on human capital, knowledge, expertise and innovation. This advancement has been driven largely by globalisation and sustainability imperatives that have demanded continual innovation and creativity to establish competitive advantage and long-term viability of international organisations. New technology has served as an enabling factor that has made it possible for human capital to be developed, shared and applied in new ways and at an immense scale and place collectively under the umbrella term of knowledge economy.

Most advanced economies have undergone significant structural changes in recent years. One of the key characteristics of the changes is the growing importance of knowledge in all sectors of economic activities. These economies have developed from an agricultural economy in which land is the key resource to an industrial economy which emphasises natural resources and labour, and now to a Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE) characterised by ICTs in which knowledge is the key resource (Dymond and Oestermann, 2004). In the same vein, Nigerian economy has evolved from agrarian, industrial, oil and gas to knowledge economy. Drucker (2001) posits that the next society would be knowledge society. According to Drucker, knowledge will be its key resource and knowledge workers will be the dominant group with three main characteristics:

- (i) Borderless – knowledge travels even more than money;
- (ii) Upward mobility – available to everyone through easily acquired formal education;
- (iii) Potential for success as well as failure – anyone can acquire the means of production, i.e. knowledge required for the job, but not everyone can win.

ICT is an integral part of the knowledge economy. Foray and Lundvall (1996) argue that ICT revolution and knowledge-based economy are strongly interrelated. The ICT system gives the knowledge-based economy a new and different technological base which radically changes the conditions for the production and distribution of knowledge as well as its coupling to the production system. A popular advertisement on the radio says “An illiterate is not someone who cannot read or write, but someone who cannot use a computer”.

Many organisations began to be more involved either in delivering knowledge-based products or in actual selling knowledge directly. This has seriously affected and is still affecting the process of knowledge economy worldwide, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The development of knowledge economy base and the value added as created by qualified knowledge is directly related to a national scale economic growth and sustainable productivity. Indeed, the transformation of Nigerian economy involves internal and external relationships through ICT optimising products and service delivery, which is an important element in the development of Nigeria as a nation. A shift in world economy towards knowledge-based products and services have become indispensable in the recent past. Globalisation and developments in ICT have changed the business scenario and the entire landscape (Pedro, 2012).

However, Dymond and Oestermann (2004) argue that there is a great lack of strategic ‘e-readiness’ for knowledge-based economy in developing countries in particular. E-readiness has become sufficiently widespread as a concept to generate a number of variants in the successful implementation of knowledge-based economy. These include infrastructures, such as data system; legal institution; human; technology; leadership and strategic thinking. These areas of e-readiness represent the strategic challenge to knowledge-based economy in Nigeria. They operate at the macro-level of the whole nation, and they act as a precursor to knowledge-based economy and its successful implementation.

Nevertheless, knowledge economy has enabled people to secure highly skilled and lucrative jobs. It has also improved the quality of education through access to books, journal articles and vital information which may ordinarily be difficult to come by. There is also an improved information and communication system whereby information happening around the globe is received promptly. There is also a remarkable improvement in technology, medicine, and so on.

The new knowledge economy would give rise to new organisational forms within and between companies and a radical shake-up in employment relationships as more and more knowledge workers become portfolio workers, freelancers, or self-employed (Brinkley, 2008). This implies that there would be increase in the ability to use knowledge

to enhance the life of the workers in the economy. The decision to be self-employed or to engage in paid employment would not be difficult to make.

However, Nigeria is still lagging behind in the full utilisation of knowledge economy. For instance, the Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) (2012) ratings identify four pillars of knowledge economy which include:

- (i) Economic Incentive and Institutional Regime (EIR);
- (ii) Innovation and Technological Adoption;
- (iii) Education and Training; and
- (iv) Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Infrastructures

Nigeria has been ranked 118th in the world according to World Bank's knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM, 2012), carried out with a tool produced by the Knowledge Economy Index. This means that in relations to the four pillars, Nigeria still has a long way to go though it is making progress at it.

As novel and beneficial as the knowledge economy is to the world and Nigeria specifically, it is threatened with many security challenges. According to *Wikipedia* (2014), security is the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, nation, or organisation. As noted by the Institute for Security and Open Methodologies in the OSSTMM 3, security provides a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat. These separations are generically called "controls", and sometimes include changes to the asset or the threat.

