

SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION STUDIES AND REBRANDING THE CURRICULUM FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Abstract

The study laid emphasis on creating a new curriculum for Economics Education known as ECOEDU for economic security. The paper critically assessed the economics of education curriculum across Nigerian Universities and Colleges of Education. Hence, the study was qualitatively designed where consultation to literature was used to obtain useful information. In the literature consultation methodology, books and journals of economics education across international tertiary institutions were explored. These materials explained the expected curriculum for ECOEDU. Equally, unified tertiary matriculation examination (UTME) documents were explored which explained institutions offering ECOEDU. At the time of investigation, findings showed that only 57 Universities and Colleges of Education offer ECOEDU at Undergraduate level. It was discovered that only University of Jos offers ECOEDU at Master level, but course contents could not be obtained. although fewer course contents in those schools reflected actual courses of ECOEDU, the actual course contents in those institutions deviated from the curriculum of ECOEDU. Thus, the argument was that poor curriculum exacerbate graduate unemployment for ECOEDU in Nigeria due to poor curriculum contents. As such, the paper suggested a separate ECOEDU Department in the Universities to rebrand the curriculum, supervise the course contents to redirect the economy, prepare graduates of ECOEDU for field specialization to avert economic insecurity, such as unemployment, that ravaged the country.

Keywords: Social exclusion, economics education, curriculum, economic security, labour market.

Introduction

Economic security is essential and an integral part of national security. It has the purview to create other types of insecurities such as kidnapping, robberies, indiscriminate killings, etc. (Ayoola, 2014; Oyewole, 2016). In consequence, scholars have bordered themselves in defining economic security in different ways but with common ideology. For example, economic security is the “ability to satisfy needs of society on the national and international level” (Blakyta, Matusova, Lanovska, & Adamenko, 2017, p.281). In others, economic security was perceived as a threat to individual, state, firms and other economic parameters. As rightly defined:

“economic security as a state where the economy of the object whose security is to be ensured (enterprise, state, group of states, world, individual, family, etc.) is not endangered by threats which significantly reduce or could reduce its performance efficiency

necessary for ensuring the defense as well as other security capacities, social reconciliation and competitiveness of the object and its individual components (especially individual companies) on the internal as well as external markets” (Zeman. (2003) cited in Blakyta et al., 2017, p.281).

Hence, an unclear direction of educational curriculum could pose threat to the country’s economy in the area of employment, economic integration and economic hegemony. As such this paper, is much concern to see how social exclusion existed in the economics of education curriculum.

On the supply side of education distribution, Nigeria tertiary institutions, such as universities and colleges of education, offer economics of education (ECOEDU) to prospective applicants. On the demand side, these undergraduate admitted students, sometimes

innocently but most cases unwillingly, took admission without recourse to side effect, during and after graduation. However, both supply and demand sides deliberately attempted to increase human capital stock for sustainable development (Thomas, Wang & Fan, 2001).

No doubt, education has continued to play a significant role in human welfare and national economy because of its characteristic as a public good (Adetula, Adesina, Owolabi & Ojeka; Anomaly, 2015; Krueger & Lindhal, 2001). Due to its non-rivalry and non-excludability, higher education acquisition is contributing to productivity, improves human welfare and wages, and healthy life. It enhances importation of technology and competition across countries (Barro & Lee, 2013; Todaro & Smith, 2012). In other words, higher education shapes and reshapes attitudes and perception of the society towards new business strategies, innovation, technology and orderliness of the society. For example, the contribution of ECOEDU is expressed in the wage log linear regression of Mincer (1974). He argued that the years spent in school have positive impact on the wage of the labour. Likewise, Krueger and Lindhal (2001) had a robust result confirming that relationship of income and education has a “payoff to investment in education” (p.130). Recognising this fact, many OECD countries redirected their educational programmes in favour of knowledge economy to increase level of human capital (OECD, 1997). Adopting the knowledge economy with high economic security triggered some OECD countries to attain higher development stage earlier than others. These countries include South Korea and Singapore while others are emerging economies such as China and Malaysia (World Bank, 2018).

