

An appraisal of the Philosophy of Nigerian Education for Sustainable Livelihood in Nigeria (2008 - 2012).

Ekpenyong E. Ekanem* Rosemary O. Osim, Victoria I. Nkama

Department of Educational Administration and Planning, University of Calabar, P.M.B. 1115 Calabar, Nigeria.

*ekpenyongekanem@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The philosophy of Nigerian education seems not to guarantee good lives for citizens of Nigeria. The macro-economic indicators for five years (2008 – 2012) now continuously recorded increase growth rates in Nigeria but without significant development. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the philosophy of Nigerian education could justify sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. This study was designed to provide baseline information for macro policy-management on education in order to enhance the welfare of Nigerian citizens. The study adopted a descriptive survey design in Cross River State of Nigeria as a study area. One research question and one hypothesis were applied to guide the study while the related literatures were reviewed. The population of study was 2,395 university teachers and out of which 250 was drawn using a simple random sampling technique. Researchers' constructed instrument was used to collect information from the respondents. Data was statistically analyzed using tables, mean rating and population t-test statistics. Results obtained revealed that the contemporary socio-economic trends of the philosophy of Nigerian education have not accelerated sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. Basic needs provision among the geo-political zones of Nigeria indicated disparities. Therefore, it was recommended that better measures of economic development such as Human Development Index (HDI) be utilized to ensure sustainable livelihood in Nigeria.

Keywords: Livelihood, sustainable, philosophy, education, socio-economic trends.

1. Introduction

Education is for life and for living. It is a vital instrument which improves quality, shapes destiny and transforms man from what he is to what he hopes to become (Kermon 2007, Ekanem and Uchendu, 2011). In Nigeria, direct involvement in education is anchored on the philosophy of the nation. It is aimed at achieving integration of the individuals into sound and effective citizens of the nation. The philosophy of the nation as stated in the Second National Development Plan include a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. According to FRN (2004), the aims and objectives of formal education on the basis of the philosophy of Nigerian education include:

1. the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
2. the inculcation of the right the of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
3. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
4. the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Government and educational managers are therefore concern with the process of directing, co-ordinating and modifying the efforts of people and machinery towards achievement of the stated objectives for good living in Nigeria.

Managing education for sustainable livelihood in developing countries dwells on emerging socio-economic trends in the nation's philosophy of education. Sustainable livelihood are capabilities, assets and activities required for means of living both now and the future while not undermining the natural resource base. According to Briggs (2008), it is a means of good living which meet the needs and aspirations of the present without having negative impact on the ability of future generations. Sustainable livelihood aims at better access to nutrition, infrastructure, financial resources, natural resources and supportive cohesive social environment to better living of the people. Therefore, it is committed to support policies and actions which promote sustainable development. This is particularly important as Nigerians are constantly informed of the robust growth of the economy in the last five years but with no significant development. The contemporary socio-economic trends of the philosophy of Nigerian education (new ways of socio-political structure) should engender enabling

environment and competitive market for enhanced well-being.

The fact that there is a positive relationship between education and economy confirms that the economy invest in education for significant returns on investment to accrue to both individuals and the society (Psachoropoulos, 1973). Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change a nation and is a central issue for discussion in the global fora (Ajayi, 2011). Ekpo (2011) adduce that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria grew by 7.68 percent in the fourth quarter of 2011, which is slightly higher than the 7.40 percent growth in third quarter of the same year. In first quarter of 2012, the GDP increase to 7.8 percent. Despite the growth rates, the economy remains at the crossroads but with non-employment generating.

The official unemployment rate from the National Bureau of Statistics as espoused by Ekpo (2012) is about 24 percent, the rate of inflation is 12 percent, the lending rate is about 22 percent while the incidence of poverty is 70 percent. This high discomfort poverty index for Nigeria has far reaching implications in different sectors of the economy. The public school system at all levels have virtually collapsed, the health system is nothing to write home about, poor infrastructure, corruption as a way of life and high level of insecurity in the country. Major indices such as business environment and human development record low scores with loss of trust/confidence in government of Nigeria. Based on the socio-economic indicators, the nation seems to possess all the indicators of a failing state. There is need to ensure that education plays an important role of improvement of quality of life to its citizens. This may take the form of livelihood outcomes such as more income, increased well-being, improved food security, reduced vulnerability and more sustainable use of the natural resource base (Ndiyo, 2008).

