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CHALLENGES FACING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE WAYS FORWARD

Abstract. This article discusses the challenges facing the teaching and learning of economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions. To achieve the objective of this article, a literature search on different websites and libraries was carried out. The online libraries consulted for this paper included Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier and Springer. The purpose of consulting these sites was to access literature on the subject matter, which include the concept of economic education, objectives of economic education, problems facing teaching and learning of this subject. The search strategy adopted for this study was content analysis. Two evaluators were consulted to help with the literature analysis. This study employed a content analysis method by selecting the relevant content in various literature related to the study. The literature review enabled the overall development of the study which ordinarily centred on theoretical and conceptual exploration. In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of economic education are facing many problems, including inadequate funding of economic education programmes, inadequate instructional materials, poor research in economic education, negative attitudes of students to economic education offers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, few universities offering economic education, lack of association of economics teachers and poor staff development in the department of economic education. In view of solving the outlined problems, this paper suggests the following: the government should increase the funding of economic education programmes, provide adequate instructional materials, provide adequate research funding for economic education programmes, employ more lecturers with specialisation in economic education, students should be motivated to study or offered economic education, effective staff development and provision of adequate infrastructural facilities in the department of economic education should be ensured. Teaching and learning economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions has many benefits, but the concept has not been studied in detail. This study is the first to examine the challenges facing the teaching and learning of economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Keywords: challenges, department, economics, education, higher education institutions, university

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INTRODUCTION

The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) defines higher education as the post-secondary section of the national education system provided by universities, polytechnics and colleges of technology, including courses provided by the colleges of education, advanced teachers training colleges, correspondence colleges and such institutions as may be affiliated to them. According to Adeyemi (2001), higher education refers to a system that embraces much of the country's research capacity and produces most of the skilled professionals required by the labour market. Peretomode (2007) sees higher education as the facilitator, bedrock, powerhouse, and a driving force for the strong socio-economic, political, cultural, healthier and industrial development of a nation, as higher education institutions are key mechanisms increasingly recognised as wealth and human capital producing industries. Bennett (1997) defines higher education institutions as unique institutions, which are different from others in terms of research, and their managers hold the positions of a provost, rector, and vice chancellor. Higher education is the education aimed at producing a workforce and aiding the social, economic, and technological development of a country. Obanya (1999) views higher education as an embodiment of all organised learning and training activities at the tertiary level. This includes conventional universities with traditional arts, humanities and science faculties and institutions specialising in agriculture, engineering, science and technology. It also includes post-secondary institutions such as polytechnics and colleges of education. 'Higher education' includes all forms of professional institutions drawing from the available pool of persons who have completed various secondary school education forms, including military, police, nursing, agriculture, forestry, veterinary, catering services, tourism, secretarial services and other possible combinations of programmes. Even this broad spectrum does not exhaust the possibilities of higher education forms, such as non-formal higher education. Indeed, it includes any situations in which mature persons are organised to build up their knowledge and skills and apply knowledge to the analysis and search for solutions to life problems.

The objectives of higher education in Nigeria include the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of an individual and societies, the development of the intellectual

capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate the environment, the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community and the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2004).

Nigerian higher education system is the largest in Africa. Noun (2009) submitted that economic and social development are increasingly driving the advancement and application of knowledge from a global perspective. Education in general – and higher education in particular – is fundamental to constructing a knowledge economy and society for all nations. The nation looks up to higher education through its traditional functions of teaching, research and community service to develop a workforce and disseminate the necessary knowledge needed by the industry and other sectors. The Nigeria higher education system comprises universities, polytechnics and colleges offering programmes in teacher education and agriculture. Higher education is a community of scholars free to pursue knowledge without undue interference from anywhere. The science programme is one of the major programmes offered in Nigerian higher education.

