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## Productive Education and Economic Security Nexus: Lessons for a Labour-Surplus Nigerian Economy

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### Abstract

In Nigeria, as in most other developing countries, the problem of social and economic insecurity has constituted a serious threat to the peace and development of the entire society. This problem is complicated by the daunting challenge of the growing number of unemployed labour force. Although governments at various levels, have been making efforts to improve the economic wellbeing of the citizens through the provision of social instruments and support by attempting to increase both the individual and societal income, raise opportunity for increased employment as well as reduce the level of poverty in the country, the gap in economic deprivation among the growing population continue to widen. Consequently, there is a high rate of social and economic unrest in the country with its attendant negative effects. Available social-economic indicators revealed that, of the over 92 million economically active population in Nigeria, only 51.2 million (55%) of the labour force were employed in 2010, while the poverty incidence stood at about 70 percent during the same period. The thrust of this paper therefore, was to draw a link between productive education and economic security in the Nigeria labour-surplus economy. The paper concludes that a high quality and market relevant education has the capacity to provide genuine solution to most of the economic problems through the creation and provision of stable

employment, increased sources of income for the individual, eradicate poverty and control population growth. It therefore recommends concerted efforts towards developing the nation's educational system as a strategy for improving the economic wellbeing of the citizenry.

Key Words: Economic Security, poverty reduction, employment generation, stable income, productive education

### Introduction

The Nigerian Economy is one that is characterized by the paradox of abject poverty in the face of abundance. It is composed of a mixture of potentiality and uncertainty. On the positive side for instance, the country is one of the largest and most populous in Africa and about eighth in the world (Reference Population Bureau – RBP 2009). The 2006 population census conservatively puts Nigeria population at 140,431,790. At an estimated average growth rate of 2.8%, the country population was estimated to reach 168 million in 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics NBS 2010). More importantly, the country has a large pool of economically active population of about 92 million out of which about 90 million falls into the category of the youth population (Garba 2012; Ekpo 2012)

Geographically, the country covers a land area of 923,768 square kilometres. Its vegetation ranges from the mangrove and thick forest in the south, followed by the savannah and the Sahel in the middle belt and the North respectively (NBS, 2010). Recent macro economic data show that the country has been enjoying a progressive growth over the past few years. Available statistics at 1990 constant prices showed that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from N595.8 billion in 2006 to N775.5 billion in 2010. This represents an average annual growth rate of about

6.66 percent (NBS, 2010). Table one show some of the macroeconomic indicators of the Nigeria economy from 2006 to 2010

Table 1: Nigeria Macro Economic Indicators (2006-2010)

Indicators	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Nigeria's Total External Reserves(US\$ Million)	42,298.11	51,333.15	53,000.36	42,470.00	32,339.25
Non Oil Production level at constant Prices	465,628.04	509,965.98	555,607.99	9601,855.97	7652,567.83*
Oil Production level at constant Prices	130,193.57	124,285.12	116,594.57	117,121.37	7122,957.88*
GDP level at 1990 Constant Prices	595,821.61	634,251.10	672,202.55	718,977.33	3775,525.71*
GDP Growth at 1990 Constant Prices)	6.03	6.45	5.98	6.96	7.87*
Oil Sector Growth %	-4.51	-4.54	-6.19	0.45	4.98*
Non Oil Sector Growth %	9.4.1	9.52	8.95	8.32	8.43*
Projected Population Figure(Million)	140.43	144.50	148.69	153.42	159.29
Gross Fixed Capital Formation( % of GDP)	8.27	9.24	8.31	12.49	13.59*
Change in Stock( % of GDP)	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01*
Exports of Goods and Services % of GDP)	45.96	33.73	39.88	30.79	45.57*
Imports of Goods and Services( % of GDP)	21.44	30.32	24.79	30.38	33.08*

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2010
\* Figures are provisional estimates