The role of education in socio-economic and political development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. The contemporary socio-economic trends can be effectively articulated to ensure that education achieve the objectives of the national development plan to alleviate the challenges of good life in Nigeria (World Bank, 2006 and Enemu, 2010). In this study, the variables such as freedom in expression, honest leadership, equality before the law and leadership opportunity were considered to examine the objectives of the philosophy. Others include patriotic leadership, manpower availability, unemployment, change in economy, equality of opportunity and lifelong transformation. They are assessed in the light of equitable access to competitive market (sustainable livelihood structure) and for poverty reduction and wealth creation (people-centred). This is because education should develop people to fend for themselves, live in a society and behave well (Oladeji, 2004). Therefore, the main aim of this study is to determine the extent philosophy of Nigerian education could justify sustainable livelihood in Nigeria.

The significance of this study will be seen in its acting as an inspiration for institutions of learning to be committed to the objectives of the nation's philosophy of education, among other potential benefits of the research. The government, educational administrators, students and parents will equally find the study useful as sustainable livelihood is yearned for among citizens in Nigeria. The study is particularly important to scholars since it examines the contemporary socio-economic trends of the philosophy of education in order to alleviate the challenge of good life to the citizenry.

The scope of the study is delimited to university teachers' assessment of the contemporary socio-economic trends of the philosophy of Nigerian education and the extent they can guarantee sustainable livelihood in terms of welfare of people in Nigeria. Therefore, the investigation wishes to contribute to the filling of the gap and hence, to bring added knowledge to literature.

2. Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, it appears that individuals and government do not have the convictions that education can narrow down the gap between the rich and the poor. The present situation depicts lack of proper understanding and practice of the philosophy of Nigerian education with its resultant consequences on challenges of good life in Nigeria. Nigerian leaders are always given the impression of continuous growth in the economy but the increase growth rates are non-employment generating and without significant developments. This misleading situation compels educational managers to accept the contemporary socio-economic trends of the philosophy of the nation's education as supporting the sustainable livelihood structure (equitable access to competitiveness) and as people-centred (poverty reduction and wealth creation). An observed issue is that education seems not to guarantee good life for citizens in Nigeria. A perceived way out of this administrative challenge is to determine better measures of economic development utilized to capture the welfare of the people. The question remains; can contemporary socio-economic trends in the philosophy of Nigerian education guarantee sustainable livelihood in Nigeria? This study is designed to find an answer to this poser.

3. Research Question

What is the university teachers' perception of the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria?

4. Research Hypothesis

The philosophy of Nigerian education on sustainable livelihood is not significantly high.

5. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design because it involved the use of a representative sample from a population and the drawing of inferences based on available data analyzed. The population for the study consisted of 2395 university teachers in universities in Cross River State of Nigeria. A sample size of 250 university teachers were drawn from Faculty of Education of the universities studied using simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for the study was a 10-item questionnaire titled "Philosophy of Nigerian Education and Sustainable Livelihood Questionnaire (PNESLQ)". The instrument was designed to find out relevant information on contemporary socio-economic trends for solving the problems of sustainable livelihood. The scoring of the instrument was based on 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Strongly Disagree (2 points) and Disagree (1 point).

Face and content validation of the instrument were undertaken by subjecting the items to the critical judgment of two experts in Educational Management and one other expert in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established, using 20 and 30 university teachers from Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH) and University of Calabar (UNICAL), Calabar respectively. The test retest method using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient yielded a value of 0.82. This value indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in achieving the research objectives.

The questionnaire copies were personally administered by the researchers and two research assistants recruited from each of the institutions. The instrument were administered to 250 respondents and the measure adopted in doing this was without any mortality rate.