The economic security suggests structuring and restructuring educational policies and curriculum, particularly, ECOEDU. However, how well do the Nigerian tertiary institutions offering Economics Education, known as ECOEDU, fit the module to increase human capital stock in the knowledge transmission of economics of education? In most Faculties of Education in Nigeria Universities, the supply (admission) side favoured Economics of

Education. The objective was assumed to provide education that covers fundamentals of the knowledge of education economics combined with educational management, planning and administration. For example, at the undergraduate level, the curriculum of economics of education is split into two parts – compulsory courses in pure Economics and compulsory courses in Education. The compulsory courses in Economics, among others, are mathematics for economics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, international trade/finance and development economics. While those courses are necessary conditions for graduation, a pertinent question remains. Do the courses in pure Economics directly explain Economics of Education?

Furthermore, using Ekiti State University as benchmark, the compulsory courses in education include sociology of education, adult education, educational technology, introduction to teaching profession, test and measurement. These compulsory courses in the Faculty of Education are sufficient for graduation as a student of Faculty of Education. However, do the independent courses of education represents actual knowledge of Economics of Education and sufficient for labour market? The paradox exists after graduation. Where does the student belong? Does the student belong to pure economics or faculty of education? After graduation, to continue with Master Programme in ECOEDU has posted serious challenge for many graduates of ECOEDU during postgraduate admission. On the one hand, the admission criteria in pure economics often discriminate against candidates coming from the Faculty of Education to attempt postgraduate courses in pure Economics because of ECOEDU background. On the contrary, the resident Faculty of Education has no concrete offer in the field of economics of education. In some Nigeria universities, Master in ECOEDU had long been proposed to potential applicants. At the end, the candidates usually found themselves in Educational Management and Social Science Education as proxies for Economics of Education. Whereas, Economics of Education differ from

Educational Management or Educational Administration and Planning (Checchi, 2006).

These paradoxical issues raised against economics of education studies make the candidates in that field float between pure economics and the resident Faculty of Education. As such, postgraduate candidates in the Faculty of Education who graduated with assumed knowledge of ECOEDU enjoin social exclusion, in other words, deprivation, from the actual studies of Economics of Education. The deprivation would not unlikely misdirect the individual and affect the expected human capital stock which in turn, correlates with the high rate of unemployment and crawling of Nigeria economic growth (Holme, 2014; Thomas et al., 2001).

On the other side, in the pure Economics studies, knowledge of Economics of Education falls under the Department of Development Studies (FEA, UM Postgraduate Course outline, 2017/2018). Though it is a course in association with development studies, the pure Economics Curriculum in Nigeria universities offering the course does not favour the knowledge of Economics of Education because the scope of Economics of Education differs from Pure Economics. While pure economics is more abstract and theoretical, pragmatic courses are included in the ECOEDU courses which segregates pure economics from ECOEDU. In consequence, the graduates of ECOEDU are powerless, in other words, excluded, either at the entry into the labour market or during the postgraduate admission (Muddiman, 2000; Social Exclusion Unit, 2004).

So, the objectives of the paper are to (i) evaluate Economics of Education studies in Nigeria Universities and (ii) to design the course intention model regarding ECOEDU. Hence, the paper is organized into five sections. Section two presents literature review while section three discusses methodology. Findings and conclusions are presented in sections four and five respectively.

Literature Perspectives

This paper was rooted from social exclusion and job competition theories. The social

exclusion theory explains a condition where a household is powerless in social, economics, education and political participations (Muddiman, 2000). Social exclusion correlates with “unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown” (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004) in education sector, curriculum dictate focus of employment and specialization. Due to the intrinsic value of education, educational module drawn for a course/subject should have a wider coverage of the labour market entry and allows for further studies. Otherwise, such programme would constitute social crisis for the group that ignorantly accepted the module. Such group is not unlikely to wrestle with inadequate knowledge of the course such as ECOEDU. The inadequate knowledge could subject students to be floating between two extreme ends (pure economics and Faculty of Education) and face the challenge of labour crisis such as unemployment and underemployment. Evidence showed that exclusion in course contents correlates with economic insecurity such as increase in poverty level, low human capital stock, decline in the gross national income per capital together with criminal thoughts such as kidnapping and ritual killings (Ayoola, 2014; Barro, 1991; Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Krueger & Lindal, 2001; Oyewole, 2016).

