

Economic Situation and Teaching Job in Nigeria

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Abstract – As the quality and standard of education in Nigeria continued to deteriorate, teaching personnel also continued to make an influx into the teaching profession, making the current prevailing trend towards poor standard of education in Nigeria very worrisome. Presently, Nigerian education system needs qualified number of personnel who have passion for the job and not just those who want to earn a living. This paper therefore, explores the link between economic situation and teaching job in Nigeria. The paper argued that the present economic situation determines both the quality and quantity of personnel in Nigerian teaching profession as well as the standard of Nigerian education system at all levels. In this paper, it is concluded that Nigerian economy is characterized by the worse economic situation manifesting in the form of high rate of graduate unemployment and high poverty rate and these factors now determine the quality and number of teaching personnel in Nigerian education system at all levels.

Keywords – Economy, Economic Situation, Quality, Quantity, Teaching Job, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the bedrock of a nation as the saying goes. It is a means and catalyst for a meaningful economic development of any nation. It is also considered as one of the most important factors for economic growth and development. It is one of the crucial issues in many governments' agendas across the globe including Nigeria (Allen, 2007), a country with over 160 million people where the business of higher education prospers (Lucky, 2013). Apart from that, the government has continued to spend massively on the education sector in order to reduce illiteracy among the citizens, enhance the overall performance and conditions of education in Nigeria in general.

Education involves mainly teaching and imparting of knowledge and other activities. However, teaching is believed to be the most important aspect of education. Generally, teaching is described as occupation, profession or work peculiar to teachers which deals with imparting of knowledge to others. Teaching is definitely a vocation rather than a job. As one expert said, anyone can teach, but to teach well and care for people you are teaching, you have to really be a teacher with right qualification and passion for the job. Teaching has direct impact on the lives of people, that is, educating people to impart knowledge to create a better future for them.

In Nigeria, teaching is one of the common and readily available jobs for those seeking for an immediate

employment. Education as well as teaching is at its boom period regardless of the pay. Past experience has shown that teaching job attracts people with passion and qualification for the job. In other words, only those with the necessary qualifications coupled with passion for the job go into teaching. However, time has changed as many who apply for teaching and those who are currently holding teaching jobs are doing so for their personal reasons. Now, qualifications and passion which previously play significant role in teaching job are farfetched as many who take up teaching jobs do so to fulfill their need for employment.

Although the studies by Lucky (2013); Lucky and Yussuf (2013); Lucky and Yussuf (2013) have long pointed out the influx of unqualified teaching personnel in the Nigerian education system, however, they failed to mention the factor responsible for this influx. It is important to identify the factor responsible for the influx as it will guide future policy formulation in education in Nigeria. Although these factors are not hidden but past studies have failed to properly identify and address them in academic literature of this nature. The present paper tends to fill this gap in this respect.

The study by Lucky and Minai (2012) noted that different factors are responsible for people going into different occupations. These factors could be push or pull factors. To Shariff and Suad (2009), it is frustration caused by the economic downturn that pushes an individual into a particular profession. In other words, it is out of frustration that people go into certain professions or jobs like education system. This study identified economic situation as the factor responsible for both quality and quantity of teaching personnel in the Nigerian teaching profession. Therefore, the study proposes and argues that economic situation determine the quality and quantity of teaching personnel in Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. *Economic Situation in Nigeria*

According to Lucky (2011), the general view on the current economic situation in Nigeria indicates that Nigeria has been under the worst economic situation which has never been experienced before (Lucky, 2011). This is a unique situation and can only be observed in Nigeria that happens to possess abundant natural resources to support the economic development of the country (Ifuoye, 2009; Nwaobi, 2009; Emma, 2000). For example, Central Bank Nigeria (CBN) (2009) has reported

that many banks in Nigeria are in serious financial crisis, the country is with inadequate electrical supply and the country's basic infrastructure is not in place. The situation becomes more serious with the uncontrollable increase in the level of graduate unemployment (Central Bank Nigeria, 2009) and this calls for a drastic action to be taken immediately to put Nigeria back on the right track. This environment is new and unique to Nigeria.