The mean rating and population t-test statistics were used to analyze data generated for the study. Items with a mean of 2.50 and above were considered positive interpretation, while those with value below 2.50 were interpreted negative in the mean rating. The population t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

6. Data Analysis and Results

The information gathered from the university teachers were subjected to descriptive statistics using tables, mean rating and population t-test. The analysis were shown in table 1, 2, and 3.

7. Research Question

What is university teachers' perception of the philosophy of Nigerian Education for sustainable likelihood in Nigeria? Mean was used to rate the responses of teachers on the variables affecting the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood. Summaries of the results were presented on table 1.

Table 1 revealed that the university teachers have a low perception of the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. The sampled teachers exhibit negative opinion towards the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood. For example the mean was below 2.50 for items such as freedom in expression and education, diligent and honest leadership, patriotic leadership and education for lifelong transformation. All other statements, as shown in table 1 attracted mean of agreement/disagreement ranging from 2.67 to 3.36 from the respondents that indicated negative opinion to the contemporary socio-economic trends in the philosophy for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. This result also indicated that the practice of the philosophy of Nigerian education was having negative effects on the welfare of the citizens.

TABLE 1
7.1 Mean rating of responses of university teachers on the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria.
n=250

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Freedom in expression, assembly, religion and education.	2.02	1.02	Disagreed
2	Diligent and honest leadership.	2.13	0.05	Disagreed
3	Equality before law in practice.	2.67	1.00	Agreed
4	Inequality of leadership opportunity.	2.97	1.04	Agreed
5	Patriotic leadership in Nigeria.	2.07	0.04	Disagreed
6	Inadequate manpower to build the economy.	3.34	0.51	Agreed
7	A change in economy for the better.	2.68	1.02	Agreed
8	High level of unemployment among youth.	3.36	0.54	Agreed
9	Inequality of opportunity anywhere and anytime despite place of birth.	2.98	0.78	Agreed
10	Education for lifelong transformation.	2.06	0.30	Disagreed

* Mean significant at 2.50 and above.

8. Hypothesis

The philosophy of Nigerian education on sustainable livelihood is not significantly high. The independent variable was the philosophy of education while the dependent variable was the sustainable livelihood. Population t-test statistical analysis was used to compare the mean (\bar{X}) score of the overall nation's objectives with the hypothesized mean. The results were presented in table 2.

TABLE 2
8.1 Population t-test analysis of whether the philosophy of Nigerian education on sustainable livelihood in Nigeria is significantly high.
n=250

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
Overall nation's education philosophy towards sustainable livelihood.	28.21	4.99	1.66
Hypothesized mean.	35.00	0.00	

* $P < 0.05$, $df = 249$, critical $t = 1.965$.

The findings of the analysis in table 2 showed that when the overall mean value (28.21) representing the university teachers' opinion on the socio-economic variables of the nation's education philosophy was compared with the reference mean value of 35.00 (obtained by multiplying the mid-point between agree and disagree of 3.5) by the number of items (10). It yielded a positive t-value of 1.66. The result agreed with and summarize the results in table 1. The null hypothesis was accepted with the interpretation that the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria is not significantly high. This was because they obtained t-value (1.66) was found to be lower than the critical t-value (1.97) at 0.05 alpha level of significance, with 249 degree of freedom.

TABLE 3
8.2 Comparison of nations and their impact on livelihood (basic needs provision)

Nations	Literacy of 15-24 years (%)	Improved water access (%)	Life expectancy at birth (years)
Nigeria	88.60	60.00	43.40
Malaysia	97.20	95.00	73.20
South Africa	92.80	87.00	48.40

Source: Adapted from Ekpo 2012.

The outcome of table 3 revealed that the nations' philosophy of education was important in impacting on likelihood in term of basic needs provision to the society. The three developing nations compared showed that Malaysia was ranked topmost, followed by South Africa and then Nigeria as last on the table in the three areas of basic needs (literacy, improved water access and life expectancy). Nigeria's basic needs provision was analyzed as literacy rate of 88.60 percent, improved water access as 60 percent and expectancy at birth as 43.30 years.

