
TRANSFORMING AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES FOR GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study was on the transforming of African Higher Education for Graduate Employability, to eradicate major problems of graduate unemployment. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. Three hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. This study was conducted in Abia State University, Uturu, Anambra State University, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Enugu State University of Science and Technology and Imo State University, Imo. This study correlation using the survey research as a design method. The population adopted was 600 comprises 120 each from five South Eastern Nigerian Universities. Reliability of the instrument were analyzed using pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics. Three hypotheses generated were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and T-test statistics. The findings revealed that University Education significantly influenced graduate entrepreneurship in African. It was recommended that higher education curricula should be re-designed. African government must expand the opportunities for entrepreneurship development programme for all the unemployed graduates in African.

Key words: Africa State, Graduate, Employability, Economic, and Development.

Higher education has been identified as the most powerful instrument for social transformation. It is the process of positive change in the right direction. Higher education imparts knowledge, skills, attitude and character to the individual through teaching, learning and experiential activity. Africans recognizes the importance of university education in continental development, thus made it to reflect in the goals of higher education in universities curricula in Africa. It plays a vital role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period of integrated with viable employable skills.

Unfortunately African universities are facing major problem of graduate unemployment. Graduate men and women leaving the universities and polytechnics every year with every little hope of securing jobs, several researchers from year 2000-2012 studies the labour market prospects of university graduates in African faced, the unemployment rate for graduates to be around 30% while their prospects for employment have worsened over time. Hoping to improve their chances of employment. Some recycle themselves into postgraduate programmes. Others who do not see any hope of self-sustenance outside the university, devise ways of remaining within the system by engage in various anti-social activities, such as cultism, kidnapping, armed robberies, and advance fee found. The universities are challenged to response to a number of issues democratization of higher education, staffing, competition, funding globalization and ill structured curricula. The inability of higher education to meet the need as well as the promotion of economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency has resulted into graduate joblessness (unemployment) and increasing incidence of social ills among the gradates. Capacity development is the panacea for insecurity, poverty, prevalent in Africa. There is a great concern among the education and higher education stakeholders about how university education could meet the needs of the graduate through transformation of higher education by entrepreneurship acquisition in Africa. Graduate entrepreneurs have a crucial role to play in the development and growth of the economy.

It is therefore, the focus of this study to examine university higher education and graduate entrepreneurship for graduate employability in Africa. In order to find solution to the problems, the study is aimed at finding the following sub-themes.

1. Socio-political environment conduction for higher education.
2. To determine the relationship between higher institution and the industries.
3. Determine the role of the private sectors in higher institution development
4. Determine effective funding by Government and non Governmental organization.

The study provide comprehensive sources of information on graduate employability and socio-economic development. The study lead to transformation of African universities higher education. The study was delimited to entrepreneurship development programme in African universities. It covered universities in two south eastern states in six geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Socio-Political Environment Condition for an Higher Education

Effort to stimulate environmental economic development through the strategy of entrepreneurship development is not new in Africa. Several institutions and government agencies have been engaged in different aspects of fostering entrepreneurship in Africa since sixties. The Willians, (2003), attempted to develop a model to facilitate the identification, selection and training of potential entrepreneurs. In

Nigeria there are institutions such as Nigeria industrial Development Bank (NIDB), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Nigeria Bank for commerce and industry (NBCI) and Nigerian youth service corps (NBCI) and Nigerian youth service Corps (NYSC) have had programme for entrepreneurship development. These socio-political efforts have almost short-lived and have minimal impact on the Nigeria economy. the programmes were poorly delivered, ad hoc and uncoordinated. Steinhoff, D & Burgers J. (1993), stated that the delivery of entrepreneurship development programmes in Nigeria is poor as a variety of teachers Nigeria is poor as a variety of teachers are hurriedly assembled and given materials also hurriedly written. National University commission (NUC, 2004) stated that the participants of Entrepreneurship Development programmes (EDP) rated them positive.

Government Sponsored so many institutions to have the tendency to emphasize the provision of capital on the assumption that the limiting factor inhabiting the assumption of entrepreneurship role lack capital. A variety of companies such as the Nigerian Employers consultative Association (NECA), international Labour organization (ILO), the united Nations Development programmes (UNDP) engaged in entrepreneurial development activities.