The programme offers of Nigerian universities as listed in the BMAS documents were produced for the following academic disciplines: i) administration; management and management technology; ii) agriculture, forestry, fisheries and home economics; iii) arts; iv) basic medical and health science v) education; vi) engineering and technology; vii) environmental sciences; viii) law; ix) pharmaceutical sciences x) medicine and dentistry; xi) science; xii) social sciences; xiii) veterinary medicine.

Economic education is one of the programmes offered in Nigerian universities by faculties of education. Faculties of education represent some of the largest faculties in the Nigerian higher education system and host many programmes and courses. They offer degree, post-graduate and PhD programmes with core and elective courses. This article discusses the challenges facing the teaching and learning of economics in Nigerian higher education institutions.

CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC EDUCATION

Economics, as a social science subject, concerns itself with making choices and finding alternatives. It studies how society decides what, how and for whom to produce

goods and services. In fact, Lionel Robbins defined economics as a social science subject that studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means with alternative uses (Ayanwale, 2010). Economic education as an area of study cannot be said to be a separate field of inquiry that is completely different from ordinary economics. Economic education is the application of economic principles, concepts, laws to the process of education. Economic education studies human behaviour [in terms of human decisions, action(s), and reaction(s)] about schooling (Babalola, 2003).

Economic education employs some elementary concepts commonly used in labour economics, public sector economics, welfare economics, growth theory and development economics. World-known classical economists like Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, John Stuart Mill discussed education and development extensively, advocating for public investment in education. By the 1950s, economists gave attention to such issues as the relationship between education and economic growth, the relationship between education and income distribution, and education financing. Economic education is one of the branches of ordinary economics, though it is the study of how educational managers make official or approved choices from scarce available resources, which is meant for the realisation of the best possible educational outcomes (Ayanwale, 2010). Economic education involves using appropriate teaching methodology to enhance the understanding of economics as a concept and facilitate the in-depth residual knowledge of the learners to make them contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of society. Economic education involves imparting knowledge effectively by making use of learner-centred approaches to promote learner self-confidence in tackling economic problems (Noun, 2006).

The study of economics serves a useful purpose in modern life. It gives us facts and shows us what may be expected to be the outcome of certain lines of action; it helps us decide which of several alternatives to choose. It changed its recipient to make wise choices that will satisfy their needs in the presence of unlimited wants and limited resources (Adu, 2002). Economics, as a subject, has various values to the learners and these values, according to him, include:

i) cultural values: economics has some intrinsic value that makes it appealing as a school subject; for example, there is great logic in it. It connects learners to

the essentials of everyday life, and it is also concern with almost topical events such as the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and Structural Adjustment Programme [SAP], among others;

ii) intellectual training: economics also contribute to intellectual training because it involves looking at issues that are foremost new to people. Economics is not primarily a body of knowledge; it is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of the mind, a technique of thinking which helps its possessors to draw correct conclusions;

iii) vocational training: the vocational nature of economics made it readily acceptable to students. Economics, as a subject, is of direct utility in many branches of industry and commerce. It is also an essential part of most professional examinations, including banking, accountancy or secretarial examinations (Obemeata, 1991).

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this article is to discuss the challenges facing the teaching and learning of economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions. To achieve it, a literature search on different websites and libraries was carried out. The online libraries consulted for this paper included Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier and Springer. Its purpose was to access literature on the subject matter, which includes the concept of economic education, objectives of economic education, problems facing the teaching and learning of this subject. The search strategy adopted for this study was content analysis. Two evaluators were consulted to help in the literature analysis. Only literature in the English language was used for the study. Literature from 1990 till 2020 was included in the paper because resources on economic education are limited. Literature published before 1990 was excluded in order to ensure its reliability and validity. Journal articles on economic education, including original studies, theses, and review articles, were searched and extracted while any other categories were excluded. Many papers were collected based on the criteria. A reviewed was done to reduce the volume of the literature to reflect the need. Another review was done to sort the articles and papers needed for the study. The reason behind this comprehensive scrutiny of the articles, papers and abstracts was to select the most relevant studies. The selected abstracts have a relationship with the concept of

economic education, objectives of economic education and problems facing teaching and learning of this subject. This study employed the content analysis method by selecting the relevant content of the various literature related to this study. The literature review enabled the overall development of the study which ordinarily centred on theoretical and conceptual exploration.