9. Discussion of Results

The research question revealed that there was a low perception of the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. This was reflected in the negative affirmation decision of the items of response by the university teachers. The anomaly was explained by the affirmation of the mean rating of responses to the effect that they were having negative effects on the welfare of citizens. Therefore, the philosophy of Nigerian education did not accelerate sustainable livelihood that could impact positively on the individuals' welfare in Nigeria.

The study confirmed that a free and democratic Nigeria as an objective of the nation was yet to be realized. There was no free press, free assembly, free publication, free religion and free education in practice. Over time, Nigerian leaders failed to effectively carry the citizens along while the economic power to pursue and maintain human rights were limited. Importantly, the study noted that the rationalization and justification approach as occasioned by federal character and quota system were abnoxious. The practices tend to support the weak against the strong (Oladeji, 2004). These trends caused the economy to operate below its potential with output loss. It was explicit that the economy failed to provide its citizens with functional education, housing, food, health, employment and life-expectancy. This means that the socio-economic trends of the lofty objectives of Nigerian philosophy of education failed to support the welfare of Nigerian citizens. The robust economic growth notwithstanding, since the growth was not distributed equitably among the poor and rich citizens of Nigeria (Ekpo, 2012).

Moreso, the study showed that Nigerian state was neither united nor strong self reliance since the nation's leadership have continuously proved unpatriotic. Management of the resources in Nigeria has been characterized by discrimination and corruption with poor vision. These menace make a child's sense of greatness and unity of the nation to be irrevocably destroyed in him. Institutions of learning in the nation on the other hand, lost focus on their major role of systematic management of knowledge. The output of education failed to link up what was learnt in schools with practical situation at workplace to ensure sustainable livelihood. This finding was similar to the report in Ekanem (2012) that the culture of lifelong learning in Nigeria was not essentially entrenched in the Nigerian education system. Therefore, practical engagement, discovery technique, reinvigorate research culture (critical thinking) and lateral thinking need to be emphasized for outcome of education to replicate best practice and transfer learning to doing the needful in the society.

The population t-test analysis revealed that the philosophy of Nigerian education for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria was not significantly high. This attested to the fact that on-going socio-economic trends of the philosophy could not yield the desired results for sustainable livelihood. This study pointed out that the citizens failed to enjoy equal opportunity anywhere and anytime not minding the geopolitical place of birth in Nigeria. This specifically affected knowledge as a child could be deprived of education opportunity on the basis of admission policy of merit, locality and Educational Less Disadvantaged State (ELDS) status (Ajayi, 2011). The relevance of this finding rested on the fact that there was a direct positive relationship between Knowledge Economy Index (KEI) and the economic growth which made measurement of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita possible (Psachropoulos, 1973). This implied that a country with low KEI also have a low GDP per capita and vice versa. Nigeria still rank low since the nation lacks efficient planning and effective management of all the components of knowledge required to surmount the challenge of good living (Ekanem, 2012). Such learned knowledge can be organized at the mind, content, teaching and institutional levels (Kermon, 2007).

The comparisons on table 3 showed that education level attained could positively influence the developmental level of the society. Education becomes a potent factor to distribute employment and income for both the present and the future generation to the realization of individuals' full potential. In Nigeria, this study revealed disparities in socio-economic indicators across the geo-political zones. For example, Ekpo (2012) reported that 51 percent employed safe water source in 2006 of which less than 50 percent was in rural areas across all geo-political zones except in the north-east. 13.8 percent accessed safe sanitation and was not significantly different across all the zones while 50 percent of the national sample of household enjoyed electricity. Availability of electricity was higher in south-west followed by south-east; and also higher in urban than in the rural areas. Therefore, the value of disaggregated sub-national level analysis could be adopted to effectively address Nigerian challenge to good life.

