

Integrating Entrepreneurship Education into Higher Education Curriculum for Self-Reliance and National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract. Education is seen as an instrument for social/economic mobility. The development of a nation has close relationship with the quality of its education. Parents see it as investment in the recipient. The true situation in the contemporary period is that this objective is far from reality as college graduates are not only unemployed, they may at times rely on their aged parents for a living. It is based on this background that the paper attempts to examine the limitations of the current educational system in Nigeria and propose a reform not only in the structure but also in the psyche of the citizenry towards making education functional and the recipients self-reliant. Developed countries of the world, Israel for example used education to develop technology through introduction of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) right from the secondary school. The University education in Nigeria which presently has a span of four years and above should be elongated by two years during which students are exposed to vocations out of which they go for practical experience in the one they prefer. This paper profess that vocational and entrepreneurial education be made compulsory and assessed like other courses. The students should be properly guided against solely searching for white collar jobs. It is therefore suggested that the government should encourage the graduates by provision of take off loans with minimal interest. The National Orientation Agency is expected to

sensitise stakeholders to embrace vocational education towards self and National development.

Keywords: Education, Self-reliance, Vocational, National Development

1. Introduction

Education enterprise in any country attract the interests of stakeholders like Government, parents, the students, the Society and Non-Governmental bodies to mention just a few. These stakeholders have great expectations from the recipients of the educational system. While the Government expect the recipients to be agents of socio-economic transformation, parents and students look forward to returns from investments on education by way of employment or accruable economic benefits while the society expects qualitative social dispositions from the beneficiaries of education.

It has been very obvious that none of the stakeholders have been fulfilled as regards achievement of their objectives. The incapability of the education sector to deliver as expected may not be unconnected with non-consideration of an answer to the great question. Education for what? To the extent that the educational system fail to adjust periodically to the needs of its society, to that extent will there be disillusion on

the part of the stakeholders as regards their expectations.

Dauda (2009) stated that “The crucial role education plays in the overall development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. It is not only seen as a key to poverty reduction and vehicle for promoting equity, fairness and social justice but also helps to supply the essential human capital which is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth. Thus, enhancing effective investment on education has been a tenet of growth and development strategies of most countries”.

Whereas the society is dynamic in developmental attainments and needs, educational sector particularly in developing countries like Nigeria is very slow in bringing to bear patterns of adjustments to compliment the changing outlook of the society. Edward de Bono referenced by Akinboye (2007) stated that “Education systems are a disgrace to civilization. Much has changed in the last century: transport, telecommunication computing, values etc. The one thing that hardly changes at all is education. Education has reached a stable equilibrium state from which it cannot be judged”.

This paper focused on the tertiary level of education specifically university education, employment challenges, experiences of developed countries and strategies for promoting self-reliant graduates by universities in Nigerian which will dovetail to appreciable development of the country.

The foremost wish of an average secondary school leaver (and parents) in Nigeria is securing admission into the university. The Polytechnic and Colleges of Education rank next. The Tertiary Institutions are expected to generate knowledge through research, disseminate same and ignite the development mechanism of the nation through innovative inputs. Promotion of positive character for career development is also sacrosanct. The products are expected not only to be well developed cognitively but to also be capable of analysing issues and develop logical thinking capacities all which are essential for

social development which is an ingredient of National Development.

Danbazau (2015) quoting Larry Gigerich MD Indiana-based development advising firm wrote... higher education and economic development are inextricably linked to one another, and for any country to be successfully in economic development, universities must be key partners throughout the process.

The University is a medium of development of expertise in various disciplines. This in turn promotes improved services through updated knowledge and positive innovation which contributed to economic growth.

Don (2002), expanded the focus of development beyond economic dimension to new concepts such as poverty reduction, social justice, environmental sustainability human rights and empowerment. These dimensions additional concepts can best be taken care of at higher education level.