However, while these efforts have created awareness of the roles of entrepreneurs in a private sector led economy, the scope of the programmes are unlikely to ever reach the critical mass of the Africa population. Neither are they sufficient to create an entrepreneurial culture, in the society and change the orientation of graduates from that of a job Seeker to that of job creator. Integrating entrepreneurship in the higher educational system, has great potential in achieving these goals.

By the turn of the 21st century, as many as 1600 universities in North America were offering courses in entrepreneurship compared to merely two dozens in the 70s (Woolfolk A, 1998).

In the view of the latter, the penetration of entrepreneurship into university curriculum in North America was aided by three factors students like the course and the demand for it was high universities that benefited from federal government grants, to establish innovation centres, introduced courses in entrepreneurship. Because they found that such courses were central to innovation, universities that participated in the small scale Business Administration programme had to introduce courses in small scale business management and entrepreneurship, if they can obtain the funds offered by the programme.

Ochol (2005) attributed the introduction and growth of entrepreneurship education, into the curricula of universities; in the united kingdom. This will bring the need of universities to serve the innovation needs of business. It helped to produce graduates with transferable skills for businesses and to be able to access funding from the Higher Education funding council.

Government's recent focus is on sustainable micro-financing. The government uses this as a strategy for empowering poor entrepreneurs to be self- employed and contributed meaningfully to productive life and an improved economy. Micro-finance has been adopted as one of the anchors for economic growth "Highlight". The relationship between Higher institution and industries.

University graduates to be employable, the international standard skills and business are to be produced for both the domestic and international market these should rigidly acquired and followed.

Animal fats and oil, Art and decorative, Beverages, computer and cybercate, wood and furniture, transport/haulage, fruit juice, spirits and diary production, foundry fabrication, textiles and embroidering machine, vehicle spare parks fabrication, saving, collection and micro finance business, farming and livestock, cassava, flour and poultry, ceramics aluminum design Bakery and cakes, Foot wear, headgear, Restaurant and foot vending, plantain potatoes chips/flakes, Hair dressing/ barbing salon, leather, fur and skin, Soft drinks and sachet water, Electronics appliances such as radio , television and computer systems servicing, electrical appliances servicing, GSM, recharge card service, music dance, Gari processing industries, ICT business centre, the above skills and businesses have direct relationship between industries and higher institutions. All the industrial products are used in classroom and workshop instructional techniques and activities.

The age of information and communication technology (ICT) globalized the world universities into common curriculum. African connecting higher education and fused it with production sector makes university graduates employable in the labour market.

The goals of higher education as stated in the national policy of education FRN, (2004) are to develop intellectual capacity, develop values for the survival of individual's manpower training provide enabling and conducive environment as well to acquire both physical and intellectual skills and that will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. These goals are to be purstied through teaching, research dissemination of existing new information and community of existing new information and community service. These goals are witnessing and

unprecedented public criticism. There is no household in this continent that is not concerned about the state of education systems, particularly higher education. The structure is in a very deplorable condition.

Teachers are demoralized and disenchanted. The system now produces thousands of graduate people, who roam the streets, in search of jobs that are not available. Connect higher education with entrepreneurship would make university graduates productive. The entrepreneur in his entrepreneurial activities can bring about increases in production, create employment, income, facilitate rapid growth of micro, small, medium and large scale enterprises, to reduce poverty and hunger among the people. Given this background it is thus imperative to explore the extent to which entrepreneurship contributes to innovation and growth of industries in Africa.

Entrepreneurship is all about creation and running of one's own business. Igbo (2005), saw entrepreneurship as the building creation and distribution of something of value from practically nothing to individuals, groups, organization and society. Entrepreneurship involves planning and organizing small business ventures through the mobilization of people and resources to meet people's needs. Entrepreneurship involves innovation, development, recognition, seizing opportunities and converting opportunities to marketable ideals, value while bearing the risk of competition.

The Role of the Private Sectors in Higher Institution Development

Organized private sectors continue to have very important mutual influence on human life. It influences social, economic and cultural way of living of the people. Their important roles in human life place organized private sectors very central in our daily activities.

Organized private sectors equip individuals economically through provision of skills for work such as individuals gain employment. There would enhance development of economic activities. These contribute to the building of economy with greater revenue generation, higher production, poverty reduction and independence.