To describe Nigeria's economic situation, Lucky (2011; 2012; 2013) used indicators such as high rate of entrepreneurial development failures, constant workers' strikes, the closure of schools, low GNI per capita; bank incompetency, high cost of production, mismanagement, corruption, bad leadership, communal disturbances, unpaid loans (bad debts), high interest rates, poor political climate etc. In addition to this, Iwere (2010) listed indicators such as scarcity of resources, job opportunities, unemployment, poor wages, delayed wages, irregular payment of wages, pay-cuts and declining pace of development and many more.

2. Unemployment

The Nigeria's troubling unemployment rate is not new in the academic, economic and press domains. It has become both domestic and national cankerworm eating the fabric of the country. According to Okonjo-Iweala, the immediate past Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, the unemployment rate in Nigeria has been accumulated over the past years. Hence, unemployment in Nigeria did not just start today. However, the country has not been able to track the number of people coming into the labour market and this is one major aspect of the problem of managing the new entrants into the market.

The latest and current phenomenon is the graduate unemployment which bears the acronym GU. Graduate unemployment is very common and peculiar with the developing countries and indeed constituting a peculiar problem to labor market and the general economy of these countries including the society in general. One major question that requires answer is, *how many Nigerians graduate from universities each year and out of these numbers, how many of them get employed?* Mike (2015) declared that more than 200, 000 graduates are produced each year by Nigerian universities. Quite unfortunately, these graduates are unable to find jobs while some of them look for honourable means to support themselves. The Director, Professional Development Directorate, Dr. Charles Ugwu, in one of his interviews with the Punch Newspaper correspondent during the second entrepreneurship/career fair in Abuja put the record of unemployment at 80% (eighty percent) (Mike, 2015). He further noted that only few Nigerian graduates are able to find jobs after graduation.

Also, the immediate past Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, citing from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Abuja claimed that no fewer than 5.3 million youths are jobless in the country, while 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market every year. She further

said that the cited figure is a conservative estimate of the real figure of unemployed youths in the country, going by previous statistics released by NBS, which put the number of jobless Nigerians at 20.3 million.

Three major consequences of graduate unemployment are poverty, under-utilisation of both human and natural resources, and of course increase in crime and vices in the country. Adefisoye (2000) reported that a strong correlation exists between poverty, crime and unemployment. For example, the unemployed are poor due to their inability to find jobs. Hence, they do not possess the necessary resources that will make them employable. Thus, poverty set in. also, economic growth and development is being hindered as a result of under-utilisation of both human and natural resources (Adefisoye, 2000). Finally, Eneh (2011) provided data on the unemployment rate in the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Table 1. Unemployment level in the six (6) Geopolitical Zones of Nigeria

Parameters	Nigeria					
	Niger Delta (South South)	South West	South East	North West	North Centre	North East
Unemployment (19-24)	9.5	4.5	6.6	2.2	4.3	3.2

Source: Eneh (2011)

3. General Infrastructure

Currently, it has been observed that many countries across the globe are deeply involved in the entrepreneurship development process with a view to achieve a significant economic transformation that would positively affect the life of the citizens. However, many nations are grossly lacking the required basic infrastructure needed by its citizens to achieve the desired goal of the entrepreneurship development (Nkechi, Ikechukwu and Okechukwu, 2012). The study conducted by Adenikinju (2013) observed that most developing countries including Nigeria have failed to keep pace with adequate provision and maintenance of infrastructure, and this therefore, has badly affected the entire economy including the quality and reliability of their products and services. Also, Habibu (2013) alleged that inadequate provision and maintenance of infrastructures have made many national projects and programs to be abandoned midway while others are not adequately maintained (Nkechi, Ikechukwu and Okechukwu, 2012). Akinwale (2010) argued that successive governments in Nigeria have tried to accelerate infrastructure development; unfortunately, the state of infrastructure has failed to reflect in the living conditions and well-being of its citizenry. Even the federal government of Nigeria FGN (2009) acknowledged that inadequate provision of infrastructures among others is the major dilemma of Nigerian economy. In other words, it is the absence of quality and substantial infrastructural facilities that left Nigerian economy to degenerate.

