
Perception of Business Education Students on Causes and Ways of Reducing Poverty for Sustainable Development in Colleges of Education, Delta State

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Abstract

The study examined perception of business education students on causes and ways of reducing poverty for sustainable development in colleges of Education, Delta State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 150 Business Education students in 3 Colleges of Education in Delta State. The entire population was studied due to its manageable size. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire items used in this study was structured using a 4-point response scale. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Coefficient alpha and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained suggesting a high reliability. All 150 copies of the instrument were administered and returned which was made possible through the wait and take approach. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that bad governance, corruption, low productivity, underemployment, destruction of natural resources are the root causes of poverty. The study also found that the ways of reducing challenges of poverty include quality education, diversification of economic activities, reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners, investing in health and well-being of youths as well as fighting corruption. The study recommended among other things that government should increase budgetary allocation to education as well as a review of the school curricula with a view to making the educational system more responsive to growth and poverty reduction.

Keywords: Poverty, Business Education, Colleges of Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Poverty is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon and one of the major challenges against development. According to Omobowale (2018), poverty is a state where the people are deprived of good things of life and the ability to achieve the desired state of wellbeing and socially acceptable standard of living. Poverty is scarcity of human basic needs or man's inability to acquire his basic needs for existence due to scarcity of resources. Man's basic needs are generally understood to include food, shelter and clothing. Therefore, when man is incapacitated to make provisions for his food, shelter and clothing, he is regarded as a poor person. Poverty could affect an individual, a group, a community or a nation. Undoubtedly, poverty with its detrimental tendencies has become a global challenge (Oluwatayo, 2019). Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty as at 2015 were 767 million which reduced to less than 600 million people by 2019 (UNDP, 2016). Billions of people across the globe live in dehumanizing unclean conditions enriched with hunger, disease, desperation, and degradation (World Food Programme, 2016).

Although poverty is a global issue, there is less prevalence of poverty in developed societies than there is in developing nations of which Nigeria is inclusive; despite her rich endowment with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas, and large untapped solid mineral and other natural resources. Nigeria is a country with an abundance of resources, abundant arable land, and bountiful river water, a large land area for building as well as a vast pool of human resources and other endowment. Demographically, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, the seventh world-wide with an estimated population of over 200 million in 2020 (Population Reference Bureau [PRB], 2017; Worldometer, 2020), and ranks 8th as the largest exporter of crude oil in the world with many other resources. However, Brookings Institution annual report states that Nigeria is ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world above India. Prior to independence in Nigeria (1960), the level of poverty was really low. However, 60 years after gaining independence, Nigeria rose from a low poverty level to become one of the countries with the highest incidence of poverty in the world today.

Nigeria did not achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) poverty targets by 2015 in spite of the measures initiated by successive administration to reduce poverty since 1980. No matter how hard successive governments both military and democratic have tried to reduce poverty, it has failed to yield expected results (Benyin & Ugochukwu, 2019). Official statistics show that in 1980 the national (average) poverty incidence was 28.1 per cent of the population. The distribution of the incidence across the states of the federation showed a maximum of 49.5 per cent recorded for Plateau (and Nassarawa which was excised from Plateau). This meant that every state had a poverty incidence below 50 per cent. By 1985, the national (average) poverty incidence had risen to

46.3 per cent, with the maximum of 68.9 per cent recorded in Bauchi (and Gombe which was carved out of Bauchi). As at 1996, the national average stood at 65.6 per cent with Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara (all old Sokoto State) recording the highest incidence of 83.6 per cent; followed by Bauchi and Gombe with 83.5 per cent. As at 2000, the incidence of poverty was believed to have risen to 70 per cent at the national level (Danaan, 2018).

Poverty in Nigeria remains significant as many researches such as the work of Olatomide (2019), reveal that some of the causes of poverty have been identified as unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, laziness, natural disasters, violence, and indiscipline. The high level of poverty in Nigeria alarms every sector in our society particularly the government as concerted efforts have been made by various administrations to annihilate this anomaly. This work appreciates the efforts of the Federal government which has introduced various poverty alleviation programs such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DEFRI), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP) but it is glaring that the level of poverty is still on the increase. In view of this ugly situation for the continuous increase in the level of poverty in the country, despite government efforts at eradicating it Amoo, Adekola and Oladosun (2018), posits that, all these programmes have failed to achieve the objectives for which they were established by the government.

Nigerian government is unable to sustain her development in key sectors like agriculture, infrastructure, education, health, housing and many other sectors in spite of several intervention measures since 1970s (Amaechi, 2018; Benyin & Ugochukwu, 2019). One of the most noteworthy tasks facing Nigeria today is its inability to provide quality life to its citizenry comparable to developed societies. The failure of Millennium Development Goals of halving the poor by 2015 led to a summit that brought about the Sustainable Development Goals where the issue of poverty eradication is the first goal since one of the drivers of non-sustainable development is poverty (Amoo, 2018). The above scenario raises the issue that Nigeria's poverty case requires attention and that there is need to have an insight into the issues and challenges of poverty and its implications on the nation's development. Moreover, investigating each of the competing factors will enhance informed policy intervention towards poverty reduction. It is against this background that this study sought to examine issues and challenges of poverty in a developing society and the way forward.

