



Achieving Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Nigeria Through Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a nation endowed with enormous wealth in terms of human, mineral and natural resources but still fall short of developmental progress as graduate unemployment is one of the greatest challenges that bedevil Nigeria. This paper emphasizes on the significant role that of vocational and entrepreneurship education plays in reducing the rate of unemployment problems and achieving a sustainable development. This paper posits that entrepreneurship and vocational education will provide graduates with skills with which they can be self reliant and employers' of labour. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship and vocational education when engendered leads to employment generation, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The paper recommended that educational institutions at all levels must inculcate and intensify the integration of entrepreneurship and vocational education into its curriculum.

Keywords: Vocation, Entrepreneurship, Education, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Development

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1. INTRODUCTIONp

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and is naturally endowed with millions of acres of arable land, 38.5 billion barrels of stated oil reserves , vast gas reserves, variety of unexploited minerals and a wealth of human capital by virtue of its estimated population over 150 million (Oteh, 2009). The Nigerian economy has witnessed a considerable economic growth in recent years compared to other countries in Sub-Sahara Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The country recorded an average growth of 6.5% in recent times compared to -6.0% in the 1980s. In fact, recent statistics have shown that Nigeria is one of the fastest growing economies in the world on one hand and one of the poorest nations on the other hand. According to World Bank, Nigeria has recorded GDP growth rates of 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 in 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively. (Mobolaji, 2015). Infact, a growing GDP is an evidence of a society, getting its collective acts together for progress. As its economy grows, a society becomes more compactly interwoven. Growth is good, sustained high growth is better and sustained high growth with inclusiveness is best of all.



The experiences of African and other developing countries in the past two decades have shown that mere expansion of output in the form of increase in gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not a sufficient condition for economic development, reduction of poverty and inequality. For example until the year 2014, the extent of Nigeria's economic success had not been reflected in official data, which were based on 1990 price levels and a 1990 view of the economy's structure, which significantly undercounted GDP. In April 2014, the government began to release „rebased“ data that show GDP of \$454 billion in 2012 and \$510 billion in 2013 (compared with the \$259 billion and \$270 billion that were previously reported), confirming Nigeria's lead over South Africa as the continent's largest economy (MGI, 2014).

With these increase in the GDP growth rates, one would have thought that it enhance welfare of the citizenry through reduction of unemployment, poverty and inequality. However, in Nigeria, the reverse is the case as the persistent growth has simultaneously led to rise in poverty, unemployment, and inequality. This implies that the growth is a non-inclusive growth. Precisely, unemployment rate rose from under 10% in the early 1980s to over 23.9% in 2013. The percentage of the population of people living on less than \$1.25 a day increased from 50% in 1986, to about 70% in 2010. Similarly, income inequality worsened from 38.7% in the 1980s to 48.8% in 2010 (Mobolaji, 2015). Migap, Okwanya and Ojeka (2015) opined that Nigeria faces several challenges especially, particularly the quality of infrastructure and the inclusiveness of growth, for despite strong GDP growth (productivity and per capita GDP are both growing at healthy rates) between 1999 and 2010, poverty did not decline materially.

The enormity of the challenge is corroborated by Nigeria's low score on the Human Development Index (HDI). The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, standards of living and quality of life for countries worldwide. It is a standard means of measuring the wellbeing of a country. Off all the organisation of the petroleum exporting countries (OPEC), Nigeria has the lowest HDIs. UNDP (2013) in its report stated that Nigeria is not one of the countries recording remarkable improvement in its human development index. The report listed Angola, Burundi, and Democratic republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania as among the African countries that made the greatest strides in HDI improvement since 2000. According to the report, Nigeria was revealed amongst countries with low development index at 153 out of 186 countries that were ranked. Life expectancy in Nigeria is placed at 52 years old while other health indicators reveal that only 1.9% of the nation's budget is expended on health. Similarly 70% of Nigerians are stated to be living below \$1.25 daily while adult illiteracy rate for adult (both sexes is 61.3%). Despite the reported growth in the economy, it did not make the list of 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that recorded more than 2% annual human development index (HDI) gains since 2000.