Furthermore, the absence and deficiency of basic infrastructures such as transport, energy, water supply,

sanitation, and waste management, education and health sectors equally revealed the poor economic growth of Nigeria. For example, about 60% of the Nigerian population lacks electricity supply even after spending more than USD13 billion on fueling generators annually, while only 10% of rural households and 40% of total population have access to electricity (Olaseni, 2011). The data in Table 1 also revealed the poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria according to the six (6) geopolitical zones (Eneh, 2011).

Table 2. Poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria according to the six (6) geopolitical zones

Parameters	Niger Delta (South South)	South West	South East	North West	North Centre	North East
Access to school	70.0	87.5	58.9	70.3	70.6	70.1
Access to safe water source	45.5	73.1	40.3	50.2	48.5	80.3
Access to medical	44.6	72.3	36.5	54.2	60.1	47.3

Source: Eneh, (2011)

4. Poverty Level

First and foremost, what is poverty? Generally, poverty is described as a state of being poor (Ajah, 2015). Most times, it is used to connote words such as penury, destitution, indigence, privation, hardship, impoverishment, pennilessness, hand-to-mouth existence, deprivation, absence, lacking etc, the state of being inferior in quality or insufficiency in amount. It refers to a person who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. It is also noted to be closely related to inequality.

The current Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Osibanjo in the recent time, said that the poverty level in Nigeria is intolerable. The level of poverty is often used to judge how well a country's economy is doing. Therefore the rate of poverty level tells us whether the country is economically good or bad. The economy is said to be in bad shape if there is a high rate of poverty while the economy is judge good if the poverty level is very low. For example, a country with poverty level as low as 1 or 2 percent is judged to be good economically while those as high as 30 as in the case of Nigeria is judged to be in a bad shape.

Furthermore, according to statistics from the World Bank report in 2014, Nigeria has one the highest economic growth rate but with high poverty rate of 7.4%. In 2010, the poverty rate was put at 46%. This implied that 46% of Nigerians lived below the national poverty line. Also, the National Bureau of Statistics claimed that only 112.519 million Nigerians are within the poverty line. The World Bank in its recent report cuts Nigeria's poverty rate to 33.1% even though there has been positive economic trend as well as significant progress made towards poverty eradication in the country. That is, poverty rate dropped from 35.2% to 33.1%. In other words, it dropped by 2.1% within 2 years.

According to Ajah (2015) as reported by 247ureports.com, poverty is classified into three especially within the Nigerian context. First those that are poor but do not believe that they are so. Example of them are; those begging on the street, those unable to feed thrice a day with good meals, those unable to cater for their own children in terms of education, health and shelter, and those languishing in prisons for trivial offences. Second, those who are not poor but they believe that they are equal to the poor. For example, they are those made of the insatiable minds who will refuse to pay labourer his paltry reward upon the abundance in which they swim. They compete to be the greatest in wealth amassment which arithmetically translates to impoverishing more Nigerians (e.g. some politicians, some business men and women, hardened criminals in bank robbery, pen robbery, 419, arms smuggling, kidnapping and bunkering) while the third group are those who are neither rich nor poor and they strongly believe in what they are. Unfortunately, their population is not too significant a number of the Nigerian population.

5. Teaching Job/School Business

Generally, teaching is described as occupation, profession or work peculiar to teachers which deals with imparting knowledge to others. Teaching is definitely a vocation rather than a job. As one expert said, anyone can teach, but to teach well and care for people you are teaching, you have to really be a teacher with passion for the job. Teaching has direct impact on the lives of people, that is, educating people to impart knowledge to create a better future for them.

According to Lucky (2013; 2015), teaching generally is being considered as one of the most interesting and challenging professions in human endeavour. One major reason to this fact is that perhaps, it deals mainly with human beings. Teachers need to teach others in order for them to learn and be educated (Bagley, 1938), while those who teach (that is, the teachers themselves) others must possess the right characteristics, competence and teaching qualifications to enable them impart the right knowledge and education to the people or learners as whatever they teach has a durable effect in the lives of the people they teach (Bagley, 1938). Therefore, competent teachers with right qualifications, characteristics and most importantly passion for teaching are required in this regard. For example, teaching qualifications and competence will help teachers to become more professional rather than just mere teachers who are only looking for their means of livelihood (Yusuf, 2007).