However, despite the potential natural and human resources available to the country and the socio economic growth, the majority of the population still live in abject poverty, while unemployment problem, income deprivation and inequality are high. For instance, of the over 92 million economically active population only 51.2 million or 55% of the labour force are employed while the poverty incidence stood at over 70 percent by 2010 (Akpan, 2012). The inability of the larger active youth population to have access to income generating employment compounded the security problem in the country Generally unemployment could have grave consequences on such people which in -turn would have devastating impact on the economy itself. For instance, a pool of unemployed individual could translate to low economic activities and subsequently low national and personal income. Moreover, the unemployed and income deprived individual cannot be taxed, and thus the government will not be able to aise the needed income that could be used to provide other socio amenities in the country. Similarly, poverty, unemployment and lack of income could drive the individual to resort to negative socio vices such as armed robbery, stealing, hostage taking, kidnapping etc. All of negative vices could lead to serious social and economy insecurity in the country. It is however unfortunate that as rich as Nigeria is, praiarity of her citizens are still very poor (Suleiman, 2008)

### Statement of the Problem

The problem of social and economic insecurity in the country has constituted a serious threat to the peace and development of the entire society. This problem is complicated by the growing number of unemployed labour force in the country. Although governments at various levels, have been making efforts to improve the economic wellbeing of the citizens through the provision of social instruments and support by attempting to increase both the individual and societal income, raise

opportunity for increased employment as well as reduce the level of poverty in the country, the gap in economic deprivation among the growing population continue to widen. Consequently, there is a high rate of social and economic unrest in the country with its attendant negative consequences. Available social—economic indicators revealed that, of the over 92 million economically active population in Nigeria, only 51.2 million (55%) of the labour force were employed in 2010; while the poverty incidence stood at about 70 percent during the same period. The thrust of this paper therefore was to draw a link between productive education and economic security in the Nigeria labour-surplus economy.

### Research Questions

What is the labour market employment status in Nigeria during the period under review?

2 What is the level oppoverty and its incidence in

Nigeria as a socio-economic indicator?

What is the relative income distribution pattern in Nigeria?

### Literature Review

Concept of Productive Education

The motion of productive education emphasises the type of education that has the capacity to increase individual and national productivity and hence increase both income. In Nigerian today, the declining quality of education has drawn the attention of all and sundry on the need to direct to sources towards providing the type of education that are market demanding. According to Umo (2003), Isuku, (2010) and Etadon, Isuku and Emunemu (2011) such market oriented education has the capacity to fight poverty among its recipients, create entrepreneurial minds, reduce the problem of unemployment among the army of unemployed youths, create opportunity and access to genuine income sources and

subsequently improve the economy well being of the citizenry. For instance Etadon, et al, contended that vocational and technical education is an important aspect that could bring about a lasting solution to the problem of unemployment and poverty. The researchers argued that such education has the capacity to create innovative and entrepreneurial mind who will be job givers rather that job seekers.

In his book, Education that can raise productivity in Nigeria, Babalola (2009), highlighted a rise in educational attainment and creation of knowledge among others as important factors for increased economy output in Nigeria. Thus the authors stress the need to invest on what he referred to intangible capital (human capital knowledge and organisational i.e. entrepreneurial skill) – (see Babalola 2009, 5 – 8).

It is argued that a nation's level of output is greatly influenced by its policies concerning the education of its people. Thus higher wages is generally accompanied by a more extensive educational training. For instance skilled workers were seen to earn more than double the unskilled workers in the United State even since the period 1968.

### The notion of Economic Security

The concept of economic security generally is broad; it is however defined based on the different perspective of the individual scope and focus. For instance according to Akpeninor (2013) it is characterised by access to fundamental human needs and infrastructure pertaining to health, communication, education, dwelling. (housing), electricity, information and social protection as well as work related security. According to Akpeninor, while all the dimensions are important the work related factors such as income, job security and employment opportunities seem to provide a better foundation for the individual.

Basic security implies limiting the impact of uncertainties and risks people face daily while providing a social environment in which they can fit into a range and develop their capacities via what the ILO calls decent work (Akpeninor 2013). Characteristically the include the following item:

Income Security - Adequate, actual, perceived and expected income either earned or in form of social security. It includes assurance of income both during and after work life.

Labour Market Security - When opportunities for adequate income - support activities.