Social Roles

One of the basic aims of organized private sectors in national development is to foster the social goals of living together and working together, for the common good of the people. Organized private sector helps a great deal in development of social amenities. When these aforementioned areas are enhanced, it will effect our social and communal life positively. Organized private sector is fused with medical roles which have profound effect on our health and in turn influences our standard of living. It also has far-reaching effect on our emotional well being. Organized private sector build security of nation in terms of provision of tools, equipment and weapons, development of the security personnel, supply of machines, drugs, and chemicals. It provided training for manpower employability in various areas of the organizations.

Effective Funding by the Government and Non Government Organization

African universities are to perform optimally their intervention role in salvaging the never-do we-well economy of the countries in Africa through entrepreneurship activities. Oluwole (2003), stated that it becomes necessary that there should be a special fund arrangement such as risk fund or venture capital. This is to provide fund at every necessary rates to entrepreneurship development centres of university and then being able to fund research result and innovation that such could be carried out to meaningful conclusion.

Purposely, there are three categories of funding such as: seed money from the university authority to the entrepreneurship development centres. Possibly, this should not be less than 15% of the entire project cost.

Fund From Government Agencies or Establishments Sectors

Private sector financials, such as world bank assisted project, micro finance institutions, commercial banks, non-governmental organization (NGO), and so on.

To safeguard the result of such funding, patenting and protection of intellectual properties of individual researchers must be given priority attention piracy and plagiarizing must not be allowed to jeopardize the innovative, reward, and if possible, equity for the researcher on the commercialization of their findings. African universities should be supported by African governments to assist researcher towards the commercialization of their research and development findings.

Research Method

The research was a correlation survey type carried out exposit fact because higher universities educations and graduate entrepreneurship were studies as if they had already occurred. The two main variables used were goal of university higher education as the independent variable and graduate entrepreneurship as the dependent variable. The indices of university higher education examined include teaching, research publication and community participation while components of graduate entrepreneurship were entrepreneurship development programmes, and skilled manpower in innovative technology and labour market.

The target population for the study was undergraduate students comprised graduates, artisans, entrepreneurs 600 respondents were used in the 11 selected universities, companies, banks small scale industries and parastatals. To secure the needed information, a questionnaire tagged "UHEAFQ" university higher Education and graduate entrepreneurship questionnaire was constructed for the purpose of analyzing the relationship between university higher education and graduate entrepreneurship.

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The questionnaire was divided into three sections the first section (A) was concerned with personal data of the respondents. Section B (university higher Education Questionnaire (UHQ) was administered to the Graduates while graduate Entrepreneurship. Questionnaire (TEQ) was administered to the employment of labour.

The reliability of the instrument was established using a test-retest method and person product moment correlation statistical analysis. The multiple regression was used to test the main hypothesis while the pearson product moment correlation statistical techniques was used to test the null hypotheses.

Findings

The findings indicated that the relationship between university socio-political environment and employability and graduate entrepreneurship was statistically significant. The findings are consistent, and empowering university graduates economically, which in turn capable of reducing poverty and contributing to the development of the continent of Africa. Some findings do not agree with some report in related literature on the graduate employability Etuk (2001) concluded that the development of entrepreneurial skills and initiatives should be of paramount importance especially in higher education. more often, universities are government agencies that are established by law, act.

Findings also indicated significant relationship between the university higher education curricular and entrepreneurship productive. The curriculum of universities are the totality of the experiences that are offered to the students by the institution in the persuade of its teaching and learning philosophy, goal and objectives.

Conclusion

The importance of teaching young people the difference between the principles of getting things well done and the other sides. This paper focused on transforming African Higher Education for graduate employability, through various skills. Entrepreneurship skills including designing and construction skills, creativity and innovation, business experience skills, managerial experience. On can water productions skills, whole scales, and retail sales skills. Students of higher education learn the need to develop common sense in creativity wisdom.

Entrepreneurship development is innovation in Africa and should be at the peak of awareness through creation and participation of the students to be self- reliance and self-independents. Polices of government have shifted to addressing the problems of infrastructural decay and finance. Power supply problem hinders the entrepreneurship programme in some parts of Africa. Microfinance banks that are put in place to assist entrepreneurs with soft loans is still in infancy in so many parts of Africa. Innovation in entrepreneurship bring technological progress through capital

saving, efficient production techniques in African higher education level of output or economic growth. The entrepreneur create new lines if consumption to enhance growth in entrepreneurial sectors to stimulate growth in various industries. There must be needs for economical and technological training to prepare the young entrepreneurs for the development of the nation. Entrepreneurship will teach the youths essence of business which have human needs and filling it. The individual African youth, will than learn to have status that are legitimate and functional.

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