



## Fostering Quality Education and Effective Management as Catalysts for Reducing Youth Unemployment and Stimulating Economic Recovery in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The research paper investigates the impact of quality education on job creation and economic recovery within Nigeria. The study encompasses three distinct objectives and corresponding hypotheses. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research targets 400 lecturers within tertiary institutions situated in Kaduna state. Data collection utilizes a set of structured questions titled "Functional Education for Dwindling Economic (FEDE)," presented in a four-point rating scale. The instrument's validity was established through validation by experts from the Faculty of Education at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Data collection was facilitated through face-to-face interactions, with the assistance of four research assistants. Upon administering the questionnaire, responses were promptly collected from participants after conveying the requisite information. Subsequent to data collection, regression analysis was employed for data analysis. The outcomes of the analysis revealed, among other findings, a significant correlation between functional education and the mitigation of economic challenges within Kaduna state. The study's conclusion underscores the critical role of functional education in enhancing productivity, fostering competition and innovation, generating employment opportunities, promoting prosperity, and revitalizing economies – all of which constitute prominent challenges faced by the nation. In light of the research's findings, recommendations are put forth. Particularly, it is advised that functional education be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum across all levels of education within Nigeria. This integration serves as a proactive step towards addressing the identified challenges, thereby contributing to the enhancement of job creation and the revitalization of the country's economy.

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### INTRODUCTION

The escalating rate of poverty has cast a troubling shadow over both individual lives and the nation as a whole, sparking concern among citizens and the government alike. The prevalence of poverty has contributed to a deteriorating economy in Nigeria, presenting a significant challenge. The economic situation has further exacerbated the issue of unemployment, particularly given the steady rise in the number of

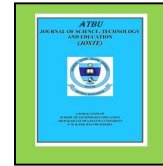
individuals emerging from various educational institutions in search of employment prospects. This predicament has grown so dire that a notable incident unfolded in Nigeria, wherein countless unemployed university graduates rallied in front of the presidential offices, voicing their distress and demanding government intervention to secure jobs for their basic sustenance (Dabalen, Oni, and Adekola, 2000).

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On a global scale, education is widely acknowledged as a formidable catalyst for driving rapid and positive changes across a nation's economy, politics, sociology, and human resources (Adamu & Usman, 2016). These authors emphasize that education empowers, refines, civilizes, enlightens, enriches, and instills confidence in individuals. It logically follows that through functional education, individuals' intellectual capabilities are nurtured, enabling them to comprehend and appreciate both their internal and external environments. The remarkable progress observed in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Brazil, and India underscores the pivotal role of innovative, creative, and entrepreneurial-driven development achieved through functional education. In essence, education holds the key to generating job opportunities and liberating individuals by equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills to lead prosperous lives and contribute to a nation's economy. This explains the growing emphasis on utilitarian education on a global scale.

In light of Nigeria's challenging economic situation, the federal government has turned its focus toward equipping youth with marketable skills for self-reliance. Functional education is being promoted within schools and colleges, with state governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) also championing this cause through initiatives such as entrepreneurship subjects and vocational centers. The core objective is to reshape the mindset of school leavers, encouraging them to be self-reliant upon graduation rather than solely relying on paid employment. Strengthening entrepreneurial activity is a commendable endeavor that will ultimately benefit individuals, the government, and society as a whole. Thus, this paper delves into the role of functional education in tackling Nigeria's economic challenges.

### **Problem Statement**

Addressing a nation's dwindling economy can be approached through robust functional education that fosters capacity

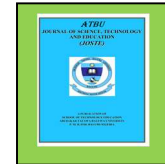
building. A country with a larger population of self-sustaining and independent youths is likely to experience economic growth. Education that prioritizes entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in a nation's economic development. The more young graduates can sustain themselves and engage in self-employment, the greater the reduction in poverty and unemployment, propelling the nation towards self-sufficiency. Numerous scholars have concurred that entrepreneurship education possesses the potential to stimulate both an entrepreneurial spirit and culture, thereby enhancing the global economy (Akpomi, 2009; Adejisola and Olufunmilayo, 2009; Adamu, 2015). Thus, functional education yields benefits for individuals, the government, and society at large.

Despite the pivotal role of functional education in addressing unemployment and economic challenges, it is unfortunate that youths in Nigeria have yet to fully recognize the significance of entrepreneurship education in ameliorating economic hardships. This is attributed to a weak link between knowledge and entrepreneurship development, possibly stemming from a lack of appropriate skills and a deficient entrepreneurial culture within the educational system. Consequently, youths often exhibit a negative attitude toward entrepreneurship education. This paper seeks to determine the impact of the following factors: (i) the quality and management of education on equipping youths with self-reliance skills in Kaduna state; (ii) the influence of quality and management on creating job opportunities for youths in Kaduna state; and (iii) the effect of quality and management on mitigating the challenges of a dwindling economy in Kaduna state.

### **Null Hypotheses**

As a guide, the following hypotheses are raised

1. Quality and management education have no significant influence on providing youths with skills for self-reliance in Kaduna state;



2. Quality and management have no significant influence on creating job opportunities to youths in Kaduna state
3. Quality and management have significant influence on curbing the problem of dwindling economy in Kaduna state.

### METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study was survey descriptive. This according to Adewale (2004) is an approach that looks for relationship on the basis of which projections are based. Also, it involves a planned collection of data over a large area for the purpose of making description. The researcher targeted 400 lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kaduna state. Four rating scale structured questions titled functional education for dwindling economic (FEDE) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by the experts in educational research and statistics. Their contributions were integrated into the final copy before the pilot study. The reliability of the instrument was through test-retest method using

40 students and 10 lecturers in colleges of education in Kano state. The result of the test gave reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained meaning that the instrument was reliable.

Data were collected by the researcher using face to face method. Four research assistants were used in the distribution and retrieving of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered and collected back from the respondents immediately after supplying the necessary information. The data gathered for this study were coded into Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS), the package was used to regression in the test of hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of test of hypotheses are as presented in Table one, two and three.

**Hypothesis One:** Quality and management education have no significant influence on providing youths will skills for self-reliance in Kaduna state

**Table 1:** Regression analysis used to test null hypothesis one

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
		B	Std. Error					
1	(Constant)	3.338	.871	3.832	.000	.620 <sup>a</sup>	.384	.192
	Functional education	.162	.298	.543	.001			

Table 1 presents the result of 'regression analysis' used to test the null hypothesis, From the Table, the computation indicated an r value .620 and at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The R-square value of .384 indicates that the independent variable has 38% of the variance that job creation is accounted for providing

youths with skills for self-reliance. The observed R<sup>2</sup> was significant, therefore the null hypothesis is not retained.

**Hypothesis Two:** Quality and management have no significant influence on creating job opportunities to youths in Kaduna state

**Table 2:** Regression analysis used to test null hypothesis two

Model	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
(Constant)	5.601	.611	9.167	.000	.662 <sup>a</sup>	.438	.332
Functional education	0.153	.112	1.366	.001			

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Table 2 presents the result of 'regression analysis' used to test the null hypothesis, From the Table, the computation indicated an r value .662 and at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The summary of the analysis present the R-square value of .438 indicated that the independent variable has 44% contribution of job creation in

Nigeria. The observed value was significant; hence the null hypothesis is not retained.

**Hypothesis Three:** Quality and management have significant influence on curbing the problem of dwindling economy in Kaduna state.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis used to test null hypothesis three

Model	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
(Constant)	4.694	.648	7.244	.000			
Functional education	0.223	.159	1.465	.001	.619 <sup>a</sup>	.383	.113

Table 3 presents the result of 'regression analysis used to test the null hypothesis. The result revealed the r value of .619<sup>a</sup> at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The summary of the analysis revealed the R-square value of .619<sup>a</sup> which indicates that the independent variable has 38% influence of addressing the problem of trickling down youth unemployment and economy recovery in Nigeria. The null hypothesis was not retained.

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result of hypothesis one indicated that quality and management of education have the potential of providing youths with skills for self-reliance. The finding is similar with that of is similar with that of Ahmed (2009) who maintained that functional education has the potentials of equipping school leavers with practical skills for self-reliance. Apeji (2012) reported that functional education encourages young people to learn and develop ways of meeting their economic needs through the acquisition and utilization of lucrative skills either about or for the purpose of entrepreneurship. Similarly, Udoh and Adamu (2012) remarked that the functional education has the ability to create in an individual the ability and skills to become self-reliant and to overcome the dynamic challenges posed by the harsh economy of nations.

Test of null hypothesis two indicated that quality and management of education have the potential of creating job opportunities in Nigeria. The finding is similar with that of Igweh

(2008) who opined that serviceable education is the purposeful intervention of the life of a learner to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills that enable them gained employment opportunities in the country. Similar, Adidu & Olanye (2006), Ugiagbe (2007), Adamu (2015) and Agetue & Nnamdi (2010) opined that the knowledge of serviceable education will enable school leave to overcome the problem of unemployment and business challenges by being resourceful, ingenious, innovative, and enduring. Usman and Adamu (2016) also reported that serviceable education has the ability of creating job opportunities in the country.

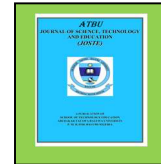
The test of null hypothesis three indicated that quality and management of education have influence of addressing the problem of trickling down youth unemployment and economy recovery in Nigeria. This finding is in line with that of Henry (2003) who considered functional education as the engine driving the economy of nations, creating new industries, young entrepreneurs, employments and wealth. Similarly, Agbionu (2008) reported that functional education involves a process aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth, development of the environment and eradication of unemployment for national sustainability. Aluwong (2010) who opined that education is the key to national development. He maintained that serviceable education unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from their

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national economy; facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation. Education is the essential tool for sustainability.

## CONCLUSION

The result of the study indicated that quality and management of education have the ability of addressing the problem of trickling down youth unemployment and economy recovery in Nigeria. It therefore follows that if the present economy problem of the country, there is needs to infuse functional education into educational curriculum at all levels. The wide spread and acceptance of functional education such as entrepreneurship, vocational education is a clear indication of its usefulness and importance in the present realities. The functional education is crucial in boosting productivity, increasing competition and innovation, creating employment and prosperity and revitalizing economies which are the major problems facing the country.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Functional education should be integrated into the curriculum of all levels of education in Nigeria
2. The government should create enabling environment that will stimulate entrepreneurship among the school leavers in Nigeria
3. School curriculum should be geared towards helping students to identify their area of cognitive strength, since creativity needed especially is majorly domain specific.

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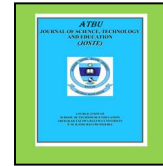
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