Employment Security – protection against loss of income

- earning work

- ❖ Job Security present of niches in organisations and across labour market allowing the workers some measure of control over the content of a job and opportunity to build a career. Whereas employment security refers to opportunity of a work to continue in an enterprise, job security refers to the worker's ability to pursue a life of in conjunction with his or her interest s, training and skill.
- ❖ Skill reproduction security this denotes access to basic education as well as vocational training to develop capacities and acquire the qualifications needed for socially and economically valuable occupations. Ways to further skill reproduction security include policies to generate widespread opportunity to gain and retain skill through education, apprenticeship and employment training (see also Etadon et al. 2011, ILO, (2006)

Moreover, according to international labour organisation 2006 the notion of economic security is also concerned with a condition of having a stable income or other sources to support a standard of living now and in the future. The main characteristics of economic security include probable solvency,

predictability of future cash flow, employment and job security. It is composed of basic social security defined by access to basic needs infrastructure pertaining to health, education, housing, information and social protection as well as work related security.

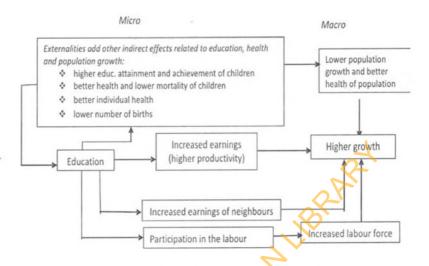
Productive Education and Economic Security Nexus: Empirical and Theoretical Review

Theodore W. Schultz (1961), and Gary S. Becker (1962) were the earliest economists to document research evidence on the nexus between investment in human capital and economic growth (Burchi 2006). Although there are other components of investment in human beings, (such as health nutrition, on-thejob training, formal education and skill acquisition), most empirical studies within the indigenous growth theory operationalized the concept of human capital focusing on its education components (Burchi 2006). Thus several studies have linked educational productivity in rural and urban society to economic development and progress of such recipients. For instance Jamison and Lockheed 1982 examined the contribution of education to food security, the authors concluded that completing the first four years of schooling result to a 7.4% increase in agricultural productivity and hence a greater opportunity for economic independence (Jamison, Lan and Lookheed 1982: 54).

According to Sen (2003), although income and other economic resources are important and an immediate goal, it can only be sustained by adequate education among other factors. It is also argued by Lanzi (2004), that the educational aspect of human capital is sin-qua-non for economic freedom. Lanzi (2004) outlined the three basics of human capital as; basic skills (reading and writing), professional competencies (applied knowledge, technical skills), and complex functionalities (problem solving ability, self learning skills). For instance, professional competencies increase human capital ceteris-

paribus, higher productivities and income. It also has the capacity to enlarge human freedom because obtaining a better job can raise the level of personal satisfaction which determines a better quality of life. Education then is fundamental to promote personal well being which expresses the capacity of recipients to escape from poverty and hunger with their own power. An educated man is more likely to get a job and also has the capacity to use more rationally the resources he/she owns; they have more probability to select valuable objectives in life such as access to food, housing and other utility. According Sen (1999) educated female mother tend to show or assign higher value to their children's wellbeing, atlocating more resources to their health and nutrition (Sen 1999) a nation level of output is greatly influenced by its policies concerned with the education of its people. Thus a person income is greatly influenced by his educational background, while. Higher wages is generally accompanied by a more extensive educational training

Over the past decades economists have offered varieties of theories and models relating education to economic growth and security. According to Dahlin (2007), education increases an individual's earning potential and also produces 'triple effect' throughout the economy by way of series of positive externalities. The author succinctly presented the work of Katharina Michaelowa of the Hamburg Institute of International Economics where she diagrammatized the tripple impacts of education at the micro and macro levels as shown below.



Source: Michaelowa, Katharina in Dahlin (2007) "Returns to Education in Low Income Countries: "Evidence for Africa"

According to study in the United States, education and particularly higher education has transformed the nature of the America economy. The study shows that of all the factors contributing to the strength of the US economy, education (higher education in particular) is the most important. It is well known fact that the US economy is strongest in the world which according to established studies shows over 13.86 trillion dollars worth of GDP in 2007 (Isuku & Emunemu 2012, Kerry 2007). Kerry argued that education has greatly improved the economic security and quality of life of American citizens over the past decades, making American to be ranked as the country with the most economically satisfied citizen in the world by way of better income.