Furthermore, it would assist the teachers to know how to handle and relate to the students (Koledoye, 2000; Lai, Elisabeth & Janvry, 2009). Koledoye (2000); Lai, Elisabeth & Janvry (2009) further noted that it would ensure that the quality of education provided is always high and fulfill the goals. Accordingly, it will equally produce and deliver inspection reports of education institutions to fulfill students' satisfaction in the allocated duration and also ensure high competencies of the teachers. On the other hand, the competence will assist the

teachers to master the subject and effectively teach the subject to the understanding of the students. In this case, teaching qualifications, characteristic and competence are directly correlated with the quality of instruction in the classrooms as well as the overall academic performance (Fah & Osman, 2011; Ogbonnaya & Osiki, 2007). Accordingly, the National Education Policy (1998-2010) reported that it is visibly clear that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence, and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have an effective impact on the teaching learning process. Therefore, academic performance and quality of teaching within the education system depends on the teaching qualifications, characteristics and competence including the passion for the job. An education system that yearns for quality and standard requires competent teachers with right qualification and passion for the job.

Finally, according to Lucky (2013), teaching job requires that teachers should also demonstrate the following: patience, intellectual curiosity, positive mental attitude, empathy, enthusiasm, maturity, compassion, confidence, creative, role model, mentorship and many more. However, these qualities are hard to find in teachers of nowadays especially in a developing country like Nigeria where the economic situation tends to determine the quality and quantity of teaching personnel in the education system.

6. *Linking Economic Situation and Teaching job in Nigeria*

According to Sharrif & Saud (2009) and also reported by Minai & Lucky (2012), there is a strong link between economic situation and any business start-up as well as the success or failure of any business. For instance, Sharrif & Saud (2009) contended that it is a specific economic situation such as economic frustration or economic downturn that pushes individuals into a particular trade or business. In other words, it is economic frustration that causes people to react towards teaching business or taking up teaching job in Nigeria. Against this background, Minai & Lucky (2012) argued that this particular economic situation may not produce the right attitude for the business and consequently right people that would last in the business since they are being brought into the business by a particular situation. Given this situation, this paper therefore argued that quality and standard will be badly affected in this regard. This is the present situation in Nigeria where many of the teachers in all levels of Nigerian education are recruited and hired into the job due to the prevailing economic situation in the country. Thus, the right qualification and the passion for the job are lacking. Both right qualification and passion for the job are much required to be able to achieve quality and standard in the education profession or teaching job in Nigeria. Unfortunately, these are not to be found both in many of the established schools as well as in those who do the teaching job in those schools. This argument is also supported by the contingency model otherwise called situation theory. The theory posited that it is the current

situation that determines what to do and what not to be done (Richard, 1998). Hence, it is the current economic situation (e.g. graduate unemployment, poverty etc.) in Nigeria that determines the quality of manpower and standard of education in Nigeria. It is all about earning a living and not the qualification and passion for the job. No wonder, the immediate past Nigerian President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and also the former Coordinating Minister, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala affirmed that 60% of those who teach in Nigerian higher institutions are not qualified (Lucky, 2013; 2015).

III. CONCLUSION

This paper explores the link between economic situation and teaching job in Nigeria. Evidence from the literature shown that Nigerian economic situation is characterized by a number of very ugly factors such as high rate of graduate unemployment, high rate of poverty, poor infrastructure decay, high cost of production, mismanagement, corruption, bad leadership, communal disturbances, unpaid loans (bad debts), high interest rates; poor political climate, poor wages, delayed wages, irregular payment of wages, pay-cuts and declining pace of development and many more. All these are singularly referred to as economic frustration which is argued to push individuals into teaching job or school business. Based on situational theory and coupled with the view of Sharrif & Saud (2009) and as also reported by Minai & Lucky (2012), this paper argued that it is the current economic situation (e.g. graduate unemployment, poverty etc.) in Nigeria that determines the quality of manpower in Nigerian education system and standard of education in Nigeria. Therefore, it is all about earning a living and not the qualification and passion for the job. Those who are hired to take up teaching duties and responsibilities in Nigerian education system at all levels should possess the right teaching qualifications and the passion for the job because doing this, would help the nation to achieve both quality and standard in our education system. The paper has contributed to knowledge by steering up further inquiry in this area of study. Thus, an empirical study in this area of study would be a very welcome idea.

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