

## **SUSTAINING QUALITY AFRICAN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study was carried out to examine the role of African education on sustainable growth and development in Africa: a case study of Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Seven hundred and twenty (720) participants were randomly sampled from the six geopolitical zones of the country. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using simple regression analysis tested at 0.05 level of significance. A 30 item questionnaire titled “Sustaining Quality African Education for Sustainable Growth and Development Questionnaire” was constructed and administered by the researchers. The instrument was validated by experts in evaluation and psychological testing. The split half reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability index stood at 0.89. the statistical analysis of the hypotheses showed that there was a significant influence of African education for entrepreneurship skills on sustainable growth and development. Again the result of the second hypothesis indicated that there was a significant influence of African education for cultural values on sustainable growth and development. Based on the result, conclusion was drawn and recommendations were made on how to integrate the African indigenous education for sustainable development.*

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable growth, development, African Education

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### **INTRODUCTION**

All through ages, man has continuously sought for medium through which he can preserve and sustain his values, beliefs, custom, culture and traditions from one generation to the other. Before the alteration of the traditional African system by Europeans through colonialism, history records show that there were medium through which African societies sustain their ways of life. At the dawn of western education in Africa, Africans had developed their indigenous system of education which involves development of skills needed for personal survival and economic development within the society. Fafunwa (1974) defines indigenous African education as one which consists of teaching and learning which every individual undergoes throughout their life time. The African education involves the training of individual based on family trade which includes farming, craft, hunting, trading, fishing, sports and other skills required for life survival. According to Mosweuayane (2013), “most learning that took place before the advent of colonialism, was designed to meet the exigencies of the whole society through training of individuals on specialized skills”. The nature of education practiced at that time was a functional education and it major

objective was to equip an individual with the skills that would enable him/her function effectively in the society.

In a quest to justify colonization of the African continent, European scholars have earlier put forth the argument that the Africans had no educational system prior to colonization. By this assertion, it thus implies everything that depicts modern civilization comes from the white man. Debunking this position Emeagwah (2006) argued that “Africans at various parts of the continent used a wide range of symbols and motifs for transmitting ideas from one generation to the other”. Although there were no formal settings such as school buildings, instructors (teachers) and a designed school programme of instruction (curriculum) which characterized the western system of education, traditional African education which involves the transmission of values, trade, crafts and other self survival skills existed long before colonization. According to Mosweunyane (2013), Africans have developed an educational system where knowledge, skills and attitudes which is necessary for an individual member of the society to lead a useful life and contribute to societal development. The uniqueness of the African education is that it is preserved and transmitted to next generation through symbols, arts, crafts, events and oral utterance.

Education is a vital tool for transformation and the key to sustainable development of the society (Jongur 2011). It is a basic means of human and cultural self-realization and actualization. Education is to help the individual fit and contribute usefully in his or her society. In African and Nigeria specifically, the reverse seem to be the case, as most of our educated people have imbibed the western culture to the neglect of our African cultural heritage. The implication is that the education our children acquire today alienates them from their society. As a people, we have failed over the years to preserve our indigenous cultural heritage, instead prefer to promote and imitate foreign cultures which in some ways are paradoxical to our traditional value system.

Odia (2013) observed that our educational system and processes are in deep crises and warn it must be rescued before the situation becomes irredeemable. There is need to inculcate our African values and norms into our educational system. A typical African traditional education involves the traditions of the people such as mode of dressing, natural foods, music, dance, proverbs, arts, crafts etc. It also involves the inculcation of certain values such as respect for elders, tolerance, character development, forgiveness, honesty, equity, justice, brotherhood, communal coexistence and love for our society. Unlike the western education, the traditional African education is a life long and functional kind of education where the skills and knowledge acquired is permanent and life sustaining. Although the current educational system operates a curriculum that teaches vocational skills and other entrepreneurial skills, the implementation of this aspect of curriculum has not been successful over the years, resulting to a situation where thousands of graduates loom the labour markets in search of white cola jobs. In Nigeria for example the era of oil boom really affected the capacities of youths to be creative and indulge in innovative ventures. This was because much emphasis was placed on quick money and the society never saw the need to urgently put up preventive measures to stall the trend. Duru (2011) lamented on the current situation when he asserted that the oil boom in Nigeria has indeed distorted our youths’ attitude to indulge in innovative enterprise, a situation which have inversely affected the economic development of the nation. Over the years our focus have been shifted from hard work to mere illusion of depending on government to share “national cake”.