### Some Key Issues of economic Security in Nigeria

Nigeria has attempted through various reform programmes to improve the economic wellbeing of her citizens by providing social and economic palliatives such as education, health and other social infrastructure (Titilola 2013). However, there are both economic and non-economic factors that have imposed limit to economic security at both micro and macro levels in the country. The concentration here however is on those socio-economic factors which include employment, poverty and income status are discussed in this paper.

### Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey which covers specific national socio-economic indicators. Due to the difficulty of accessing all relevant data, selected economic indicators were used to assess the level of economic security in Nigeria. The indices used include: unemployment, poverty indices and income level of Nigerians. The data obtained for the study were mainly secondary data. The source of data for the study was the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and other secondary data from previous research publications. The various research questions raised in the study were answered by means of simple descriptive statistics

### Results and Discussion

RQ1: What is the labour market employment status in Nigeria during the period under review?

Table 2 presents the labour market employment status in Nigeria from 2006-2011

Million	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total population	140.4	145.0	150.0	154.3	159.2	164.3
Economically Active	78.9	81.4	81,4	86.7	89.5	92.4
Labour Force	57.5	59.3	61.2	63.1	65.1	67.2
Employed	50.3	51.7	52.0	50.7	51.2	51.1
Unemployed	7.1	7.9	9.1	12.4	13.9	16.1

Source: NBS in Ekpo, 2012

Table 2 showed that there was a consistent increase in the number of unemployed persons during the year under consideration. Then number of unemployed persons increased from 7.5 million in 2007 to 16.1 in 2011

As earlier indicated, Nigeria is a labour surplus economic. According to the labour data presented by Ekpo (2012), the country had 78.9 million economically active population out of the 140.4 million total population 2006. Out of this active population, about 58 million consisted of the labour force of which 50.3 of the labour force were employed while 7.1 million were unemployed (Ekpo 2012). Table 2 shows the Nigeria labour market unemployment status 2006 – 2011. Table 2 show the Nigeria Labour Market Employment Status 2006 – 2011.

RQ2: What is the level of poverty and its incidence in Nigeria as a socio-economic indicator?

Data on the status of poverty in Nigeria as one of the socio aconomic indicator is presented in table 3

Table 3: Poverty Status in Nigeria (1980 – 2010)

Year	Poverty Increase	Estimated Population	n Population in Poverty
, , ,	(%)	(Million)	(Million)
1980	28.1	65	18.26
1985	46.3	75	34.78
1992	42.7	91	39.07
1996	65.6	102	67.11
2004	54,6	126	68.70
2010	69.0	163.47	112.47

Source: Babalola & Isuku (2008); National Bureau of Statistics 2012

The poverty incidence for the period increased from 28.1 in 1980 to 69.0 in 2010. The population of the poor was 18.26 million in 1980 but then increased to 112.47 million in 2010. While the population during the period stood at 65 and 163.5 million in 1980 1nd 2010 respectively.

Table 4: Relative Poverty incidence in Nigeria: non-poor, moderate poor and the extremely poor (%) (1980 – 2010).

Year	non-poor	moderate poor	extremely	poo
1980	72.8	21.0	6.2	
1985	53.7	34.2	12.1	
1992	57.3	28.9	13.9	
1996	34.4	36.3	29.3	
• 2004	43.3	32.4	22.0	
2010	31.0	30.3	38.7	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2010.

The relative poverty profile in the country showed that 72.8 percent of the population were the non- poor in 1980, while it declined to 31.10 percent in 2010. The figure for the extremely poor population was 6.2 in 1980 and increased to 38.7 percent in 2010.

RQ3: What is the relative income distribution pattern in Nigeria?

Table 4 presents the data of income distribution in Nigeria in 2004 and 2010.

Table 4: Nigeria income distribution profile (2004 and 2010)

Location	2004	2010	% (Change in Inequality)
National	0.4296	0.447	4.1
Rural	0.4239	0.4334	2.2
Urban	0.4154	0.4328	4.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2012

The national income inequality for the country stood at 0.429 in 2004 and 0.447 in 2010. The disparity in income inequality during the periods under consideration was 0.4239 for the rural populace in 2004 and 0.4334 in 2010, while it was 0.4154 and 0.4328 in urban area in 2004 and 2010 respectively.