Furthermore, World Bank in its Nigeria Economic Report May 2013 said that the number of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing significantly and this reveals a perplexing contrast between the nation's economic statistics on rapid economic growth and welfare improvements for much of the population. Furthermore, the organisation said that available data on unemployment shows that job creation in Nigeria has been inadequate to keep the pace with the expecting working age population. The federal government in its document "Nigerian youth employment action plan, 2009-2011" stated that of the 6 million Nigerian youths graduating annually from the educational system, only about 10% are often employed leaving about 4.5 million unemployed. This is even as the unemployment rate has steadily increased from 12% of the working age in 2006 to 24% in 2011 and preliminary indications shows that this upward trend continued in 2012.



The above clearly indicates that the present economic growth is not inclusive enough and needs to be addressed. Stiglitz (2010) opines that if economic growth is not shared throughout society then development has failed. Inclusive growth in the economy can only be achieved when all the weaker sectors of the society, including agriculture and small scale industries, are nurtured and brought on par with other sections of the society in terms of economic development”.

Graduate unemployment which is one of the root causes for non inclusive growth that Nigeria presently experiences and this as a result of the failure to assign enterprise based education as well as identifying entrepreneurial education at higher institution as engine of growth and pivotal agent against shades of unemployment and associated challenges (Otokiti 2012). Osalor (2012) in describing the Nigerian education system opined that in light of current realities in the 21st century. A careful look of the current state of affairs in Nigeria reveals that we are in a 21st century economy with a 19th century education system. A system whereby much emphasis is still placed on the conventional classroom environment with much reverence for certificate for graduates who in most cases are trained to be job seekers as evidenced in present high unemployment rate in the land. It is the contention of this paper to explore how inclusive growth and sustainable development can be achieved through Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education. Thus, this study will contribute to growing literature on the relevance of entrepreneurship and vocational Education in achieving inclusive growth by underscoring its relevance in the context of a developing economy like Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Capital Theory (HCT)

Human capital consists of skills and knowledge that individuals acquire through investments in schooling, on-the-job training, and other types of experience. The human capital theory advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe (Robert, 1991). Human resource is the most important resource or asset an organization or a country can boast of in the 21st century workplace since organizations are run and steered by people and it is through people that goals are set and objectives attained.

Ajibade (2013) opined that in development studies, human capital is recognized as the most critical in development. It has been directly linked to the ability of nations to transform from underdeveloped to developed economies. Indeed, the quality of a country’s human capital is central to promoting and sustaining innovation as well as the adoption of appropriate technology for accelerated sustainable development. That human capital was largely accountable for the transformation of resource-poor countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore while resource-rich countries like Nigeria, Venezuela and Angola are still at the lower wrung of the development ladder is a fact. This point, in fact, re-iterates the case for accelerated human capital development, especially in the developing countries, if the world is to overcome the global socio-economic and ecological crisis that have the potential to endanger our individual and collective existence as well as rob future generations of their well-being.

Education is an instrument for training human resources to optimize productivity by encouraging technical progress and by promoting cultural conditions conducive to social and economic change (Ajibade, 2013). Alumode (2005) opined that education is a vital instrument of change in any society; it is an instrument for nation building. The development of a country’s natural resources is dependent on the quality of its human resources and the quality of human resources in turn depends on education. Education helps in the positive development of human potentials, the human talents, the human intellect, the human attitude and the human skills.



Education is closely linked to development. It enlightens people especially in this modern world. It brings about the transmission and acquisition of skills, abilities and competences, which enable individuals live, work, and contribute to the development of the society at large.