University Education is most sought for and this has probably been the main factor for its rapid expansion currently there are 153 universities in Nigeria. Forty (40) of them belong to the Federal Government, Forty four (44) to state Government and sixty nine (69) to private bodies. Of the 83 Federal and State Universities, 21 are specialized in areas of Technology, Agriculture, Education, Military, Police and Petroleum. It is rather surprising that some of the specialized universities are functioning outside their scope. It is difficult to justify how a university of Agriculture will venture into courses like law, medicine and accounting to mention a few. Bogoro (2015) noted that this anomaly has led to deviation from founding objectives. Furthermore, it should be stated that the expansion is more of linear than comprehensive in scope and quality. This in turn lead to deficiency in quality output, increase in unemployment, escalation of youth delinquency like cultism, internet fraud, kidnapping etc.

The quality of graduates of the university system is not independent of the existing environment and mode of operation of the university system. When countries like Iceland, Israel, USA invest

7.9%, 7.3%, and 7.2% of their GDP on Education, Nigeria devote about 1% contrary to Dakar's recommendation that African countries should invest between 4% to 5% of GDP of the total economy in the field of education (Shevel, 2015). Infact Nigeria allocated 8% and 6% to education in the National Budget of 2016 and 2017 respectively.

The fault of deficiency in standard of higher education products is among others a result of deficiency of input to education and disposition of the students as well. Dambazau (2015) noted that many of the public universities have inadequate number and quality of classrooms, lecture halls laboratories, workshops, halls of residence and other physical structures. There had been tremendous increase in admission without corresponding expansion of facilities. To worsen the situation negative character disposition of some students such as cultism, examination malpractice, crime, use of drugs, absentism from lectures, violent demonstration among others have negative effect on the quality of the university products.

In the contemporary period, staff unions are more visible than the students' unions. Prolonged strikes based on issues like non-payment of salaries, underfunding, condition of service, lack of facilities to function with demand for autonomy, disagreement with management, have all affected negatively the output of the university system. The Punch newspaper of 9th January, 2017 in its editorial was of the opinion that the problems of Nigeria's university system are structural. Referring to the 2012 Needs Assessment report prepared by the government, there is a profound personnel deficiency. It revealed that 43% of lecturers had PhD while 57% have lowers qualifications. The distribution of qualified lecturers among existing universities revealed that just seven universities had up to 60% of lecturers with PhD.

Perhaps, the issues raised above led to the poor global rating of the Nigeria universities. The latest global biometrics ranking of universities placed University of Ibadan in a position of 1,366 in the world (19 in Africa) while Covenant University, Ota, established by Living Faith Ministries is next in 1,723 (25 in Africa) and

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife followed in 2,038 (32 in Africa). University of Ibadan was the only Nigerian University to make the Times Higher Education list by ranking 978 globally (Punch, 2017).

2. Employment Challenges

There seems to be a deep fixation in orientation of University graduates and parents that the primary essence of education at that level is to prepare the recipients for white collar employment. However, there are many factors working against the realization of these expectations. The social economic development of Nigeria is hinged on revenue from oil, the price of which is beyond what Nigeria can solely determine. The recent drop in price has affected all aspects of the nation, ranging from non-payment of salaries, inadequate infrastructure, low input to education, closure of industries to mention just a few. It is apparently difficult for such a nation to guarantee new employment opportunities. Worse still, many employers do complain of low quality expertise on the part of the latter. Many of the graduates also read courses that are not relevant to the needs of the labour market.