Indeed the World Bank (2006) and Ekpo (2011) attested to the basic-need approach to sustainable livelihood. This approach combined the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) and the Human Development Index (HDI) to ensure many basic needs of citizens such as education, sanitation, water supplies, health, nutrition and housing. According to Enemu, (2012), empirically high basic-need attainment aimed at transforming the society from the state of backwardness to a prosperous condition of living in a nation. The

philosophical assumption of education in achieving integration of individuals into sound and effective citizens would engender creative and intelligent use of the nation's resources for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria.

10. Conclusion

The practices of the philosophy of Nigerian education (on-going socio-economic trends) have not yielded the desired results for sustainable livelihood in Nigeria. The sound objectives of the philosophy of Nigerian education notwithstanding, the socio-economic indicators across the nation indicated disparities in basic needs provision among the geo-political zones. Therefore, there was need to utilize better measures of economic development in order to capture the welfare of citizens in Nigeria.

11. Recommendations

1. There should be conscious attempts by government and policy makers in education to reverse the negative trends of the on-going socio-economic factors of the philosophy of Nigerian education in favour of sustainable livelihood.
2. Policy makers and educational managers should promote the right opportunity to learn in the school curriculum according to the learners' ability, aptitude and interest. This will enhance the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) in terms of adult literacy, infant mortality and life expectancy.
3. Policy makers and educational managers should engage in policies that support multiple learning. This will engage peoples' choices of long and healthy life, education and decent standard of living tailored towards improving Human Development Index (HDI) in Nigeria.
4. Government should establish legitimacy and sustainability of developmental path with principles which work better for Nigerians at all levels of life. This will help to minimize gap between the rich and the poor considerably with positive results on livelihood.
5. Government should be sensitive to livelihood structure, poverty reduction and wealth creation (livelihood dynamics) since Nigeria is a capitalist state with implication of production and exchange of commodities. Anything short of this, the nation's leaders will be managing the economy centrally but not in the intent of the society (counter capitalism).

References

- Ajayi, C. A. (2011). Low Quality Graduate in Nigerian Universities: A Perception of University Teachers. In J. B. Babalola, S. O. Adedeji, Et Al (eds). *Nigerian Journals of Educational Administration and Planning*. 6(2), 60-62.
- Briggs, C. (2008). Empowering Youths for Sustainable Development. *Management in Nigeria*. January-March 25(7), 18-28.
- Ekanem, E. E. and Uchendu, C. C. (2011). Students Perception of Academic Staff Service Delivery and Vision 20:2020 Attainment in Nigeria. *A Journal of Nigerian Library Association, Cross River Chapter*. 4(4), 371-380.
- Ekanem, E. E. (2012). Equality of Educational Opportunities and Lifelong Transformation: Focus on Cross River State of Nigeria. A Paper Presented at Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) National Conferences Held at Markudi-Nigeria From 9th-13th October 2012.
- Ekpo, A. H. (2011). Nigerians' Youth and Economic Development. Retrieved from www.bsjournal.com on March 2, 2011.
- Ekpo, A. H. (2012). Growth without Development in Nigeria. Retrieved from www.journal.com on April 12, 2012.
- Enemuo, F. (2010). *Transition and Challenges of Rural Development in Nigeria*. In B. Onuoha and M. Fadakinte (eds), *Transition Policies in Nigerian Lagos*: Malthouse Press Limited.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Kermon, A. (2007). Institutional Organization of Knowledge: Missing Link in Organizational Discourse. In *Teachers College Record* 109 (3), 606-634. Retrieved from www.tcrecord.org Id12826 on March 14, 2009.
- Ndiyo, N. A. (2008). *Poverty to Sustainable Development: A Community-Based Approach*. Calabar: University of Calabar Printing Press.
- Oladeji, S. I. (2004). *Absorption of Educated Manpower into Nigeria Informal Sector. Diagnostic Studies Series 1*. Lagos: National Manpower Board.
- Psachoropoulos, G. (1973). *Private Education in a poor Country*. London: Routledge.
- World Bank (2006). *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion*. Washington D. C.: World Bank.