Poverty in Nigeria is a contradiction because the poverty level appears as a flaw considering the country's immense wealth. Poverty has indeed become a pandemic national disease with symptomatic effects of high unemployment rates, poor health care, poor accessibility to water, food, housing, low human development, low per capita income, and poor infrastructural development. Nigeria's poverty situation has worsened despite the huge human and material

resources that have been devoted to poverty reduction by successive governments in Nigeria with no substantial success achieved from such efforts (Danaan, 2018). Many people particularly in the rural areas are not aware of various government programmes on poverty alleviation. Those that are aware also hardly benefit from such poverty alleviation programmes due to some issues and challenges which one could describe as poor implementation and evaluation of programmes. The truth is that the beneficiaries of these poverty alleviation programmes are mainly people far above the poverty line or the rich. This situation has always presented these programmes as illusive and deceit on the view of poor population (Nwatu, 2022). Since poverty remains a development issue, it has continued to capture the attention of both national governments and international development agencies for several decades. Since the mid-1980s, reducing poverty has become a major policy concern for governments and donor agencies in all poverty-stricken developing societies, Nigeria inclusive. This study therefore examined perception of business education students on causes and ways of reducing poverty for sustainable development in colleges of Education, Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

It is sorrowful to see a country such as Nigeria with abundant natural resources and copious human capital, but with 70 percent of its people living below the poverty line and surviving on less than \$1 a day. Poverty has ripped the process of education apart and deprived people from getting proper access to education. Poverty has become the 'boss' with the help of corruption determining who should go to school and who should not. Huge numbers of male students are dropping out of school, loaded with evil intention and sophisticated weapons - declaring a war of robbery while some of their female counterparts fail to complete their studies and end up with early pregnancy. Some of them are so victimized by poverty that they have to sell their bodies on campus as a means of survival. The impact of poverty on education is of great significance and it is tormenting to see students struggling and battling the hardship to study without any support from the government or their parents. It is against this background that this study sought to examine the perception of business education students on causes and ways of reducing poverty for sustainable development in colleges of Education, Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine perception of business education students on causes and ways of reducing poverty for sustainable development in colleges of Education, Delta State. More specifically, the study sought to;

1. Identify the perception of Business Education students on causes of poverty.
2. Determine the perception of Business Education students on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the perception of Business Education students on causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State?
2. What is the perception of Business Education students on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondent's perception on the causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondent's perception on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on location.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 150 Business Education students in three (3) Colleges of Education in Delta State. Since the population was sizeable, there was no sampling. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale. The numerical value for the scale points include; Strongly Agreed = SA (4 points), Agree = A (3 points), Disagree = D (2 points) and Strongly Disagree = (1 point). Any item with mean score less than or equal to 2.49 was considered as disagreed while any item with mean score equal to or more than 2.50 was considered as Agreed. The instrument was validated by two experts from business education department, FCE(T), Asaba. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Coefficient alpha and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained suggesting a high reliability. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 150 copies of the instrument and retrieved same which were used for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, mean scores and standard deviation while the T-test statistical tool was used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation

The results for this study were obtained from the research questions answered and hypotheses tested through the analysis of data.

Research Question 1:What is the perception of Business education students on causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on Perceived Causes of Poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
1.	Bad governance over the years had deprived developing societies of the ideals and dividends of democracy and this has led to poverty.	3.95	0.21	Agree
2.	Corruption has contributed immensely to poverty and misery of a large segment of the population.	3.42	0.72	Agree
3.	Productivity sectors of the economy like agriculture are equally constrained leading to low productivity thereby throwing majority of the society into abject poverty.	4.00	0.00	Agree
4.	When people are underemployed, their source of livelihood depletes overtime thereby leading to poverty.	3.40	0.49	Agree
5.	Destruction of natural resources leading to environmental degradation and reduced productivity.	3.73	0.50	Agree
Grand Mean		3.70		Agree

Analyses on Table 1 reveals that the mean scores range from 3.40 – 4.00. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 1 further shows the grand mean for the entire item which is 3.70, and falls within the response option of agree. This indicates that the perceived causes of poverty according to the respondents are numerous.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of Home Economics students on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on the ways of reducing the Challenges of Poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State?