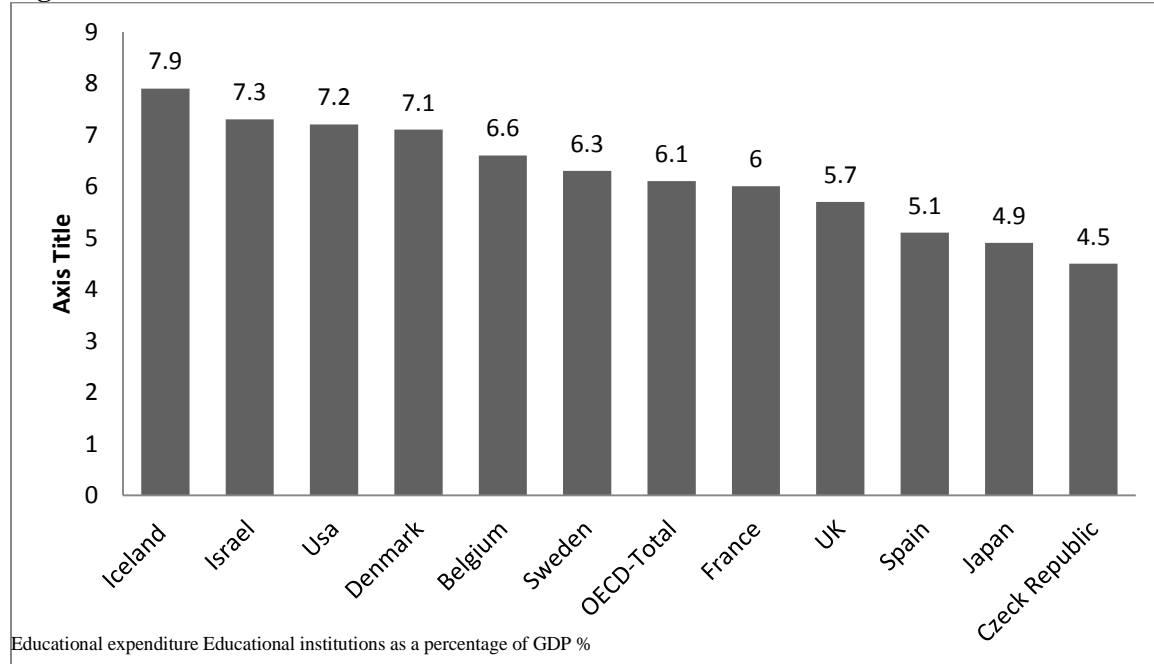
The government, though directed that the ratio of admission to universities should be 60:40 for science and other courses respectively, it has been unachievable because of many reasons. There are more non science students in the Universities. More of the applicants have flair for Arts and commercial subjects. The universities in Nigeria whether government or private are currently experiencing serious funding challenge. This has led to admission with less cognizance to the 60:40 science/non science specification. In fact record has shown that some specialized university such as in Agriculture and Technology offer non science courses like Business Administration, Accounting, Law in order to boost their enrolment and financial standing. The graduates are knowledgeable in their field of studies but lack competence in vocations. Once they fail to get employed they join the pool of the unemployment. The ego and misplaced notion that they are beyond going into vocation which are regarded as 'menial' also compound issues.

3. Developed Countries

Developed countries place high priority to education sector. The table below indicate the

percentage of GDP which twelve developed countries of the world invest in education. Nigeria hardly invests 1% of its GDP on education.

Figure 1:



Source: Joseph Shevel (2015). *Higher Education and Development: Lessons for Nigeria*. In *Higher Education and National Development*. University of Ibadan Postgraduate School Discourse Series. Edited by Adetinka, A.A, Oyeduntan, A & Aderemi, I.A.

A striking example of a country that got itself developed through education is Israel. This is a country considered to be semi desert and therefore no water. The effect of this on agriculture is obvious. It is the only country in the middle East without oil. Nigeria is better than Israel in the area of natural resources yet far apart in terms of national development. Shevel (2015) noted that the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion was so committed to education not only in area of investment but also compelled the children to go to school or the father be sent to jail. That was about 70 years ago.

It is important to indicate that Israel was aware of her needs and structured its education towards that direction. The focus was more on the Sciences. Today Israel is said to have the highest ratio of University graduates to the population in the world and 12% of them hold higher degrees. According to Shevel, Israel ranks third in the world in terms of Qualified Engineers index (after Finland and India) world competitive yearbook (2012). 24% of Israelis are in engineering related employment.

What Israel lacked in term of natural and mineral endowments have been taken care of by structured educational system. A country without water, oil, vegetation has today through scientific educational development, now have drip irrigation system and sold the same technology to more than 100 countries of the world. Israel also allocates 4.5% of its GDP to R & D which is the highest in the world ahead of Sweden, Finland and Japan which invest less than 2%. This has made the country a high-tech centre. The agricultural sector is characterized by improved seedlings and animal husbandry. For example Israeli cows provide 50 litres of milk per day (highest in the world) as against 10 litres per day of the Nigeria counterpart.

The implications of the educational system planned towards the needs and economic development of the country has not only produced wealth for the country, it has opened up a robust avenue for employment of its citizenry. The education system is not only scientifically biased it encourage putting into practice what is learnt.

