

REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT INCIDENCE FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE INTERPLAY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND URGENT SOCIAL INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT: *Economic security being an ingredient for growth and development, makes no sense if job creation is not an outcome. Hence, this study examined the interplay of entrepreneurship education and urgent social intervention in order to reduce unemployment incidence in Nigeria. This simple descriptive survey design study provided a baseline information for policy-management on education in order to enhance productivity of citizens in Nigeria. Secondary data from National Bureau of Statistics and other data sources were obtained to answer four research questions raised for the study. Data analysis was effected with sample descriptive statistics and tables. Results obtained revealed: high rate of unemployment (across education levels and age groups), low level of entrepreneurship education, high prospects of entrepreneurship education in poverty alleviation and increase employment opportunities; and a tripartite government intervention in their policies and programmes in order to create employment opportunities for citizens. Therefore, it was recommended that policymakers should emphasize entrepreneurship education at all levels of education while government should invest more on public goods for job opportunities in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Unemployment, Education, Entrepreneurship, Security, Intervention.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is rich with vast natural and human resources. Its economy can leap-frog into sustained growth and development if these resources are optimized for the benefits of the citizens. Effective investment in human resources can empower the citizenry with knowledge and skills capable of making them gainfully employed and socio-economically productive (Ekanem, 2010). This is because economic security of any country makes no sense if the job creation is not an output. According to (Ekpo, 2012), unemployment has been rising alongside the increase incidence of poverty, despite the healthy growth in Nigeria's economy. National Bureau of Statistic (2012) attest to this by stating the number of unemployed as rising from 10 million in 2008 to about 18 million in 2011. The labour force of 61.12 million jumped to 67.30 million in 2008 and 2011 respectively. The rate of unemployment in 2011 was 23.90 percent while the poverty incidence was almost 70 percent. The economy tends to produce well below full employment output, requiring entrepreneurial development and government support services to develop skills and effectively utilize the citizens. Hence, this

study sets out to examine the interplay of entrepreneurship education and urgent social intervention in order to reduce unemployment incidence for economic security in Nigeria.

Unemployment is simply a situation in which those who are able and willing to work cannot find employment. Ekanem (2012) defines it as a situation when people are able to work and would willingly accept the prevailing wage paid to someone with skills but either cannot find or have not yet secure suitable employment. Unemployment can be classified into voluntary and involuntary unemployment (Ekpenyong, 2005). Voluntary unemployment include classical, frictional and structural unemployment. Involuntary (Keynesian) unemployment is the demand-deficient unemployment which is as a result of aggregate demand that falls, and the prices are not adjusted to restore full employment. Voluntary unemployment occurs on the basis of certain economic prevailing factors such as education attainment which practically guide decisions while the involuntary unemployment connotes the actual state of joblessness. Both classes result in economic loss to the nation.

The symptoms of unemployment are easily identifiable in developing economy such as Nigeria. They include comparatively few organizations of job opportunities, low level of generation of economic factors and continuous turnout of school leavers far above the available job vacancies. According to Ekpo (2012) in Nigeria, as the economy is growing (presently 7 percent), unemployment in the country is about thrice the rate of growth of the economy. It is equally disturbing that the rural and youth unemployment is rising higher than 21 percent. The high rate of unemployment incidence captured in Nigeria are in terms of number, frequency and duration; revealing the percentage of those willing and able to work but cannot find employment. The fact that many unemployed in Nigeria are educated implies that every year admission of new entrants into the labour market further increases the unemployment rate. This made education no longer attractive despite the provision of the National Policy on Education with implication of a job after completing one's period of education. Such unemployment by the output of education for a long period of time affects the psyche of individuals, threatens the family system, and exposes the bankruptcy of the economic policies.

Economically secured nation is that which economic, environmental and social systems are sustainable such that the economy is capable of producing goods and services consistently without sectorial imbalances (UNEVOC, 2005). The implication is that the economy should be able to alleviate poverty, maintain environmental / ecological equilibrium in the process of exploiting resources for the provision of jobs, income distribution, social services and human dignity presently and in the future. The goal of any nation is to attain economic security (macro-economic equilibrium). Akangbou (1985), Longe (2000) and Ekanem (2010) attest that this can be attained through the development of human capital in the formal school system over time.