S/N	STATEMENTS	\bar{x}	SD	REMARK
6.	Quality education can provide a lasting solution to poverty in a developing society.	3.73	0.50	Agree
7.	Diversification of economic activities will create more opportunities for developing societies and ensures stability of the economy.	3.42	0.72	Agree
8.	Reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners (particularly the political class) and increase in wages and allowances for low-and middle-income earners.	3.95	0.21	Agree
9.	To alleviate poverty, there is need to take advantage of demographic dividends by investing in health and well-being, particularly for our youths.	3.40	0.49	Agree
10.	Fighting corruption is a step in the right direction to rid the nation of its rising poverty levels.	4.00	0.00	Agree
GrandMean		3.70		Agree

Analyses on Table 2 reveals that the mean scores range from 3.42 – 4.00. This indicates that the respondents agreed to all the statements in items 1-5. Data in Table 2 further shows the grand mean for the entire item which is 3.70, and falls within the response option of agree. This indicates that quality education; diversification of economic activities; reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners; investing in health and well-being; as well as fighting corruption is a step in the right direction to get rid of or at least reduce the challenges of poverty.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was retained when the $t_{cal} < t_{crit}$ and rejected otherwise.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondent’s perception on the causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on gender.

Table 3: Analysis of t-test on the mean and standard deviation Responses of Male and Female Students on the Causes of Poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	S ²	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Male	58	3.14	0.84	148	-	1.97612	.05	Retain Ho
Female	92	3.82	0.44		5.67028			

From the t-test table, since t-cal (-5.67028) < t-crit (1.97612), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of student’s perception on the causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on gender.

Ho₂:There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of respondent’s perception on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on location.

Table 4: Analysis of t-test on the Mean and Standard Deviation Responses of Home Economics Students on the Ways of Reducing the Challenges of Poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on Location.

Location	N	\bar{x}	S ²	Df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Urban area	97	3.14	0.79	148	-	1.97612	.05	Retain Ho
Rural area	53	3.32	0.72		1.38692			

From the t-test table, since t-cal (-1.38692) < t-crit (1.97612), we retain Ho. The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant relationship in the mean ratings of respondents on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State based on location.

Summary of Findings

The summary of findings of this study includes the following:

1. Students’ perception on causes of poverty include;
 - Bad governance
 - Corruption
 - low productivity
 - underemployment
 - Destruction of natural resources
2. Students’ perception on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty include;

- Quality education.
- Diversification of economic activities.
- Reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners.
- investing in health and well-being of youths.
- Fighting corruption.

Discussion

Research Question 1 sought to find out perception of Business Education students on causes of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Findings of the study reveal that bad governance over the years had deprived developing societies including Nigeria and Delta State of the ideals and dividends of democracy which has led to poverty; corruption has contributed immensely to poverty and misery of a large segment of the population; productivity sectors of the economy like agriculture are equally constrained leading to low productivity thereby throwing majority of the society into abject poverty; when people are underemployed, their source of livelihood depletes overtime thereby leading to poverty; and destruction of natural resources leading to environmental degradation and reduced productivity further causes poverty. This finding is in line with Onah (2016), who submits that the manifestation of corruption in Nigeria progressed among individuals, and there after assumed an institutional and later national dimension. In Nigeria, corruption has contributed immensely to poverty and misery of a large segment of the population.

Research Question 2 sought to determine perception of Business Education students on ways of reducing the challenges of poverty in Colleges of Education in Delta State. Findings of the study reveals that provision of quality education which could provide a lasting solution to poverty in a developing society; diversification of economic activities could create more opportunities for developing societies and ensures stability of the economy; reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners (particularly the political class) and increase in wages and allowances for low-and middle-income earners; to alleviate poverty, there is need to take advantage of demographic dividends by investing in health and well-being, particularly for our youths; and fighting corruption is a step in the right direction to rid the nation of its rising poverty levels. This finding is in consonance with Omoniyi (2019), which reveals that quality education improves economic efficiency by expanding labour force value and efficiency, and subsequently moving people out of poverty.

Conclusion

This paper focused on perception of business education students on causes and ways of reducing poverty for sustainable development in colleges of

Education, Delta State. Issues and challenges of poverty calls for serious attention in developing societies such as Nigeria. This study, empirically concludes that bad governance, corruption, low productivity, underemployment, destruction of resources are the root causes of poverty. The study also found that the way forward towards reducing challenges of poverty include provision of quality education; diversification of economic activities; reduction in wages and allowances for high-income earners; investing in health and well-being of youths; as well as fighting corruption.

Recommendations

This study therefore recommends the following;

- It is worthy of note that Education reduce poverty, this paper therefore recommends an increase in budgetary allocation to education as well as a review of the school curricula with a view to making the educational system more responsive to growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria.
- Policies addressing the employment situation of the country should be enforced, such as providing enabling environment for private sector businesses to grow and boost employment opportunities by small and big industries.
- Policies on substantial public resources devoted to poverty alleviation should be implemented. Such a situation will facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals particularly as it pertains to poverty, zero hunger, decent work and economic growth as well as industry innovation and infrastructure which are sustainable development goals 1, 2, 8 and 9 respectively.
- There is need for a law that will make it unlawful for any government official to operate a bank account in a foreign country. If anyone has account before coming into government, such account must be disclosed and closed immediately the person undertakes to serve in government.

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