Also, unlike signaling theory where emphasis was placed on ability, job competition theory stipulated that wages and productivity are determined by jobs themselves instead of workers ability (Holmes, 2014). Everyone in the labour market is struggling to get high paid and best job. In this instance, the kind of education one acquires will give the signal to the employer which is defined by the curriculum. The job competition theory is a zero-sum-game which indicates that “if an individual moves up the job queue, it pushes someone else down” (Holmes, 2014). The theory equates the labour market supply and demand sides of education because getting the job requires over education. Over education arises when a candidate possesses enough education to push out someone out of office and secure the job. By implication, this suggests that a poor curriculum development for

ECOEDU could serve as a trap for the candidates applying for the course, thereby causing social exclusion by pushing the ECOEDU graduates into high rate of unemployment.

For example, in the recent educational distribution, evidences showed that in the big Universities and Colleges, the study of Economics is no longer a general knowledge, but job competition and society focused. For example, in the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya (FEA-UM, 2017/2018), Malaysia, the economics curriculum explained specificity instead of generality. In other words, attempt was shifted from general economic studies to specific courses during the second year of undergraduate's studies. The students choose from the specific arms of economics such as finance, development, business, environment and other core economics including microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics. Designing such curriculum is for student to choose a specific direction of the labour market and the economy. Similarly, Lancaster University designed their economics courses to reflect various fields of economics. For example, the university is running independent Bachelor of Science in Business Economics (B.Sc, Business Economics) to produce labour and experts for industries.

Like in the Lancaster University where business economics has focus on industry, ECOEDU is explicit on human capital, social capital, social integration, social cohesion and entrepreneurial than the broad sense of pure Economics. For example, attempting to see ECOEDU from social cohesion which Larsen (2014) renamed as "social erosion" would make the decision making and knowledge transfer easier across the learners. Such knowledge would have greater and positive effect on the society because cohesion is a property of relationships (Moody & White, 2003). In other words, applying cohesion, ECOEDU dictates the path the society should take and have a reflective apparatus to adhere to the needs of the graduates in the field (Bruhn, 2009; Carron & Spink, 1995). Hence, the study of ECOEDU with adaptation of curriculum to the needs of the society and to engage favourably in the labour market job competition would rather

enhance economic integration than much abstraction of the pure economics.

Justification for Rebranding Economics Education Curriculum and Economic Security

There is a confusion in the use of the concepts. The concepts had been used in three different ways in the literature and UTME brochure. The concepts have generated paradoxes which would be discussed here. The concepts are

- Economics Education
- Economics of Education
- Economics/Education

The first-two concepts are used interchangeably in the previous studies (Grubb & Lazerson, 2004; Labrador, 2011; *Suciu, Lacatus, & Staiculescu, 2010*) indicating that a standard curriculum for the field is available (Checchi, 2006; Labrador, 2011). Like in Health Economics where health related contents are taught such as HIV, it connotes that much economics knowledge are applied to educational development. The third concept, Economics/Education, suggests that the course is studied independently, indicating that no interrelationship exists between economics' course contents and education course contents. However, the way ECOEDU sounds to candidates applying for the course differs from the third concept. The course is perceived as denoted in the first two concepts instead of the third concept. Likewise, the perception of the entrepreneur in the labour market showed that although economics was studied independently, it is widely known for teaching based.