Pidlisnyuk (2010) states that education is an instrument for training human resources to optimize productivity by encouraging technical progress and by promoting cultural conditions conducive to social and economic change. The role of the university in building human capital through high quality educational that promotes creativity, innovation and adoption of modern technology for the successful implementation of sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. The bottom line here is to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship in the student through education. The knowledge gained from education and experience represents a resource that is heterogeneously distributed across individuals and in effect central to understanding differences in opportunity identification and exploitation (Anderson & Miller, 2003, Chandler & Hanks, 1998, Gartner et al, 2005, Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Vocational Education

According to Abdulahi (1994) vocational and technical education is that aspect of education that involves the acquisition of techniques and application of the knowledge of science for the improvement of man's surrounding. Technical and vocational education prepares one for the world of work with which the individual becomes reliant and can make contributions to the development of the society. As employers look for new talents every year from new graduates, it is important to not only have a solid education but graduates that have features that stand out from the rest of the graduating students. With the economy being more globalised than ever, it is important to have a background and a skill set that allows graduates to become immersed in the global economy right from graduation (Cote, 2007). The philosophy of technical and vocational education in Nigeria emphasizes that any programme that will qualify as "education" in Nigeria should not just offer "certificates" but must be work-oriented. This will go a long way in solving under-employment/un-employment and the attendant problems. It will also empower the graduates to become relevant producers of goods and services as well as become sensible consumers of same. The concept of Vocational Education aims at equipping individuals to use their heads and hands in order to survive in a world that is essentially work-oriented. The philosophy of Technical and Vocational Education is basically to enhance human dignity and enthrone work and labour by making individuals acquire and/or develop enough saleable and employable skills, competencies, attitudes as well as knowledge to enable them gain and maintain basic employment or self-reliance for a comfortable living.

Entrepreneurship Education

Mauchi¹, Karambakuwa, Gopo, Kosmas, Mangwende, and. Gombarume (2011) defined entrepreneurship education as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them. OECD Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme (2009) defines entrepreneurship as an enterprising human activity in pursuit of the generation of value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets. Entrepreneurship education, by its nature, has been found to precipitate employment generation, assist with the growth of the economy and the overall promotion of sustainable economic growth and development in a number of nations (Raimi and Towobola, 2011). Witte & Wolf, (2003) opined that developed nations like Japan and America utilise entrepreneurial (facilitative) learning for improving their human capital as opposed to the traditional approach of teach-and-listen approach, which is prevalent in developing nations .



Garayan and O'cinneide (1994) noted that the major objective of entrepreneurship education or training is to develop enterprising people and inculcate an attitude of self reliance using appropriate; learning processes. Akinola (2012) opined that the need for entrepreneurship education cannot be overstressed in Nigeria because unemployment, poverty and the corresponding social problems are on the increase. Similarly, the age-long traditional education in vogue in Nigeria breeds graduates job-seeking mindsets as opposed to job-creation; they thus lack entrepreneurial traits like self-motivation, drive and innovation needed by the world of work and employers of labour (Raimi *et al.*, 2011; Simkovic, 2012). The previous education system is deficient in providing the necessary entrepreneurship skills for national transformation since the university curriculum is structured in a way that makes the Nigerian graduates unemployable (Akinola, 2012)

Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized knowledge that inculcates in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities (Acs and Storey 2004, Minniti and Lévesque 2008, Kanothi, 2009). From several definitions provided above, entrepreneurship education can be conceptualised as a specialised and all-round training programme designed by education authorities to change the worldview of students from job seekers to wealth creators by developing their latent talents and potentials). Entrepreneurship education became very important in higher institutions in Nigeria because it offers a realistic approach to solving the endemic problem of unemployment. The overall objective of entrepreneurship education is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view of not only educating them but to also support graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures including but not limited to those arising from research.

Paul (2005) opined that entrepreneurship education is structured to achieve the following objectives.

1. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
4. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
5. To reduce high rule of poverty.
6. Create employment generation.
7. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
8. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth involves a long term perspective. It focuses on the generation of productive employment, instead of direct income redistribution, in order to increase the incomes of excluded groups. Some redistribution schemes may however be necessary in the short term (Ianchovichina and Lundstrom, 2009). Klasen (2010) described inclusive growth as non-discriminatory and disadvantage-reducing growth. This implies that for growth to be inclusive it must result to more accessible productive resources to majority of people in the economy. This can be achieved by expanding human capabilities, such as investing in education, health, and basic social services as well as providing productive employment opportunities.