The first security challenge to knowledge-based economy is Data Protection. Ajanaku (2014) stresses the importance of data security. In like manner, the President, Nigeria Computer Society (NCS), Prof. David Adewumi has said Nigeria's pursuit of a knowledge-based economy will not stand the test of time if steps are not taken to protect the data of people. He warned that cyber warfare could be more devastating than the physical warfare going on across the globe. Adewumi who spoke on the sideline at the computer professionals umbrella body's 25th annual conference in Enugu, Enugu State recently, said the trend globally is a paradigm shift to knowledge-based economy, adding that Nigeria can no longer wait while other countries take proactive steps to improve the living standards of their people. He urged private and public organisation to prioritise data protection. According to him, the current contribution of the ICT sector to the nation's GDP could be doubled if steps are taken by the government to put in place a knowledge-based economy driven by ICT.

Odumuboni (2014) asserts that in the knowledge economy, data is collected about everyone and it is a prime currency for activities and business. Protection of this information/data within the economy therefore, has to be of topmost importance. She posits that inability to know the people who have access to information, what is being accessed, which information is flowing out of organisations and nation or flowing in, is one of the security issues of the knowledge economy. Data for a particular individual, organisation or nation could be assessed and be utilised negatively thereby having

negative impact on the individual, organisation or nation whose data is misused. Therefore, data protection is a security challenge of the knowledge economy.

Another security issue identified by Odumuboni is piracy. According to her, the reliance on knowledge as a means of exchange makes susceptibility to piracy a grand and growing problem. She describes piracy as the act of illegally copying someone's product or invention without permission. She cites the BSA and IDC global software piracy study which revealed that the commercial value of unlicensed PC software installations totalled \$2.7 billion globally in 2013. The consequences of piracy according to her are loss of revenue, killing of innovation, reputational damage and loss of competitive advantage (Odumuboni, 2014).

Identity theft is another identified security challenge for knowledge economy. Again, Odumuboni describes identity theft as a form of stealing someone's identity in which someone pretends to be someone else by assuming that person's identity. This is done in order to gain access to resources or obtain credit and other benefits in that person's name. The challenge in a knowledge-based economy where most information is digital makes it difficult to confirm the identity of each and every person. With stolen identity, the attacker can perpetrate all kinds of activities (Odumuboni, 2014). The case in mind is that of Cynthia Osokogu, an undergraduate who met some boys on Facebook, posing as potential dates. She was invited to a hotel. Unknown to her they were predators who raped her, dispossessed her of valuables and then murdered her.

Dymond and Oestermann (2004) further strengthen the need for security in ICT-based services because the convenience associated with knowledge-based economy increases the need for security. Hence, the core security areas, such as confidentiality, integrity, and availability must be addressed. A key concern is that of privacy. You cannot expect to do business on the internet without addressing the privacy concerns of your customers. Security measures must be installed and must be effective to prevent not only the breach of privacy but other security concerns like the alteration of data, ICT fraud, etc. Security is vital to the success of digital or knowledge economy. We cannot claim to be clamouring for a knowledge economy when security is porous. Therefore, it is critical for the nation to put appropriate security measures to secure the country's sovereignty.

System availability is another serious threat to knowledge economy. System availability assurance still has a lot of effect on knowledge-based economy in Nigeria. When you are in knowledge economy, your products and services as a nation are totally dependent on ICT. Of what use are powerful and operational programmes, which are lacking in recovery procedures in an environment where telecommunications services are still at best epileptic? Fault tolerance and robustness of the ICT setup in a knowledge-based economy nation must never be underestimated. Contingency plans should be put in place to handle this persistent problem of availability. That is, in a knowledge-based economy nation offering worldwide products and services, the fault tolerance of its ICT infrastructure cannot be compromised. Availability planning must address power supply, telecommunications, internet service, quality of technical support, backup facilities, and

robustness of ICT setup, such as hardware tools, software tools and networking systems (Pedro, 2012). Country Managing Director, Accenture Nigeria, Biyi Yusuf said there is need for Nigeria to leverage knowledge-based economy through ICT that would drive the country's education sector. To achieve this, she said Nigeria should be able to deploy cost-based technology (Ajanaku, 2014).