Entrepreneurship education is a form of education that seeks to prepare people to initiate creativity and changes in production (produce entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinkers), and contribute to sustainable communities and economic security. According to Kuratko and Hodget (2004), the aim of entrepreneurship education is to produce individuals who are self-employed and employers of labour. Therefore, the personality of an entrepreneur is important in achieving success. These include the willingness to take calculated risk in order to earn

higher income, the ability to formulate effective venture dreams (high need achievement), vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos or confusion, the drive to get more done in less time, tolerance for ambiguity and believe in locus of control (not luck or faith). The entrepreneurial skills also include those of planning, strategizing, marketing, leadership, communication, delegation and negotiating. In Nigeria, there is a planned integration of policies of education with enterprise and self-employment as a panacea for mass unemployment, rural poverty and empowering the populace economically (Fabunmi and Isah, 2009).

Tangible efforts towards actualizing entrepreneurship education in formal institutions in Nigeria were at variance with the global investment to develop entrepreneurship skills (Akinboye, 2003). No wonder there was a national consultation on education convened by Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja in August 2000 which identified underlying lingering optimal service delivery in educational system as a limitation. Some of the challenges include poor state of infrastructure and facilities, lack of relevance, appropriateness and responsiveness in curricula and over-emphasis on rote learning. Overcoming these challenges means enhancing the developmental requirements of our society to stimulate entrepreneurial process, entrepreneurial career, and a powerful tool for job creation (UNESCO, 2004).

Most developing countries are with high rate of unemployment and therefore focus their policies in the areas of education and technology. The main reason for this is to breach the gap between the rich and poor countries with the belief that the negative variance may be due to their level of knowledge and not only in capital accumulation (World Bank, 1999). For instance, studies in labour market in East Asia, Tanzania, South Africa and China show the association between reduction in unemployment and knowledge/skills learned in schools. Moreso, social intervention needed in knowledge revolution is mainstreamed into government thinking for the attainment of new national economic vision 20:2020 in Nigeria. There is need to consider the effect of education and employment when considering upgrading human intellect and skills for productive employment and hence, a nation's economic security. This is the believe of East Asia in their widespread improvements in living standards and the process of democratification towards economic security (Ekanem and Uchendu, 2012).

Moreso, social intervention by government as an economic agent can effectively reduce unemployment incidence. This may take the form of initiatives in housing construction, empowering trainees, public sector jobs, youth development, short-term teaching skills development and women development. These social intervention initiatives have the potentials to urgently reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty. Therefore, an effective ministry of finance and economy becomes essential to impact efficiently on the overall co-ordination of knowledge economy (KE) and improvement in the standard of living of citizens. This is important as the private sector has profit-seeking motives with limited effort to reverse the rising trend of unemployment in Nigeria (Ekpo, 2012). For instance, the commercial banks in Nigeria are making huge after tax profits while still retrenching workers. It is accepted that business organizations are the engine of knowledge-driven economy in any nation but urgent government support is essential at all levels of government. Korea KE effort was driven from the top at the highest level of government, and from the bottom, by the business community (Babalola, 2010). It is in the interest of all that the

worsening state of unemployment in Nigeria be reversed through a stop-gap measures both in the short and medium terms by all the arms of government.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study revolved around the high rate of unemployment and low productivity among the citizens of Nigeria. The present situation seems to give an impression of economic insecurity as a result of failure to properly engage people in the production process. This study was therefore necessary to fill the gap by examining the entrepreneurial development and urgent social intervention for all government strategies/programmes to have employment generation as an output towards economic security.