Furthermore, there are different schools of thought on economics of education in Nigerian universities. In some institutions, the course is superimposed on social studies. For example, some universities placed ECOEDU under Arts and Social Sciences (e.g. University of Lagos, UNILAG) and Social Science Education (e.g. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, UNN). However, placing it under social studies degrades the course. Previous studies showed that social studies differ from economics education on three grounds. First, economics education occupies little space in social studies works thereby makes it matter less to social studies' curriculum. Second, the experts in

social studies have little knowledge of economics and its linkage with education (Josh & Marri, 2006; Weidenaar, 1980). Finally, it is difficult to differentiate the course from physical sciences because of its numerous assumptions (Siegfried & Meszaros, 1998) that brought multiple principles. Thus, attaching economics education to social studies or regard it as social science education with general classification looks presumptuously.

In contrast, a teacher education should look beyond generalization to the specific of knowledge acquisition (Siedfried & Meszaros, 1998). For example, economics of education is more of pragmatic than abstract (as applicable to pure economics) which Joshi and Marri (2006) referred to as “economics education for citizenship” (EEFC) (p.198). In building a strong economic tower in developing economies, the EEFC model that contains decision making, ideology skepticism, affective, socialization and workforce preparation should matter to the construction of economics education curriculum particularly in knowledge stock institutions. A deviation from EEFC model would not only make the students of ECOEDU to be floating between the two fields of study but increase knowledge deprivation across households in that field (Muddiman, 2000). Although we do not let down the argument of Joshi and Marri (2006) on the choosing of content and pedagogical in teaching economics of education, the changing society and economy petition pragmatism and dynamism in the learning process of economics education. The pragmatic focus would be to develop enterprising skills to erode unemployment saga among the youths because students would “*appreciate economic analysis more when they see how powerful it is in action rather than just being told that it is useful*” (Siegfried & Meszaros, 1998, p.142), *as applicable in the abstractness of the pure economics.*

Furthermore, an ECOEDU curriculum cannot be effective unless it gives solid foundation in core areas to its prospective learners. It is difficult to be productive without creativity of economic reasoning, “research-oriented teaching practices, more open mind to take challenges on new techniques and a clear focus on the core knowledge of economics” of

education (Bhattarai, 2009, p.2). Averting the syndrome of looking at education as ritual, the ECOEDU studies should be the type that focuses on problem-solving and entrepreneurial development to reduce the high rate of unemployment in any of the developing countries.

Empirically, studies demonstrated the importance of economic literacy in exposing all ages of the population to economic activities (Hogarth, 2006; Varum, Santos, Afreixo, 2014). For example, in Varum et al. (2014), the study carried out in Portugal determined people’s awareness oneconomic literacy such as household finance. The study found out that economic literacy is essential for the population due to the increasing market complexity, different financial products available in the financial market and the objectives to which economy and financial markets have been developed. Likewise, with the increasing unemployment that permeates developing economies, the study concludes that “more education, dissemination of information, transparency of financial institutions and greater access to financial counselling (*or knowledge*) are necessary, especially for the most vulnerable individuals” (p. 204). In Hogarth (2006), the study of financial education and economics in developing communities showed that financial literacy programme is changing poor communities to affluent ones. They argued that consumers that are financially literate are having strong capacity to make informed decisions on their families, strengthen economic security and explain the well-being of the family (Hogarth, 2006). Hence, the conclusions from the previous studies were in favour of economics of education than pure economics because it affects household directly.

According to Keynes theory of employment, full employment is achieved when those willing to work and able to work gets employed (Ajayi & Olasehinde, 2019; Keynes, 1937). Educational attainment and the type of certificate obtained are used to apportion status in the labour market. However, the floating of ECOEDU graduates and nature of the curriculum leads to deprivation in the labour market, thereby triggering unemployment among the youths of ECOEDU.

From these preceding arguments, the position is not to border the readers about the theoretical underpinning ECOEDU. Instead, we understood from the literature and the current situation of the developing countries that an in-depth understanding of economic literacy (Varum et al., 2014) that is narrowed down to sustainable goal through a robust economics of education curriculum would be a sufficient condition for national economic security and transform-ation (Labrador, 2011).

