

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND JOB CREATION THROUGH BUSINESS EDUCATION: AN INSTRUMENT FOR ERADICATING INSECURITY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A PAPER PRESENTED BY

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Abstract

Despite the fact that the country has undergone Vocational and Technical Education system for years; the desires and aspirations of the government and people of Nigeria has remained a mirage. This is with reference to unemployment reduction, job creation, poverty reduction, and self-reliance motive of the government. Further, Vocational and Technical education has been included in the curricula of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and yet the situation has not changed. It is in the light of this obvious problem and the imminent danger to the society compounded by the present global economic meltdown that this paper is canvassing for skill oriented and practical education in Nigeria. This is different from the presently mounted business education in tertiary institutions which lacked practical components, not goal oriented (theory as usual) and therefore impotent. This paper examined the importance of full implementation of Vocational and Technical Education with recommendation that government must wake up from slumber and implement Vocational and Technical Education as measures to create jobs, an instrument for change/development and a provider of service oriented skills which play a significant role in economic development and eradication of the insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment, Job Creation, Insecurity, Entrepreneurship Education and Nigeria.

Introduction

This paper looked at Business Education as a functional education which can be used as a panacea for unemployment, poverty eradication and national security. Education has remained the major instrument for national development for many countries of the world that is the reason most nations of the world spend huge sums of money to provide education for their citizens. Thus education becomes a veritable platform for tackling socio-cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological challenges facing many nations.

According to Agi and Yellowe (2013) education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization and a high way to global knowledge economy. Agi et al (2013) explained further that education is regarded as a means of achieving culture of peace, gender equality and positive African values. It is therefore the understanding of many that education leads to national transformation and development, through reduction in poverty with ensured peace and security.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (2004) document lends credence to the place of education by clearly explaining its role in self-reliance and development, Agi and Yellowe (2013) also supports this when they asserted that the goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values. In view of the benefits of education enumerated above, Nigeria has provided education for decades with abundant available manpower. However, what keeps agitating the nation endlessly borders on the slow and inefficient economy, near primitive democracy and violent social co-existence in society (NEEDS, 2004), evidenced with many primary and secondary schools and tertiary institution's graduates not gainfully employed either by self or government.

Supporting this, Ochonma (2011) reported that about 2.8 million fresh graduates enter the labour market yearly and only 10% of these are gainfully employed. Analyzing the problem of education in Nigeria, Agi and Yellowe (2013) argued that the problem is not about curriculum or investment in education neither is it non-availability of manpower for the sector, but that many

have tended to look in the direction of management of education which include lack of policy analysis to make students to fit into society, yet not relying on the government of the day but the managerial ingenuity of educational managers and administrators to make education a building block of socio-economic empowerment, prosperity, self-reliance, employment crime reduction and national security, through improved access to quality, functional education at levels.

Quoting Mills, Nwadiani (2011) noted that education embraces not only the deliberate processes of schooling but it includes even indirect and incidental influences. This concept of education discusses formal and informal education; seeing education as going beyond the formal school system and includes non-formal education which make the whole process of learning a continuous one terminating at death. However, because of recent happenings – unemployment, underemployment, poverty and their re-occurring effects, many people have hitherto criticized formal education for lack of its relevance while some others also strongly looked down on informal education as being unable to promote the much needed development, scientific and technological breakthrough. According to Nwadiani (2011) there are misconceptions that non-formal education is cheap, designed and meant for the poor and it is only suitable to developing countries.

It must therefore be noted that these fallacious misconceptions are forces against the acceptance and popularization of the entrepreneurship in Nigeria's educational policy making and implementation. It is the purpose of this paper therefore to look at how business education can be used as instrument for eradicating insecurity for national development.

Concept of Business Education

The concept of business education, in the opinion of Adeboye and Olubela (2009) is concerned with the new ways of looking at opportunities and identifying a new approach towards solving problems. It also involves the consideration of a number of opportunities to enhance employees' performance and business profits. Business education is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. Business education majorly is to orient youth to other career options than paid employment.

It prepares them for opportunities, self-worth as well as the courage to pull and maintain them out of poverty.

Furthermore, Business Education (BE), according to Agada and Ekpa (2007) encouraged many people to be their own boss someday. This goal serves as an incentive for thousands to become entrepreneurs. It encourages individuals, especially the unemployed ones to become creative and stop searching for the jobs that are not there, rather they should start thinking of how to get themselves involved in doing one thing or the other on their own and therefore create employment for themselves, and if possibly employ other people. It does not only empower trainees with life sustenance/employability skills to become productive and active participants in the task for socio-economic and political development and national unity but also checks the rising tide of crime, unemployment and insecurity in Nigerian communities, Abefe-Balogun and Nwankpa (2010).

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

In the opinion of Adeboye and Olubela (2009) entrepreneurship is concerned with the new ways of looking at opportunities and identifying a new approach towards solving problems. It also involves the consideration of a number of opportunities to enhance employees' performance and business profits. Entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. Entrepreneurship education majorly is to orient youth to other career options than paid employment. It prepares them for opportunities, self-worth as well as the courage to pull and maintain them out of poverty.

Concept of Insecurity

The phenomenon of National Security/Insecurity. National security according to Wikipedia is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. Handley (2010) is of the opinion that the real reason for violence isn't ethnic or religious differences but scramble for scarce resources and joblessness.

Economic Empowerment and Job Creation in Business Education

Business education is a form of education which makes human to be responsive to their personal, families and national needs and aspirations. Business competencies carry with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to

understand the functioning of an already existing business. Business education is about developing attitudes, behaviors and capacities at the individual level.

The Role of Business Education in curbing Insecurity for National Development

There are various factors responsible for insecurity in Africa and Nigeria in particular, these include but not limited to; unemployment, corruption, lack of basic amenities, infrastructure, inadequate educational opportunities, and factors in the leaders and the led.

Senate president, David Mark and the Registrar of the joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Prof. Dibu Ojerinde have stressed the need for a functional education of Nigerian youths as the antidote to the various problems confronting the nation. They attributed the problems facing the nation including insecurity, violence, armed robbery and drug abuse among others to illiteracy. He said, "Besides being the foundation for any development, education liberates the people and curb all forms of anti-social behaviors.

Recommendation

The overwhelming role of business education in tackling the issues of insecurity has been succinctly stated in this write up. Since its benefits are enormous, adequate steps should be taken to requite business education by providing at the various level of governance-federal state and local government areas, suitable environment through proper curriculum planning and implementation, and by proper funding and equipping of the business education centre's/units/departments of out Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges.

Conclusion

The role of grooming middle-level, intermediate and higher-level business graduate by the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions is gradually becoming very challenging. Since there are fewer job openings than graduates, the major challenge facing the institutions is to equip the graduates with appropriate skills and competencies for self-employment, self-reliance and where possible, employment in the formal sector.

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