The disturbing observed issue was the youth and urban unemployment rising higher than 21 percent, far above the conventional accepted rate of four to five percent. Thus, presenting a paradox of increasing growth (seven per cent) and unemployment incidence of thrice the rate of growth of the economy. A perceived way out of this labour market challenge was to introduce entrepreneurship education at all school levels together with urgent social intervention as stop-gap measures to reverse the national crisis of unemployment in Nigeria. The question remains: given that the economy of Nigeria is producing below its potential, can entrepreneurship education and urgent social intervention guarantee high unemployment reduction? This study was designed to find an answer to this poser.

Research Questions

1. What is the unemployment incidence profile in Nigeria for the various years?
2. What is the level of entrepreneurship education development for reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria?
3. What are the prospects of entrepreneurship education in reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria?
4. What are the expected urgent social interventions for reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The study was a descriptive survey research design. It involved a national survey with population comprising of all students at the three levels of education namely primary, secondary and tertiary level. The sample was purposefully chosen to examine entrepreneurship education and urgent social intervention as they influence unemployment reduction towards economic security in Nigeria. The source of information for this study was mainly secondary data. The data was obtained from National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), National Economic Review of the National Planning Commission, World Development Report and any other secondary information from relevant government agencies.

Data Analysis and Results

The working research questions raised in this study were analyzed in line with data collected using the simple descriptive statistics and tables. The analysis were shown in tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and figure 1.

Research Question 1

What is the unemployment incidence profile in Nigeria for the various years? Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and figure 1 presented the profile incidence of unemployment and the pictorial presentation of the national unemployment trend in Nigeria.

Table 1a: Unemployment rates of levels of education in Nigeria (1999-2011)

Education levels	1999	2001	2004	2006	2008	2011
No schooling (illiterate)	20.70	14.00	14.90	15.20	16.70	17.80
Primary	12.90	21.00	15.80	16.30	16.90	18.10
Secondary	59.40	55.20	52.80	53.70	56.30	61.30
Post secondary	7.00	9.70	16.50	17.20	17.90	18.50

Source: FRN (2012). National Bureau of Statistics: Labour Forum Survey March 2012.

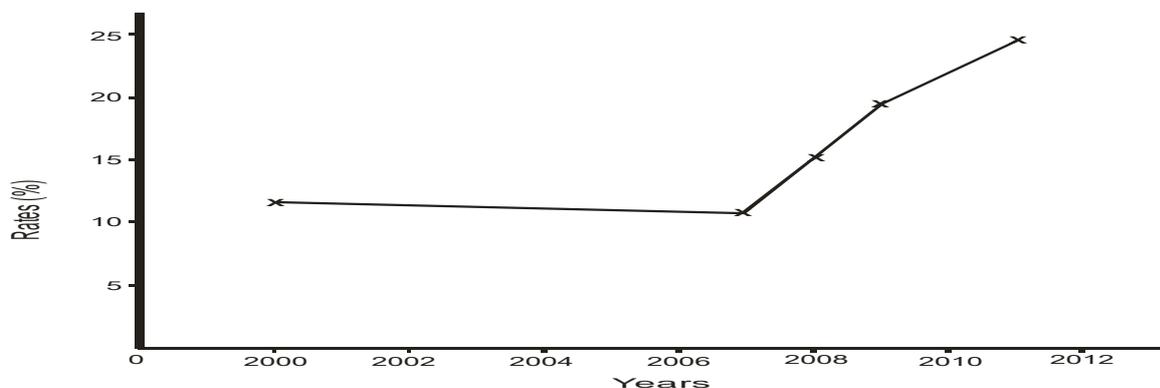
Table 1b: Unemployment rates across age groups in Nigeria (1999-2011)

Age group	1999	2001	2004	2006	2008	2011	Average
15-24	58.40	59.60	52.90	57.30	57.70	58.30	57.37
25-44	29.20	34.20	41.10	41.90	43.80	43.90	48.58
45-59	7.20	4.20	2.70	4.40	4.60	4.80	4.65
60-64	5.20	4.70	3.40	4.37	5.10	5.20	4.67

Source: FRN (2012). National Bureau of Statistics: Labour Forum Survey March 2012.