Challenges facing the Teaching and Learning of Economic Education in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of economic education face many problems, including the following.

Table 1. Main Challenges for Economic Education in Nigeria

1	Inadequate Funding for Economic Education
2	Inadequate Instructional Materials
3	Poor Researching in Economic Education
4	Negative Attitudes of Students to Economic Education Offers
5	Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities
6	Few Universities Offering Economic Education
7	Lack of Association of Economics Teachers
8	Poor Staff Development

Source: Jacob (2009).

Inadequate funding is one of the problems facing the teaching and learning of economics education in Nigerian higher education institutions. The annual budgetary allocation for the implementation of the programme at higher education institutions is inadequate. The inadequate funding is responsible for the shortage of professional lecturers of economic education. It is also responsible for the poor administration and coordination of economic education in various higher education institutions in the country. The Nigerian government has failed to meet the 26% of UNESCO recommendations for education in developing countries like Nigeria. A breakdown of budgetary allocation for the past decade revealed that the Nigerian government annual budgetary allocation for the educational sector is below 15%.

The above information showed that it is difficult for higher education institutions in the country to develop

Table 2. Annual Budgetary Allocation for the Educational Sector in the 2010–2020 Decade

Year	Education Budget	%	Naira
2010	N234.8 billion	5.10	N4.6 trillion
2011	N306.3 billion	6.20	N4.972 trillion
2012	N400.15 billion	8.43	N4.749 trillion
2013	N426.53 billion	8.60	N4.987 trillion
2014	N493 billion	10.70	N4.69 trillion
2015	N392.2 billion	8.91	N4.4 trillion
2016	N369.6 billion	6.01	N6.1 trillion
2017	N448.01 billion	6.00	N7.3 trillion
2018	N605.8 billion	7.04	N8.3 trillion
2019	N620.5 billion	7.05	N8.83 trillion
2020	N652.94 billion	6.9	N10.50 trillion.

Source: Ogunode and Adah (2020).

all educational programmes. The various departments and units in the universities depend on these small funds for developmental purpose.

Another challenge facing the teaching and learning of economic education is the shortage of professional lecturers who specialise in it. Economic education is one of the programmes that students have little interest in pursuing. This poor interest in studying economic education is observed at every level of higher education. The programme is offered at the first-degree and post-graduate level and is compulsory for admin and planning students at every level. The inadequate number of economic education lecturers is one of the major problems facing the teaching and learning of the programme. Many higher education institutions do not have lecturers that specialise in it. Many higher education institutions depend on economics departments to provide them with lecturers to conduct the programme. The shortage of qualified teachers in Nigerian universities is well articulated in the reports of the federal government's needs assessment of Nigerian public universities carried out in 2012. According to the reports, only about 43% of university lecturers have a PhD. The remaining 57% have qualifications below PhD. Only seven universities have up to 60% of teaching staff with PhDs. There are universities with fewer than five professors. For instance, the Kano State University of Science and Technology,

Wudil, established 11 years ago, which produces numerous graduates, has only one teaching staff with a professor title and 25 lecturers who are PhD degree holders. Similarly, the Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, established in 2006, has only two teaching staff with a professor title and five lecturers with PhDs. The understaffing of universities in Nigeria has serious implications for the quality of instruction and academic productivity. The situation has led to an increasing culture of visiting lecturers in the system. The few available qualified lecturers are recycled as visiting, adjunct, sabbatical and contract lecturers to work in many universities simultaneously. Many of them are always on the road travelling from one university to another and unable to meet their primary obligations of their tenure-employer (Federal Ministry of Education, 2012). At the tertiary level, the subsector of colleges of education experiences a very acute teaching staff shortage in special education and early childhood development. In contrast, the polytechnic subsector reported a very acute shortage of teaching staff in health technology (NEEDS, 2014).