Methodology

Qualitative research design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The qualitative design method allowed to exploring literature and university documents on ECOEDU curriculum. In qualitative research design, out of three methodologies available, literature exploration was chosen (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Piaw, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007; Soiferman, 2010). The university documents on ECOEDU prospective and literature that discusses ECOEDU were consulted.

Furthermore, the study was constrained with certain challenges as per sample of institutions

to use in the study. First, from the undergraduate list, we have no access to some universities' postgraduate programmes such as UMYU. Second, a set of institutions are Colleges of Education that do not offer postgraduate programmes at Master and PhD levels such as College of Education, Ikere Ekiti and Adeyemi College of Education. Finally, some institutions postgraduate programmes seem not understandable such as COOU. So, purposive sampling method was used to select 26 institutions whose information was available during the investigation.

Evaluation of Nigeria Universities' Economics Education Course Curriculum

This section presents the findings from institutional documents explored from the Nigeria Universities (Public and Private), Colleges of Education and affiliated institutions offering ECOEDU.

Institution Offering ECOEDU at Undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The institutions are grouped into two namely, institutions that offer economics as a course and those that make it as (i) Economics as just an option and (ii) Economics as teaching option.

Table 1: Institutions Offering ECOEDU at Undergraduate Levels

Course	Institutions Offering ECOEDU At Undergraduate Levels
EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS	AAU, AAUA, ABUJA, ADEYEMI, AGBORCOE, AL-HIKMAH, BABCOCK, BAYERO, BENIN, BIU, CALABAR, COEA, COOU, DELSU, EACOE, EBSU, EDALV, EDSU, EKSU, FED-GUSAU, FED-KASHERE, FOUNTAIN, GOUU, IAUED, IBADAN, IKERE-EKITI, ILA-ORANGUN, ILORIN, IMSU, JOS, KAT-ALA, DEG, KSU, KWCOE, LAGOS, LASU, LCITY, MOCPEN, NASARAWA, MAITAMA, NSUGBE, OAU, OOU, OSCOE, PHC, SHAGARI-2, TANSIAN, TASUED, UDU, UMYUK, UNIOSUN, UNIZIK, UNN, UYO, VERITAS, WARRI and YOSU
Total: 57 institutions offer Economics Education in Nigeria universities	
Source: UTME JAMB Brochure	
Academic Departments Making Economics as an Option or Teaching Option - Institutions (Universities, Colleges and Affiliations)	
Creative Arts	EBSU
Primary Education	EBSU
Education Foundations and Management	EKSU and AAU offer it as B.Sc (Ed))
Educational/Psychology/G&C Curriculum and Instruction	PHC and IMSU NDU
Educational Management -	AAUA, AL-HIKMAH, BSU, DELSU, EBSU, EACOE, ESUTECH, FC-OKENE, IBADAN, ILA-ORANGUN, ILORIN, LCITY, NDU, OSCOE, IAUED, SACOED, EKSU, OYOSPECIAL, SOSU and TASUED
Teacher Education	Ibadan, SACOED B.Ed
Library and Information Science/Economics	AAU, ABU, ABSU, BAUCHI, BAYERO, BENIN, BSU, CALABAR, DELSU, UNN and VERITAS

Adult Education/Economics/ statistics	Benin
Adult and Non-Formal Education/Economics	PHC
Education and Social science/ Economics	Calabar, EBSU, Ibadan, NDU, PHC and UYO
Total	32 Institutions (Note: An Institution was counted once)

Source: Author's collation from the UTME/JAMB Brochure online

Table 1 showed a total of 57 institutions offer ECOEDU at undergraduate levels. Also, there are 32 institutions that offer economics as an option or as a teaching option (Jamb Brochure, 2018, Online). We further use the information in Table 1 to investigate those institutions offering ECOEDU (postgraduate programme) at postgraduate level.