Table 1c: Unemployment rates in Nigeria (2000-2011)

Year (X):	2000	2007	2008	2009	2011
Rate (Y):	13.10	12.70	15.00	19.70	23.90

**Figure 1:** National unemployment trend.

Source: FRN (2012). National Bureau of Statistics: Labour Forum Survey March 2012.

The presentation in table 1a showed the unemployment rates across different levels of education in Nigeria (1999-2011). The rates of unemployment are high with secondary school level mostly affected. The secondary education level was expected to equip the output of education with requisite skills for the labour market to absorb. Most of the products at this level became unemployment. This was followed by the output of education at primary and tertiary levels. The table 1b presented unemployment rates across age groups in Nigeria (1999-2011). The unemployment among the ages increased over the years. The average rate of unemployment among age 15 to 24 years was 15.37, 25-44years was 48.58 and 45-59 and 60-64 were 5.65 and 4.67 respectively. A close observation revealed that the age bracket of 15-24 was more pronounced followed by those of 25 to 44. This further confirmed the greater proportion of unemployment of youth, being the active class to contribute to the national productivity. Table 1c and figure 1 showed the national unemployment rates in Nigeria (2000-2011) and the graphical presentation of the national unemployment trend over the period. It revealed a rising trend over the period under consideration which was unhealthy to the economy. The high unemployment especially among the active age classes (15-22 & 25-44) must be effectively managed if economic stability would be maintained as the necessary ingredient for growth and development.

Table 2a: Indicators of Entrepreneurship Education in some nations

Items	Nigeria	USA	Canada	S/Africa	Japan
Number of processes to register a business	21	17	17	26	6
Number of days taken to register a business	274	12	10	23	14
Policy uncertainty	-	-	0	-	-

Source: Extract from World Bank (2006). World Development Indicators.

Table 2b: Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Indicators for security in Nigeria (2000-2011)

Indices	2000	2004	2006	2009	2011
Population (in millions)	127	129	141	156	17
Population density (in millions)	139	141	159	177	196
GNP (& billions)	32.70	55.30	90.00	126.20	160.10
GNP per capita (&)	260	430	620	811	820
Purchasing power of parity/GNP ranked among 250 countries	199 th	190 th	177 th	181 st	188 st

Source: Extract from World Bank (2012) and National Planning Commission (2012).

Research Question Two

What is the level of entrepreneurship education development for reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria? Table 2a showed a comparison of entrepreneurship education in some processing period for registration of business (274) and greater number (21) of processes in registration. This was discouraging and unhealthy to the economy. Table 2b showed the economic indices in Nigeria and other nations with entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education impacted positively on the economic and social security vis-a-vis their advantages for the growth and development of the nation. The population of Nigeria was frequently high with high population density (inhabitants per unit area of land). The private sector as a share of GDP indicated an increasing trend with credit to the core, private/GDP revealing dominant trend (average 4.1 percent) between 2010 and 2011. The net credit of government in 2009 and 2011 was quite high (grew exponentially at 3.16 percent) and provided a fiscal risk with high interest/foreign exchange risk for financial institutions. This was not favourable for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Unemployment as an important macroeconomic variable must be considered in order to stabilize the economy.

Research Question Three

What are the prospects of entrepreneurship education in reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria?

Table 3: Prospects of Entrepreneurship Education in reducing Unemployment in Nigeria

No	Benefits	Effects on unemployment reduction/national security
1	Preparation of citizens for self-employment.	Meeting the social demands for employment in building a strong, united and self-reliant nation.
2	Eradication of poverty	Empowerment with practical orientation for improving productivity.
3	Improvement in national economy	Empowering people above poverty line, and encouragement of taxation for development.
4	Improvement in social and political image	Rebranding the nature to improve socio-economic and socio-political perspective globally.

Source: Researchers.

It was observed from table 3 that if entrepreneurial education could be effectively adopted at all levels of formal education in Nigeria, several benefits would accrue to both the citizens and the national economy. This finding further revealed that the prospects impacted positively on economic development with indirect potential to reduce poverty as a result of simultaneously increasing employment opportunities and labour productivity (Ekanem & Uchendu, 2012; Erwat & Isah, 2011).