Instructional materials are educational resources employed or used in the process of teaching to make the students understand the concepts better, and instructional resources are educational resources that help the teachers to teach well and help the students comprehend the concepts. Many higher education institutions in the country do not have adequate instructional materials for teaching and learning economic education. There are limited textbooks, journals, resources and materials on legal aspects of educational administration in many Nigerian higher education institutions. Many inadequacies characterise the teaching of economics in Nigeria. Nigerian secondary school teachers of economics have few materials on the teaching of economics to aid them. For example, audio-visual aids for teaching economics are either not available in sufficient quantity or inadequate. Except for a few, the economics textbooks in Nigeria are poorly written, vague, and lacking in in-depth economic analysis (Yusuf, 2012).

Poor research in economic education is another problem of teaching and learning the programme in various higher education institutions. Due to insufficient economic education funding in most Nigerian higher education institutions, there is no emphasis on research. Researching funding generally in the Nigerian higher institution have not been encouraging. This is confirmed by Okoli, Ogbondah, and Ewor (2016), who

affirmed the poor attitude of governments towards research and inadequate funding of research programmes. Mercy (2001) also pointed out that research programmes in Nigerian universities have not been given the priority they deserve. One of the functions of a university is to engage in research and solve the social, economic, and political challenges affecting the nation through their findings. Due to inadequate research programmes and lack of research capital, many young researchers are discouraged from doing research. Donwa (2006) reports that the average annual allocation to federal universities for recurrent expenditure is 0.4% of gross domestic product (GDP), and 5% of this allocation is to be used for research. This report shows that research funding by the government is less than 1% GDP, which is grossly inadequate for meaningful research. Thus, the amount of research funding by the government is a function of the total funding for recurrent expenditures of universities.

There is a negative attitude of students towards economic education programmes in many Nigerian higher education institutions. Many students have no interest in the programme. They believe it is too voluminous and tedious. Many students fail to see the relevance of economic education, while others complain about the lack of textbooks and journals to aid further reading. This kind of student attitude affects school work and learning in general because a positive attitude about the teacher and the subject guarantees success. It is observed that student attitudes to economics determine the degree to which they understand economics, and a negative attitude towards the subject and teachers adversely affect their academic achievement in the subject (Noun, 2006).

Infrastructural facilities are essential in the administration of economic education. Adequate infrastructural facilities are social capital that every higher education institutions must have to implement science programmes effectively. Ogunode (2020) postulates that infrastructural facilities should include classrooms, offices, exam halls, laboratories, tables, chairs, desks, power supply, water, and a good road network within the schools. Noun (2012) observed that physical facilities are required for teaching, learning and research. They include classrooms, laboratories, workshops, staff offices and libraries. Others include hostels (in residential institutions), staff quarters, students and staff recreational facilities, sports and games facilities. They also include roads, electricity and water supplies (UNESCO, 2006). We can examine each of these briefly below.

Lecture Rooms: a classroom or lecture room is a geographical space with furniture (that is, tables and chairs) where a class of students is taught. For the sake of effective teaching and learning process, there is a need for well-ventilated classrooms. *Laboratories:* practical-oriented courses require the use of a laboratory. Disciplines like chemistry, physics, microbiology require the use of well-equipped laboratories. Apparatuses and chemicals meant for practical use have to be made available because a laboratory without the expected apparatus amounts to no laboratory.

Workshops: electronics, mechanical engineering, woodwork or metalwork courses involve hands-on (practical) experience. Thus, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education offering these courses need functional workshops where theoretical aspects are complemented with practical classes.

Office Accommodation: lecturers, instructors and non-academic staff have to be accommodated in offices. The offices have to contain essential tools that will make them function properly. A functional computer system is one of the tools required by academic staff to deliver quality instruction. There is a need for them to have access to Internet facilities. They require printers, scanners and other stationery in their offices.