According to Okoli and Allohna (2014), the term entrepreneur is not new in African context. The word appears to be a mere nomenclature as Africans have been involved in activities which depict entrepreneurship undertakings. For example, in traditional African societies, every family was known for one particular trade or the other. Some time families exchange trade with each other by sending one or two person to the other family to acquire a special trade. Thus, the issue of unemployment was unknown to the African societies considering the functionality of the indigenous education. From childhood, male children begin the process of receiving training on the trade of the family and when they grow towards adulthood they become masters of the trade. Also female children also learn trades peculiar to female folks. Upon graduation, students of African education do not need to seek for job, they carry on from their parents. This unique feature of the African education if sustained can be a panacea for curbing high indices of unemployment which western education has brought upon us.

The values system in African education formed the basic foundation for indigenous African society and the pattern of learning (Avoseh, 2008). The focus of indigenous African education system is centered on sets of values which mirror what the society stands for. These set of values are inculcated into the individual members of the community about what the society stand for and to uphold this values all through life processes. According to Avoseh (2007) The African cultural values entails character building and inculcation of virtues like honesty, tolerance, truthfulness, humility, integrity, honour, self-control, patience, industry and the feeling for one another. Opoku as cited by Avoseh (2008) added cooperation, harmony, mutual helpfulness, generosity, respect for human lives and respect for older persons as core values which African societies promoted. For example a disrespectful person was regarded as a bastard because there was no place for disrespect in the training given to individuals. Although these values are taught in the western curriculum, less emphasis is given to the applicability in our day today dealings. According to Igbo, Okpenga and Ako (2007) “for any nation to develop meaningfully, her citizen must cultivate good values”. Most recently, the issue of decaying standards in all sphere of our collective endeavor has continue to rise as area of urgent concern and proper attention must be accorded to this issues if we must develop as a people. Incidences of corruption and fraud which is the bane of public service today is in contradiction to African cultural value systems which promote honesty and self worthiness as standard for living in the society.

Sustaining the quality of education entails the deliberate preservation and integrating of African values and norms into the received western educational system. Unlike the current education which makes an individual dependent on white collar jobs, the traditional African education is entrepreneurial in nature and could be a tool to reducing the menace caused by unemployment in our society.

### **Statement of the problem**

The current state of unemployment couple with declining moral values associated with the youth and younger adult, who constitute large population within the society, has raised serious concern over whether the western education has really done worse than good in Africa. The moral decadence in our society today can be attributed to the influence of western values on our people. The neglect of indigenous education which inculcates moral values and entrepreneurial skills needed for self survival and community development is fading away. The absence of indigenous

education may be responsible for social issues such as unemployment, crime, disrespect to constituted authority, corruption, and other social vices. The aim of this paper is therefore to examine the role of quality of African education for growth and sustainable development in Africa.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study focused on sustaining quality African education for sustainable growth and development in Africa: a case study of Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to examine the influence of sustaining quality African Education in terms of:

- i. African education on entrepreneur skills for sustainable growth and development
- ii. African cultural values for sustainable growth and development

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does African Education in terms of entrepreneurial skills influence sustainable growth and development?
- ii. To what extent does African Education in terms of cultural values influence sustainable growth and development?

### **Research hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

- i. There is no significant influence of African education in terms of entrepreneurial skills on sustainable growth and development
- ii. There is no significant influence of African education in terms of cultural values on sustainable growth and development

## **METHOD OF THE STUDY**

The study is carried out to examine the role of African education on sustainable growth and development in Africa: a case study of Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Seven hundred and twenty (720) participants were randomly sampled from the six geopolitical zones of the country. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using one way ANOVA and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. A 28 item questionnaire titled “Sustaining Quality African Education for Sustainable Growth and Development Questionnaire” was constructed and administered by the research. The instrument was validated by experts in evaluation and psychological testing. The split half reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability index stood at 0.89.