Research Question Four

What are the expected urgent social intervention instruments for reducing unemployment in Nigeria?

Table 4: Expected Social Intervention instruments capable of urgently reducing unemployment situation in Nigeria.

No	Initiatives	Instruments of social intervention
1	Housing construction	Affordable and subsidized housing for all groups of the society, skill acquisition and vocational/entrepreneurial development labour-intensive public work scheme.
2	Empowering trainees	Set up trainees small business, guidance counseling services and business financial support.
3	Public-sector jobs	Cleaning of roads, maintenance of government buildings and other government physical assets among others.
4	Short-term teaching skills	Primary/secondary school teacher's skills, with enhanced salaries as incentives.
5	Graduate recruitment	Security agencies recruitment on a massive scale and agricultural development.
6	Youth development	Vocational/technical skill development, agricultural investment, access to quality education, access to credit facilities at no cost, knowledge/information about HIV/AIDS control, award of scholarship.
7	Women development	Development in economic activities, vocational skill development and increase female participation in social political activities and access to credit facilities and agricultural investment.

Source: Adapted from Ekpo (2012). Unemployment: Nigeria's looming time bomb.

Table 4 showed the drastic and short term measures needed to generate employment in the economy of Nigeria. The recent federal government programmes of SURE-P and U-win directed at tackling unemployment and poverty were the right steps in the right direction. It was believed that Nigerians were not sure of the extent of the implementation of the federal government's National Action Plan on Employment Creation 2009-2020. The present government focused more on initiatives such as reforms in power, agriculture, education, oil/gas and infrastructure to generate employment. This study regarded these strategies and programmes as long term since unemployment incidence in Nigeria was viewed as a national crisis and should be treated as such.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The research question one revealed that unemployment incidence cut across all the levels of education. The worst hit was the secondary level followed by the primary and then the tertiary level of education. It became worrisome as youth who were suppose to be active continue to depend on their aged ones, which in most cases suffered from poverty. The implication was that most of them were unable to earn money to meet basic financial commitment of life. This included payment for decent accommodation and other physiological needs of life. This resulted in negative effect of malnutrition, unless, mental

stress, depression and loss of self-esteem (Jaiyeoba & Atanda, 2007). These impacted negatively to the economic security of Nigeria.

The unemployment rates across the age groups also confirmed that the youth were suffering most from unemployment. They continue to depend on their older classes who were already weak with diminishing returns to productivity. Education acquired by these youth was unable to provide job since they were without creative and innovation skills for self reliance. The economy faced the problem of economic loss vis-à-vis the productivity of the unemployed.

The national unemployment rate in Nigeria (2000-2011) revealed a rising trend which indicated that the policies on unemployment reduction were inappropriate. The frustration carried by this persistent unemployment and lack of opportunities if not urgently handled, could prompt citizens (especially educated youth) to gravitate towards a charismatic and opportunist social revolutionary (Ekpo, 2011). This unemployment crisis required intervention for citizens to be gainfully employed and with heavy dose of entrepreneurship development for skill acquisition in formal education. Educational output were to effectively utilized in the national economy.

The research question two revealed that there was a low level of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. It revealed a longer period of processing time and processing stages in business registration. Entrepreneurship was not seen to be encouraging in Nigeria as the policies were not adequate and appropriate to motivate it towards reducing unemployment. The growth of entrepreneurship education was slow thereby denying the rewarding benefits of the programme to the nation. Entrepreneurship education could go a long way to enhance creativity and innovations of most idle hands thereby directed them to think creatively towards businesses and product. The programme could bring respect for and dignity of labour as output of education at all levels will be gainfully employed in small and medium scale businesses. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education could continuously increase knowledge/skills, prompt creative thinking and change in production for economic/social security of the nation.