Functional Library: Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus (concise edition) (2002) views a library as a collection of books, tapes, records, photographs, among others, for reference or borrowing, a room, building or institution containing such a collection. Infrastructural facilities support the administration and management of science programmes. Their availability aid the implementation of educational objectives, and their inadequacy affects the implementation of teaching, learning, researching and delivering other education services. It has been observed that inadequate infrastructural facilities are one of the problems facing the entire educational system in Nigeria. The infrastructure and facilities remain inadequate for coping with a system that is growing at a rapid pace. Therefore, the working environment is generally not conducive to delivering services due to the physical condition of most offices and lack of working resources (Noun, 2012). Moja (2000) observed that the existing buildings are in a state of decay due to a lack of maintenance and repair. The present condition of buildings negatively impacts the quality of education offered. Such conditions have encouraged teaching and administrative personnel to leave education and enter other

sectors of the economy or leave the country. Dilapidated school environments contribute to the high dropout of learners from school. The amount of funding needed for new buildings is high, and the estimated cost of the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure is even higher.

Another problem facing economic education in Nigeria is that only a few universities are offering the programme. Economic education is a new programme in Nigerian higher education institutions. Until recently, only one faculty of education, i.e. the Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan, offered courses in economics methods to undergraduate students and a postgraduate diploma in education. Two other university departments of education are known to have started offering courses in economics methods. Similarly, of the numerous colleges of education in the country, only a few are known to offer courses in teaching economics (Yusuf, 2012).

There is a lack of coordinated professional bodies in the economic education programmes in the country. The lack of professional bodies to formulate and develop a programme of economic education affects the advancement of this programme in Nigerian higher education institutions. Because economic education is a new programme, this makes it impossible for the few professionals in the field to come together annually to discuss issues and challenges facing the programme. The inability of the teachers of economic education to come under one professional body and chart a road map for the development of the programme affects it negatively. All secondary school subjects that are regarded as established and important have associations; there are associations for subjects like English, history, geography and sciences. Even the French teachers in Nigeria are known to have only a few secondary school students, yet they have an association. The points highlighted above can be regarded as institutional, professional factors responsible for the low recognition of economics as a subject (Yusuf, 2012).

Few universities in the country that offers Economic education do not have effective staff development for the department of Economic education. Basil, Felix & Eno (2013) studied university lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes in south-south Nigeria and its implication for sustainable development. It is focused on the extent of lecturers' participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training and mentoring aspects of capacity building programmes. One research question and two hypotheses were drawn to direct this

investigation. Findings revealed that university lecturers participate mostly in conferences than any other capacity building programme. Lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes is significantly low with respect to workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training and mentoring. There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes. It was recommended that enabling environment should be provided whereby university lecturers are encouraged to participate fully in capacity building programmes. Udejaja (2005) described it as a recurring decimal, especially since 1998. As a result of this, universities find it cumbersome to sponsor their lecturers to participate in these programmes or even organise some themselves, with a consequence of low capacity building by universities. However, it is pertinent to point out that poor funding affects lecturers' participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and ICT training, and mentoring. Many higher education institutions in the country have not thought it necessary to organise or sponsor refresher courses, workshops or even conferences for their economics lecturers.

Ways Forward for the Development of Economic Education in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

In view of solving the outlined problems, this paper suggests the following measures.

The government should fund economic education by allocating higher funds for administering the programme in all higher education institutions in the country. Considerable funding should be poured into the educational sector to bring education to an expected standard. Institutions should vigorously adopt the mechanism for internally generated funds.

Table 3. Development of Economic Education in Nigerian Higher Institutions

1	Adequate funding for economic education
2	Provision of instructional materials
3	Provision of adequate research funding in economic education
4	Employment of lecturers with specialisation in economic education
5	Motivating students to study or offering economic education
6	Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to economic education departments

Source: Jacob (2009).

The school administration should provide the faculty of education with adequate instructional materials. More textbooks, journals and other economic education resources should be provided for lecturers and students of economic education in all Nigerian higher education institutions.