All the ten top World's Education systems according to Pearson (2016) Education ranking are developed countries.

Table 1: Top 10 World Educational System

Rank	Country
1	South Korea
2	Japan
3	Singapore
4	Hong Kong
5	Finland
6	UK
7	Canada
8	Netherlands
9	Ireland
10	Poland

Source: Pearson Education Ranking, 2016

This justifies the universal notion that the educational system of any Nation play very important role in its development.

A variable that plays important role in any educational system is the Teacher. Just as a nation depends on its educational system for development, the quality of the educational system is also dependent on the quality of its Teachers. The table below indicate five top ranked countries in teacher education by McKinsey (2010).

Table 2: World's Top 5 Teacher Education Systems

Rank	Country
1	Finland
2	South Korea
3	Singapore
4	Hong Kong
5	Ontario, Canada

Source: McKinsey Ranking, 2010

The common factors among the five countries as indicated by McKinsey and restated by Okebukola (2016) are:

- Get the right people to become teachers
- Develop teachers to become effective instructors and
- Ensure that every child succeeds.

Teachers are subjected to rigorous training not only in content and pedagogy but also capacity to engage in research. The remuneration is good and comparable to other professions particularly in South Korea. Teachers are also exposed to on the job development. They enjoy considerable authority and professional autonomy. These promote job satisfaction and effective discharge of services.

Comparing the world top teacher education systems countries situation with Nigeria, the survey of quality of graduate teachers in Nigeria in relation to the minimum standards carried out by the National Universities Commission (NUC) 2004-2006 is very revealing. According to Okebukola (2016), the study

was to determine the strength and weakness of the minimum academic standards in education through an assessment of on-the-job performance of first degree holders in Education.

On the positive side, it was revealed that the average education graduate is adaptable and learn fast. They are capable as serving as change agent as well as broad based theoretically in their areas of specialisation. They are young and readily cope with stress and pressures.

The study also identified some deficiencies of education graduates in job performance. The results are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Overall Assessment of Skills

Skills	VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR
Literary skills	0%	22.2 %	66.7 %	11.1 %	0%
Oral Communication	0%	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%	0%
Information Technology skills	0%	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	0%
Entrepreneurial skills	0%	0%	88.9%	11.1%	0%
Analytical skills	0%	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%	0%
Problem solving and decision making	0%	33.3%	44.4 %	22.2%	0%
Subject-specific knowledge	3.1%	8.2%	15.7 %	52.9 %	10.1%
Technical skills	0%	11.1 %	11.1 %	77.8 %	0%
Critical thinking skills	0%	22.2 %	66.7 %	11.1 %	0%
Self directed learning	0%	11.1 %	88.9 %	0 %	0%
Inter-personal skills	0%	33.3 %	55.6%	11.1 %	0%
Numeracy	0%	44.4 %	55.6 %	0%	0%

Source: NUC (2006). *Labour market expectations of graduates from Nigerian universities. Abuja, NUC Nigeria*

As laudable as Israeli educational programme is, it may not be possible to adopt it for Nigeria educational system. It can however be adapted to suit the Nigeria situation with the aim of reducing unemployment, promoting economic and social development. Kofi Annan the Secretary General of United Nations (1999) expressed the notion of education that suites the continent of African nations at the learning the initiative to strengthen African Universities.

He stated:

Universities provide the logical extension to basic education for all... it holds the key to something we all want and need: African answer to African problems, the capacity to address the most pressing issues both at the theoretical and practical levels.

4. Recommendations

For a Nigerian University to be able to answer Nigeria's problems, there is need to review its curricula. Presently the minimum duration for a degree programme for a secondary school

graduate is four years. Many of the courses offered and the content over years are more or less the same except for change in nomenclature. Furthermore, some of these courses are not relevant to the needs of the present situation. The resultant effect of this is the pronounced unemployment and frustration on the part of the University graduates.

It is on this note that the undergraduate programmes in the Universities should be reviewed to cater for individual, societal and National development. The following are hereby recommended:

The Federal Government should establish a Vocational and Entrepreneurial Commission which would be responsible for development of Curriculum for Vocational and Entrepreneurial Studies in Tertiary Institutions in the country. This should be done in conjunction with relevant bodies like the Nigeria Educational Research Development Council, the National Board for Technical Education, the National Universities Commission, National Commission for Colleges

of Education, Academic Staff Unions and Student Bodies.