Ineffective financing affected entrepreneurs and institutions involved with Entrepreneurship education. Though a lot has been done by Nigerian government in its influence on growth of small and medium scale enterprises (SMES) with recent policies on Micro-finance banks, more could be done in this respect. Entrepreneurship education cannot function effectively with only national votes for education especially at this period of global economic meltdown and international crisis in global oil sectors with increase inflation and distressed banks (Fabunmi & Isah, 2009). Entrepreneurship development financing was expected to be given special attention by policymakers for proper realization of its objectives.

The research question three revealed high prospects of entrepreneurship education in reducing unemployment and securing the economy of Nigeria. The fallout of this was that entrepreneurship education could empower people presently operating below the poverty line and reduce the risk of becoming nuisance in the society. A greater proportion of citizens with income could effectively pay taxes to government for development (Erwat & Isah, 2011). The economy would be strong, united and self-reliant as the results of individuals being self-employment, empowerment and empowerment of others towards demonstrating a strong

resilience in the nation and external shocks. The exploitation of the nation's national resources must consider the needs of future generation such as building infrastructure, providing quality education and building quality future leaders (Ekanem, 2010). By so doing, Nigerians could build and sustain their confidence on government, for the improvement of socio-political image.

Government of Nigeria were aware of the unemployment situation and has apparently taken steps in trying to reverse the rising trend of unemployment. Employment generation among the youths has been the current goal of President Goodluck Jonathan's transformation agenda. Despite the efforts, citizens were still denied of job opportunities with attendant social/economic implications. The experience was most disappointing and painful. It was disappointing because the nation was not doing enough to provide opportunities for majority of its skilled manpower. It was also painful as most of the educated youths from institutions of learning did not have confidence in their education attainment to provide reliable means of livelihood. It should be noted that any society that fail to utilize its skilled manpower adequately in a national economic pursuit, cannot achieve its education and economic goals (Nwadiani, 2000).

This finding as shown table 4 emphasized government active role in job creation because the private sector was unable to generate employment on a massive scale. Moreso, the profit-seeking motives of the private sector negates its ability to provide employment in a scale necessary to reverse the rising trend of unemployment in the nation (Ekanem, 2011). Hence, urgent social intervention was necessary since no country could afford to have millions of unemployed workforce with huge economic loss and nuisance to society.

CONCLUSION

This study has been able to establish that substantial part of the labour in Nigeria were idle (highly unemployed), underemployed and, thus, producing below full potentials. Nigerian economy with rising unemployment (educated and uneducated persons) resulted in economic loss. A dissatisfactory level of entrepreneurship education showed that the economy was performing well below full employment output. The entrepreneurship education was advantageous in reducing poverty and increasing employment opportunities. Government as an economic agent has a positive role to participate effectively in reducing unemployment incidence in Nigeria. Such targeted social intervention were urgent and included public investments in different sectors such as education, health, housing and agriculture because unemployment has become a national crisis in Nigeria. Ironically, entrepreneurship education and urgent social intervention in job creation provided genuine solution to the challenge of unemployment, ensure economic security and impact on development in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendation made:

1. Educational planners should increase advocacy for entrepreneurship education at all levels. Emphases on entrepreneurship education in all spheres will effectively reduce unemployment across education levels and age groups in the society.

2. The policymakers should create awareness of the prospects of entrepreneurship education and promote opportunities to learn in the school curriculum according to the learners ability, aptitude and interest. This will improve the level of entrepreneurship education development towards improving Human Development Index (HDI) and economic security in Nigeria.
3. There should be direct involvement by the three tiers of government in supporting decent standard of living through public investments in creating jobs for the enhancement of Physical Quality of Life (PQL) and building a strong economy in Nigeria.
4. Government should take direct responsibility to improve infrastructural development such as constant supply of electricity, good water supply, good roads and basic facilities. A conducive business environment will guarantee a qualitative and functional entrepreneurship education for increased opportunities in job creation.
5. Government and policymakers are to reinforce financial institutions such as commercial banks, microfinance banks and insurance companies to genuinely assist entrepreneurs in developing talents and skills. This will bring about increase creativity and economic change in the economy.

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