The government should increase the research funding for legal aspects of education administration programme in all higher education institutions in the country. This will facilitate useful research in the institutions.

More lecturers with specialisation in economic education should be employed in all higher education institutions where the programme is offered. This would help to reduce the large class size. The government should also encourage lecturers to specialise in economic education by providing the lecturers with a full scholarship throughout an in-service programme.

Students should be motivated to study economic education at various higher education institutions across the country. Students should be given scholarships to enrol on the economic education programme.

The government should provide more infrastructural facilities in higher education institutions across the country. The government should also intensify efforts in providing more physical facilities. Corporate bodies, philanthropists and alumni associations should assist in providing these facilities to aid effective teaching and learning activities. There is a need for a serious expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population.

CONCLUSIONS

This article discussed the challenges facing the teaching and learning of economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions. Secondary data were used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were sourced from print material and online publication by recognised institutions and individual authors. There are many problems facing the teaching and learning of economic education in Nigerian higher education institutions. These challenges include inadequate funding of economic education, inadequate number of economic education lecturers, poor-quality instructional materials, poor research in economic education, negative attitudes of students to offered programmes and inadequate infrastructural facilities. To solve these challenges, this paper suggests the following: adequate funding of

economic education, provision of quality instructional materials, provision of adequate research funding for the programme, employment of lecturers with specialisation in economic education and motivating students to study the subject or offering them the programme and provision of adequate infrastructural facilities.

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WYZWANIA STOJĄCE PRZED NAUCZANIEM I UCZENIEM SIĘ EKONOMII W NIGERYJSKICH SZKOŁACH WYŻSZYCH ORAZ SPOSOBY ICH PODEJMOWANIA

Abstrakt. W artykule omówiono wyzwania stojące przed nauczaniem i uczeniem się ekonomii w nigeryjskich szkołach wyższych. Na potrzeby artykułu przeprowadzono przegląd literatury, korzystając ze źródeł internetowych i bibliotek elektronicznych (między innymi Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier i Springer). Celem przeszukiwania tych stron było uzyskanie dostępu do literatury przedmiotu dotyczącej koncepcji i programów edukacji ekonomicznej oraz problemami z nauczaniem i uczeniem się tych zagadnień. Metodą badania była analiza treści wsparta opiniami dwóch ewaluatorów. Analizę treści prowadzono poprzez wybór treści z różnych źródeł adekwatnych do celów badania, co pozwoliło na przygotowanie ogólnego zarysu badania, które koncentrowało się głównie na poszukiwaniach teoretycznych i koncepcyjnych. Proces edukacji ekonomicznej w Nigerii napotyka na wiele problemów, które obejmują m.in. niewystarczające finansowanie, nieodpowiednie materiały instruktażowe, niskiej jakości programy edukacji, negatywne nastawienie studentów do oferty edukacji ekonomicznej, nieodpowiednie zaplecze infrastrukturalne. Ponadto oferta edukacji ekonomicznej na poziomie uniwersyteckim jest bardzo ograniczona. Brakuje organizacji skupiających nauczycieli ekonomii oraz instytucji, w których mogliby się kształcić. W celu rozwiązania zarysowanych problemów, w artykule zasugerowano działania będące w kompetencji rządu, takich jak: zwiększenie finansowania programu edukacji ekonomicznej, zapewnienie odpowiednich materiałów dydaktycznych, finansowania badań w tym zakresie, zwiększenie zatrudnienia wykładowców ze specjalizacją z edukacji ekonomicznej. Zwrócono również uwagę na potrzebę lepszego zmotywowania studentów do studiowania oraz konieczność wprowadzania udogodnień infrastrukturalnych. Wyzwań stojących przed edukacją ekonomiczną w nigeryjskich uczelniach wyższych jest wiele, ale nie zostały szczegółowo zbadane. Niniejsze studium jest pierwszym badaniem tego typu.

Słowa kluczowe: wyzwania, ekonomia, edukacja, szkoły wyższe, uniwersytety