Furthermore, through investigation, efforts were made to understand those universities that offer ECOEDU at undergraduate level and determine whether they are offering the course at postgraduate levels. Thus, among all the universities offering ECOEDU at undergraduate, University of Jos (UNIJOS) was the only University that directly offers M.Sc (Ed) Economics Education. However, in UNIJOS, the courses details of the M.Sc (Ed) Economics Education could not be accessed to understand if course contents reflect the actual knowledge of ECOEDU. Other universities attached economics education to a discipline such as Educational Management (e.g. EKSU)

and social science education (e.g. UNN and UNILAG) at postgraduate levels.

The Economics of Education Course Intention

In most of developing countries, there is neither market nor government failures parameters embedded into the curriculum as reflected in the existing Nigerian curriculum of ECOEDU. A good curriculum is expected to be inclusive, as well as, promote equality principle in learning. More importantly, due to the dynamism of the market and economic systems, a good curriculum should allow "students need ... to develop the skills, values and attitudes that are important for life and work, and fundamental to their continued personal, physical, social and cognitive growth" (UNESCO, 2016). In this section, we present the ECOEDU Goal Model (EGM) as suggested by Varum et al. (2014) to which ECOEDU curriculum could be rebranded in Figure 1.

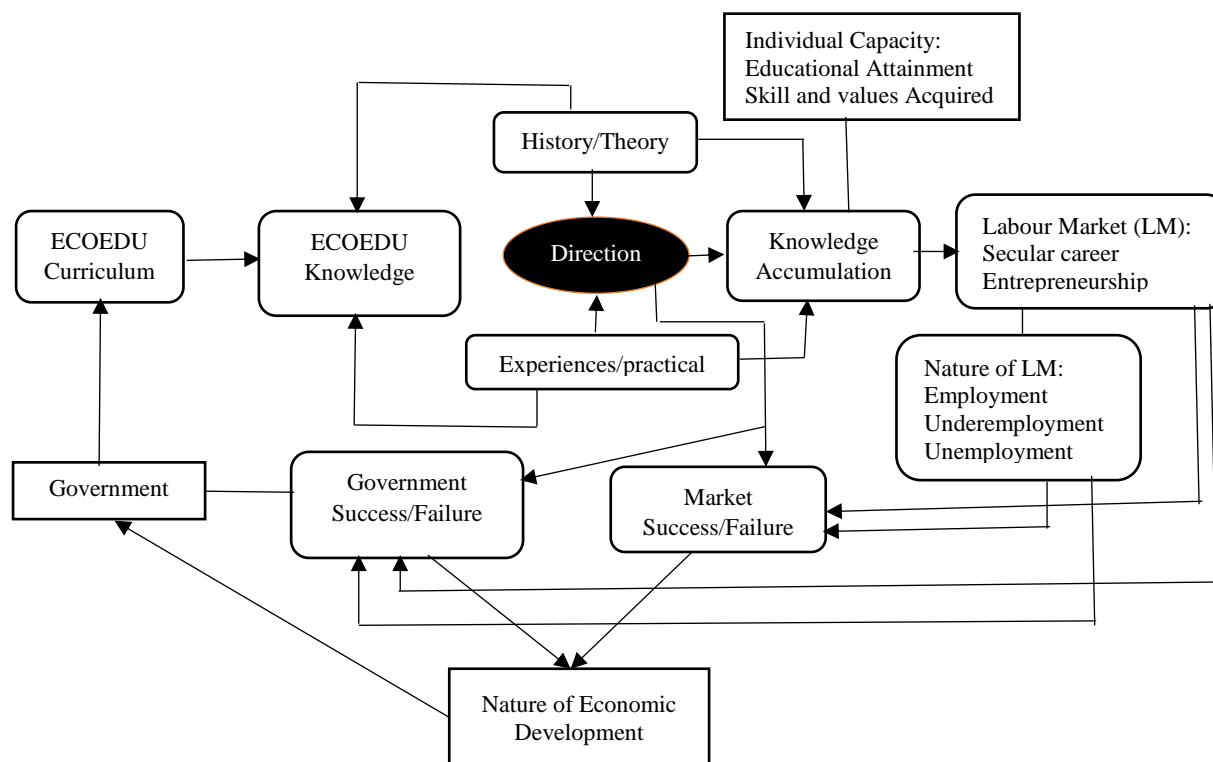


Figure 1: ECOEDU Curriculum Goal Model

Figure 1 explains flow of the ECOEDU goal and the direction of economics of education curriculum on the economy, individual in the field, the society (the end user of education) and the government. The model captures the direction of ECOEDU, the labour market that absorb graduates of ECOEDU, and describe the behaviour of the market and government. In other words, the ECOEDU curriculum goal (ECG) should always provide a clear direction of economics of education for individuals offering the course and the society which would further explain the nature of the market (market success/failure) and the performance of the government (government success/failures) during the economic operations. Achieving human welfare particularly in employment creation for individual, society's development (physical infrastructures) and market economic efficiency (growth) depends on the vision of the Nigerian institutions offering ECOEDU and the focus of Federal/State government agencies preparing curriculum to either induce economic prosperity or economic insecurity.

However, the floating of graduates of ECOEDU between economics major and Faculty of Education would no doubt, have

contributed to the high rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. In turn, Afolabi (2013) argued that the high rate of unemployment, which is economic insecurity, has increased national insecurities over the years. Currently, in Nigeria, economic security is not assured because, as population increases, youth unemployment would continue to rise and in turn put pressure on the national security (Okafor, 2011). Thus, avoidance of rebranding the curriculum of ECOEDU towards, not only secular teaching but entrepreneurial skills (Checchi, 2006; Labrador, 2011), would make economic systems to be unsecured for the graduates of ECOEDU and the society.