Food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture taking together is another area of concern as far as knowledge economy is concerned. It is time to rethink how we grow, share and consume our food. If done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centred rural development and protecting the environment. But right now, our soils, freshwater, oceans, forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded. Climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources we depend on. A profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed if we are to nourish today's 925 million hungry and the additional 2 billion people expected by 2050. The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions to the problem of unemployment, development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication (UNDESA, 2014).

On sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD), it should be noted that by the year 2025, 83 per cent of the expected global population of 8.5 billion will be living in developing countries. Yet the capacity of available resources and technologies to satisfy the demands of this growing population for food and other agricultural commodities remains uncertain. Agriculture has to meet this challenge, mainly by increasing production on land already in use and by avoiding further encroachment on land that is only marginally suitable for cultivation. Also, major adjustments are needed in agricultural, environmental and macroeconomic policy, at both national and international levels, in developed as well as developing countries, to create the conditions for SARD. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) first reviewed these issues at its third session in 1995, when it noted with concern that even though some progress had been reported, disappointment is widely expressed at the slow progress in moving towards sustainable agriculture and rural development in many countries. E-Sustainable agriculture should be considered in Nigeria to meet up with the global practices for sustainable food production and in support of the International Alliance against Hunger to accelerate action to reduce world hunger (UNDESA, 2014).

Financial institutions and economic security which delve into the role of financial institutions in supporting or undermining economic security in the advanced nations of the West, and the implications for industrial innovation and economic performance is another issue as far as knowledge economy and security is concerned. At the conference held in London on 21-22 May, 2009, the influence of financial institutions on employment security, retirement security, and housing security, as well as the interrelations among these forms of economic security in North America and Europe was considered (Lazonic and Mazzucato, 2014).

Information security of knowledge economy should also be considered here. The issues of computerisation, information and recently, "internetisation" of education

demand deep analysis of impacts initiated by them in the development of students in order to avoid non-desired consequences in their psychological and socio-cultural conditions. All things around a modern person are connected with information technologies in society-knowledge economy. The software and hardware resources are constantly renewed, so also in the educational spheres. This is so in order to avoid psychological numbness because of non-desired information, to teach "digital generation" to think – this is the goal of education system today. Analysis of existing threats and dangers originating from the use of internet-resources has shown that information security is obligatory condition to provide positive personal development of all participants of education environment (Nadezhda, 2013).

Odumuboni (2014) proffers some security measures that could be put in place in order to address the security issues in a knowledge-based economy which include effective identity management, robust information security framework, adequate legislation and cyber security awareness.

If Nigeria is to benefit maximally from knowledge economy, the issue of security in its entire ramifications must be properly taken into consideration. For instance, there must be adequate security of the country's educational activities. Curriculum planners must go back to the real definition of education, which according to Achibald Callaway in Osokoya (2003), originated from two Latin words: *Educere* and *Educare*. While *Educere* means to "bring out", *Educare* means "to nurture". This actually means that education is supposed to bring out the innate potential of the individual and nurture it so that individual will be trained according to his natural endowment which would make him grow and excel in his natural area of calling. This is the best way to reduce graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the present educational system only trains every individual towards looking for white-collar jobs that are no longer there.

Also, knowledge economy in Nigeria should be utilised to address the problem of provision of employment opportunities for all and sundry as well as effective empowerment programmes leading to functional poverty alleviation project and facilitate meaningful engagement of individuals, which could drastically reduce the high crime rate in the country. Therefore, knowledge economy in Nigeria could be more beneficial if the government and relevant stakeholders would seek for means by which the knowledge economy would benefit all concerned. It could lead to poverty reduction, wealth creation and improved international relations. Just as the News Knowledge Economy (2014) advises that if we cannot solve all the ills of the world, we should at least be able to manage this one, the Nigeria government should be abreast of the current situation in the world and apply the benefits of knowledge economy to manage the present challenges in the country.

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