Inclusive growth is 'growth that not only creates new economic opportunities, but also one that ensures equal access to the opportunities created for all segments of society, particularly for the poor (Ali and Hwa Son, 2007). African Development Bank (2012) defined inclusive growth as economic growth that results in a wider access to sustainable socio-economic opportunities for a broader number of people, regions or countries, while protecting the vulnerable, all being done in an environment of fairness, equal justice, and political plurality'. Inclusive growth includes but extends pro-poor growth; it involves 'increasing the size and economic strata of the middle class'. The assumption is that growth which is beneficial for the large majority of people in developing countries is more likely to be economically and politically sustainable (Birdsall, 2007).

According to OECD (2008), Inclusive growth is economic growth that guarantees equity in opportunities, employment and poverty reduction. Inclusive Growth strategies must be tailored to country-specific circumstances. Inclusive Growth focuses on productive employment rather than income redistribution. Hence the focus is not only on employment growth but also on productivity growth. On the other hand growth is inclusive if it: (i) creates and expands economic opportunities, and (ii) ensures broader access to these opportunities so as to allow majority including the vulnerable to participate in and benefit from growth, (McKinley 2010). In order for growth to be sustainable and effective in reducing poverty, it needs to be inclusive (Berg et al, 2011; Kraay, 2004). The Commission on Growth and Development (2008) notes that inclusiveness is a concept that encompasses equity, equality of opportunity, and protection in market and employment transitions.

It is an essential ingredient of any successful growth strategy. Inclusive growth" as a strategy of economic development received attention owing to a rising concern that the benefits of economic growth have not been equitably shared. Growth is inclusive when it creates economic opportunities along with ensuring equal access to them. Inclusive growth as the literal meaning of the two words refers to both, the pace and the pattern of the economic growth. There is a clear distinction between direct income redistribution or shared growth and inclusive growth. The inclusive growth approach takes a longer term perspective as the focus is on productive employment rather than on direct income redistribution, as a means of increasing incomes for excluded groups.

Inclusive growth has been defined as output growth that is sustained over decades, is broad-based across economic sectors, creates productive employment opportunities for a great majority of the country's working age population, and reduces poverty (Berg and Ostry 2011). Inclusive growth is about both the pace and patterns of economic growth (Jonathan and Ostry, 2011). The practice of inclusive growth and development requires widening the lens through which priorities are set in national economic strategies. Macroeconomic, trade and regulatory policies remain critically important as they establish the conditions necessary for improvements in productivity that help drive growth.

Sustainable Development

Brundland report defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs (Wikipedia, 2013). According to Al-Roubaie (2013), sustainable development is a situation that requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. He goes on to say that sustainable development requires the promotion of values that encourage consumption standards that are within the bounds of the ecologically possible and to which all can reasonably aspire. Pearce (1993) states that, sustainable development is concerned with the development of a society where the costs of development are not transferred to future generations or at least an attempt is made to compensate for such costs. The satisfaction of human needs and aspirations has always been the major objective of development.



For several decades, and particularly in the last century, economic growth and development had resulted in substantial improvements in health, education, and the quality of life for many people especially in the western countries. Adoption of education as an instrument for the actualization of national development objectives has always been the policy thrust of the federal governments of Nigeria in most of its economic development plans (Gabadeen and Raimi, 2010). The above assertion is supported by the guidance as stipulated in the national policy on education which states that education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans, because education is the most important instruments of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution (Federal government of Nigeria, 1988). Education is central to economic growth and development through human development strategy as it prepares for employees that will be willing and able to work. Education for Sustainable Development is the focus or projection of education that seeks to equip people towards creating a sustainable future and this constitutes one of the germane objectives for the introduction of the entrepreneurship curriculum. One of the most significant indicators of social progress is education, which also plays a decisive role for a society to achieve self-sustainable and equal development.