Conclusion

The paper has assessed the contents of Economics of Education curriculum across 57 Nigeria universities and colleges of education offering ECOEDU. Thirty-two (32) of these universities made it as a teaching subject or an option to the main course. The paper argued that economics of education differ from educational Management; and Educational Planning and Administration to which most universities attached the course. It was pointed out that there is too much abstractness in pure

economics than economics of education to which a new curriculum for ECOEDU is deserved. Simply, economics of education is entrepreneurial and family welfare focused than the pure economics' course if the actual courses' contents of ECOEDU, is truly offered (Labrador, 2011). It was equally argued that the old curriculum is obsolete which requires rebranding and repositioning ECOEDU for economic security.

At this juncture, it is positioned that there is obvious social exclusion in the distribution of economics of education if Nigerian current curriculum on ECOEDU in Nigerian Universities is compared with expected and international course contents (Checchi, 2006; Labrador, 2011). Because the course was overly attached to teaching without recourse to number of secondary schools available and the making of the subject optional in the secondary schools, the attitude, in no doubt, created economic insecurities such as unemployment for the numerous ECOEDU graduates. Further--more, the study concluded that the ECOEDU curriculum was prepared to study economics as independent course to education instead of the actual contents of ECOEDU. In other words, there is no linkage of the course' contents of the pure economics to the real economics of education. The exclusion has not allowed for specialization in the field thereby creating exclusion in the distribution.

Thus, instead of ritualizing economics of education (i.e. just to take a certificate) and making it a supportive course in ECOEDU teaching and learning (Bhattarai, 2009), this paper suggested that universities offering ECOEDU should rebrand ECOEDU curriculum to create expertise in the field and to reduce likelihood unemployment affecting the graduates of the course. This could be achieved through creation of an independent ECOEDU Department to clear the paradoxes and to make the graduates of ECOEDU stop floating. Understanding that international experts in economics of education tailored their course contents toward entrepreneurship to reduce unemployment, the paper suggested that Department of Economics Education and Employment (DEEE) be created. Thus,

rebranding the course towards entrepreneurial skills would significantly affect employment generation. In turn, increase in employment would increase labour productivity and economic security, thereby reduce government failures.

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