### Further Discussions

The attainment of Economic Security (i.e. improving employment level, reduction of poverty and creating opportunity for access to income sources) in Nideria is faced with several challenges. In the past few years, the country had witnessed several social and economic challenges which has constrained the possibility of achieving economic security in the Nigeria. For instance, the lack or inadequate access to employment opportunity in the midst of a growing youth population in the country, constitute a serious threat to the society's peace. According to Isuku (2009), most unemployed youths in particular have resulted to various negative vices in the country such as hostage taking, kidnapping, armed robbery etc. These negative vices have the capacity to scare off would-be investors and business in the country thereby creating additional unemployment problem (see Albert 2012). Due to the problem of insecurity in the country, the risk of unemployment became exacerbated as some business organizations from Nigeria began to relocate to other neighbouring countries (Titilola, 2013, Alberts 2012).

Unemployment itself is a very important determinant of poverty. This development has grave consequence for the country. According to recent World Bank report in the Punch Newspaper (August, 10, 2012) cited in Titilola (2013), investors in Nigeria lost 10% of their revenue to poor quality infrastructure, crime,

insecurity and corruption in 2011.

The corruption perception index (CPI) published by Transparency International ranked Nigeria as 143 out of the 183 surveyed countries. The problem of corruption in Nigeria is also capable of driving away would-be investors from the country and hence lowers the possibility of increasing the income of the individual and the country through employment generation. Available data showed that the relative poverty which was 54.4% (68.70) in 2004 increased to 69% (112.5 million Nigerians) in 2010. According to World Bank 1997 in Isuku (2009), the prevalence of poverty and its associated inequality can compound ethnic tension. The inability of public institutions to address this problem could lead to political instability, (especially in budding democracies) and to economic uncertainty, destroying an otherwise favourable environment for domestic and external private investments. The relative poverty index for Nigeria during the period under consideration showed a widening gap between the poor and the non-poor in the country. For instance the number of the non-poor declined from 72.8% of the population in 1980 to just 31.% in 2010 indicating that the country living standard (economic wellbeing of the citizens) declined by a difference of about 41.8 percent during the period. The consequence of poverty is grievous and has the potential to affect productivity of the person as he/she lacks the economic power to command necessary goods and services (Odumosun in Isuku 2009). The consumption level of such affected people will be greatly limited and such may consequently affect the saving and investment propensities of such individuals.

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The growing income insecurity in the country constitutes a great threat to the issue of personal and national security. Available data of income distribution for the country between 1980 and 2010 showed that the income gap between the poor and the non-poor continued to widen during the period under consideration (see table 4).

### Conclusion and Lessons to be learned

Economic Security (which include reduction in poverty profile, improving employment opportunity and closing income gap between the poor and the non-poor among many other issues), are the most difficult challenges facing Nigeria and its people today. It constitutes some of the greatest obstacles to the pursuit of sustainable economic wellbeing (see also National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy NEEDS, 2005). It is however a contradiction that in spite of the growth in Nigeria economy, majority of its citizens are living in abject poverty. Unfortunately, a statistical forecast of income inequality is expected to rise in the nearest future except serious and deliberate action is taken to redress it (Kale, 2012).

However, given the importance of education, (and in particular the more advanced type of education), concerted efforts should be made towards ensuring quality investment in the system. It is believed that the lack of quality and affordable education for all eligible citizens could perpetuate inequality among generation and hence limit opportunity for upward social mobility. Thus, the urgency of finding solution to these aforementioned challenges requires taking a broad range of social and economic policies to address such problems as poverty, unemployment and income inequality in Nigeria. Any of such policy however should necessitate increasing the skill and human capital base of the citizens. Moreover, there is the need to provide access to basic as well as vocational forms of education in other to develop capacities and acquire the qualifications needed for socially and economically valuable

occupations. Thus investing in people through education and skill acquisition therefore is the basic foundation for economic progress. A literate and skilled society is better organized and more productive. The country therefore needs to invest on its human resources through adequate education of its citizens particularly the youth; through skill acquisition and formal education of its people including women (see Titilola 2013).

In conclusion, education is both theoretically and empirically proven to be relevant to economic security and promoting wellbeing of its recipients. Its contribution positively affects the life of the people in addressing the problems of unemployment, poverty and income inequality among other benefits. Hence as presented by Dike (2008), "the rehabilitation of the education sector should be treated as a public health issue because its survival is important for the nation's economic progress."

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