Entrepreneurship Education as a Viable Policy option to address Nigeria's Developmental Challenge

Development experts at different times have come up with several proposals address Nigerian developmental challenge to revert this trend (Mobolaji and Abikan, 2015). Scholars have advanced argument for developing manufacturing sector, but this requires access to fund. The diffusion of technology, the creation of high value-added products, greater linkages in the economy, a wider employment base, and rising incomes are all associated with a robust manufacturing sector. However, ineffective industrial policy as been a mitigating factor. Reasons have also been advanced that the country needs to develop the agricultural sector, as it has potentials for both vertical and horizontal integration, and as over 50% of Nigerians still reside in the rural sector. While others propose diversification of the economy, this has been policy prescription since 1970s. This requires appropriate mobilization, strengthening and strategic repositioning public institutions to support emerging industrial clusters. Yet, some further argue that low integration of the informal sector to the economy. (Rajadhyaska, 2012; Lin, 2012). With over 2/3 of the population in the rural area in the country, and over 60% of rural dwellers patronize informal sectors, and rural poverty is higher than urban poverty and wide income inequality among the two sectors still persist. Thus, from the foregoing, it is obvious that the growth pattern in the country exhibits non inclusiveness.

This paper advocates the germane role of entrepreneurship and vocational education in promoting inclusive growth because the basic feature of inclusive growth is an economic growth that facilitates empowerment and access to opportunities, reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment which has a relation to this paper. It is important to note that of the seven fundamental frameworks that can assist policymakers and other stakeholders translate an aspiration for a more inclusive model of economic growth and development in their country into a practical national strategy as buttressed in the inclusive growth and development report 2015 of the World Economic Forum (WEF), three have a relationship with inclusive growth and entrepreneurship education. They include education and skills development, employment and labor compensation and asset building and entrepreneurship.

Oteh (2009) opined that Universities have tremendous impact on innovation and entrepreneurial development. Infact, notable universities that have played this catalytic role in the United States include Stanford and Silicon Valley, University of Texas and Austin; University of North Carolina and Research Triangle. Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology also illustrate how universities can also serve as a source for talent and ideas, serving as economic magnets for investments, entrepreneurs and talent to a region.



It is in realization of this and to make Nigerian graduates more resourceful and self-reliant, the Federal Ministry of Education introduced entrepreneurship education into the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through their regulatory/supervisory agencies - National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). It was incorporated into the curricula of tertiary institutions effective from the 2007/2008 academic period (ILO, 2010; Raimi & Gabadeen, 2012). Technical support has also been extended to tertiary institutions in Nigeria to teach entrepreneurship education (ILO, 2010; Raimi and Gabadeen, 2012).

The general philosophy of developing the general studies entrepreneurship curriculum is to produce graduates with some value addition over and above their field of study for the purpose of self reliance. The objective here is to redirect education and training for relevance and quality by developing in the students an entrepreneurial mindset (spirit) and equipping them with the skills necessary to start and run a business successfully. Furthermore, the respective regulatory agencies (NUC, NCCE, NBTE) has mandated all tertiary institutions to also establish and equip an entrepreneurship study centre with both human and material resources needed to inculcate the required practical skills in students. The centre is expected to encourage knowledge transfer by promoting the community service mandate of higher institutions of learning through the establishment of a desk to serve as contact for business in the catchment areas and also the country at large, so as to access research information, partnership and networking opportunities with the academic community

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vocational and entrepreneurial education play very crucial roles in the development of any country and its importance cannot be overemphasized especially to a country whose unemployment rate is very high coupled with non inclusiveness in its growth dimension. It is the position of this paper that the hope for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Nigeria can be accomplished through rigorous and massive entrepreneurial education, training and development that will make graduate job creator. There is need therefore need for continuous review of the entrepreneurship education curricula in Nigeria to meet the ever changing dynamism in education development. Institutions should also evolve a culture of entrepreneurship by supporting, training and rewarding their self-reliant graduates. This approach would help engender entrepreneurship culture effectively and efficiently. This is also in addition to the need for the Federal government to evolve a national culture of entrepreneurship by supporting, training and rewarding self-reliant graduates across the tertiary levels in Nigeria. This approach would help foster among students offering entrepreneurship innovation, invention and creativity.

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