### **Data analysis**

The researchers administered the questionnaire to the selected students through research assistants. Data collected was then analyzed using simple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance

**Ho1: There is no significant influence of African Education on entrepreneurial skills on sustainable growth and development**

**Table 1:** Simple regression analysis of the influence of African education on entrepreneurial skills on sustainable growth and development

Multiple	R	=		.132	
Multiple	R Square	=		.017	
Adjusted	R Square	=		.16	
Standard Error of Estimate		=		5.32353	
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Means Square	F	Sig.
Due to regression	359.995	2	359.995	12.703	.000
Due to residual	20348.137	718	2034.137		
<b>Total</b>	<b>207018.132</b>				

\*P&gt; .05 level

Table 1 shows a summary of simple regression analysis of the influence of African education for entrepreneurial skills on sustainable growth and development. The result of the analysis produced a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .132 and multiple R Square ( $R^2$ ) of .017. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio of 12.703 which is significant .05 level. This result thus implies that African education on entrepreneurial skills development significantly influence sustainable growth and development. On the basis of this research finding, hypothesis 1 is hereby rejected.

## **Ho2: There is no significant influence of African Education on cultural values on sustainable growth and development**

**Table 1:** Simple regression analysis of the influence of African education for cultural values on sustainable growth and development

Multiple	R	=		.93	
Multiple	R Square	=		.009	
Adjusted	R Square	=		.007	
Standard Error of Estimate		=		5.34718	
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Means Square	F	Sig.
Due to regression	178.870	2	178.870	6.256	.013
Due to residual	20529.262	718	28.592		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20708.132</b>				

\*P&gt; .05 level

Table 1 shows a summary of simple regression analysis of the influence of African education for cultural values on sustainable growth and development. The result of the analysis produced a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .93 and multiple R Square ( $R^2$ ) of .009. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the multiple regression data produced an F-ratio of 6.256 which is significant .05 level. Thus, the result indicated that African education for cultural values

development significantly influence sustainable growth and development. On the basis of this research finding, hypothesis 1 is hereby rejected.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The statistical analysis of hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant influence of African education for entrepreneurial skills on sustainable growth and development. Findings of this study have shown that there is a linkage between quality African education for entrepreneurship and sustainable growth and development. Supporting this findings, Duru (2011) maintained that the reason for the falling entrepreneurship spirit among Africans especially Nigeria, can be traced to the period of the oil boom which negative effects have distorted peoples' attitude to work. Another area is the weakness of western curriculum which produces individuals who depends on white collar jobs for survival. The current educational system only produces individual who become totally dependent on limit job opportunities in the society. From the finding of this study it is obvious that if properly integrated and developed, African education holds the key to the drastic reduction of unemployment and other social vices associated with unemployment in our society. Affirming this position, Darisoan (2011) maintained that African indigenous education has the capacity to restore the lost glory of old and put the continent into the rightful path of greatness. Okoli and Allahna (2014) believe that the issue of unemployment in our society can be brought to its barest minimum if government can look into the possibility of integrating African traditional education with the western education to revive the entrepreneurship spirit in our young ones.

Also, findings from the results of hypothesis two presented above showed a significant influence of African education for cultural values on sustainable growth and development. The implication of this finding is that, African indigenous education can actually serve as a panacea for redeeming the glory of African societies which was altered by the introduction of foreign values in our school curriculum. Umar and Shagari (2013) stressed that Indigenous education is aimed producing individuals who are honest, respectable, skilled, and cooperative and a conformist to the norms and values of the society. The social vices such as rape, cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, fraud etc, which is prevalence in our societies today is as a result of the failure of western values, hence the need to repackage our indigenous education and introduce it in our schools to help address this social issues.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examined the sustainability of quality African education for sustainable growth and development in Africa: the Nigerian experience. Statistical analysis of data has indicated that African education for entrepreneurship skill has significant influence on sustainable growth and development. This therefore means that the solution to the increasing unemployment in our society may be addressed if only decision makers can in cooperate certain African indigenous education which promotes entrepreneurship into the curriculum. Also the study concludes that African education for cultural values significantly influence sustainable growth and development. The result of this study has demonstrated that the African education if properly



integrated into the curriculum could be the needed panacea for reducing social vices and crime which is prevalence in our society today.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. As government continues to seek for alternative ways of revenue generation rather than oil, there is need for government through the ministry of education to seek for ways of integrating African education into the curriculum so as to inculcate practical skills which will help the learner to survive after the school programme.
2. With the present societal decadence which is as a result of failure of western values in our society, the government through its agencies should makes policies that would incorporate traditional education which would promote cultural values into our educational system to curb the situation on ground.

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