The duration of the undergraduate courses should be extended from four years to six years. The additional two years should cater for entrepreneurial and vocational courses. The curriculum should be designed in such a way that the courses run throughout the six years, along with the basic degree programme. The undergraduate is first counseled as to the advantages of different vocations. They are introduced to as many vocations as possible such as plumbing, electronics, fashion design, catering, furniture etc. They are expected to pick any three vocation (e.g. plumbing, electronics and catering) in their second session. This is reduced to two at the third session (e.g. plumbing and catering) and one at the fourth session (e.g. plumbing). The student will continue with training in plumbing in the fifth and sixth sessions. During the last two sessions (i.e. 5th and 6th) he is expected to be attached to practitioners of the vocations for a period of three months each year. He would also undergo courses in basic accounting and as well as development of small scale businesses. At the end he will graduate in his basic degree e.g. B.Sc. Physics and a Diploma in Plumbing. The advantage of this is that if he is unable to get employed with the B.Sc. Physics, he can be self-employed in plumbing.

Like some developed countries of the world, the Nigeria government should make Teaching profession more attractive remuneration wise. Vocational and Entrepreneurial Teachers should be given special allowances in order to motivate them for better performances. Supervision strategies must be developed in order to give room for evaluation and needed adjustments from time to time.

For quality purpose, the Federal government should organize international training for would be instructors in the Universities.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund put in place by the Federal Government of Nigeria which intervenes annually in funding and development of both physical and human resources in tertiary

institutions in the country should fund the establishment of qualitative vocational centres in the Tertiary Institutions. This will promote qualitative practical vocational training of the students.

There are some courses which can be repositioned to promote optimum utility. For example a graduate of Yoruba Language should be able to know enough of Ifa deity and be able to function as Ifa priest. The chemistry graduate should be able to function as a patent medicine personnel. Theology should be part of Religious Studies curriculum so that the graduate could establish and manage a church. The Creative Arts graduate should be knowledgeable in Textile/Decoration/Ceramic.

The Bank of Industry should be directed by the government to put in place take off loan grant scheme at a very low interest rate for the young graduates.

The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) was established by Decree 47 of 8th October, 1971. ITF initiated the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWS) in 1973 to complement the theoretical knowledge acquired in higher institutions with practical experience.

The objectives of SIWES are:

- Provision of avenue for students in the Nigerian Universities to gain industrial skills and experience in their course of study.
- To prepare students for the work situation they are likely to meet after graduation.
- To expose students to work methods and techniques in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in the Universities.
- To make the transition from the University to the world of work easier and this enhance students contacts for later job placement.
- To provide students with an opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in real work situation, thereby bringing the gap between University work and actual practice.

- To enlist and strengthen employers involvement in entire educational process of preparing University graduates for employment.

The objectives of SIWES are fully stated in order to make it clear that the framework to make a success of the proposal of this paper that vocational education be extended to all undergraduates is in existence. Hitherto a negligible percentage of undergraduates of technical/practically oriented courses are supervised by SIWES. What is needed now is reinforcement of the organization to enable it cope with the enlarged responsibility.

The Senate of Universities should make it mandatory that a student successfully undergo the vocational and entrepreneur training before graduation.

There ought to be a well packaged enlightenment programme for the citizenry if this proposal is to succeed. There is likely to be resistance particularly in the area of elongation of duration of undergraduate programme and the introduction of vocational training which many people before now consider to be undignifying. There are many young graduates who have been unemployed for more than five years. Some negative effects of this are increase in crime rate, drug addiction and involvement in kidnapping all which can be minimized if there is opportunity of self-employment.

It is a common in Nigeria to see many industries employing expatriate artisans like welders, plumbers, electricians etc. These people are not only paid in foreign currency rate, they transfer same to their home countries. The young graduates can feel this gap if they embrace vocational training. This will consequently enhance development of the nation. A few years back, the Niger militant became very destructive of petroleum installations which in turn led to economic loss for the nation. A major step taken to address the issue was the organization of international vocational training for the militants. Many of them have finished their training and are back to the country gainfully employed by petroleum companies.

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