

Is University Education Really A Scam?



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Introduction

There seemed to be a new trend in the Nigerian social media currently, perhaps, used by persons who may have encountered unfortunate circumstances within, around and after their university education. Today, many persons – those who have been unable to enter the university, those with religious reasons and those who may have graduated without tangible results - now take solace in the now seemingly trending cliché that university education is a scam.

Nevertheless, to take a position for or against such claim will have to depend upon how one take university education to be. If one had believed that university education creates job, whence after graduation, one is unable to get a job; thence, university education can be adjudged to be a scam. It all has to do with how you see education to mean.

The truth will always remain that if you give a dollar to the toddler, he will tear it. Give a fish line and a bait belonging to a fisherman to the lawyer, he will trash it. In the same vein, give a university degree to a supposed semi-skilled worker, it will never mean anything to him. This is because he

doesn't know how to use a university knowledge to his own advantage. Consequently, how can we all view a University degree to the best of our advantage? Let us review the best way to view University Education.

How Should we See University Education?

Within the Nigerian context, a university education can be conceptualized as training meant to (1) develop the mind; (2) make learners to be aware of their environment; and (3) to adopt a skill, vocation, profession or trade for the development of the self and in extension, the society around. According to the National Policy on Education (2013), the objectives and philosophy of education are as follows:

- development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity; and
- development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society (National Policy on Education 2013).

Can you see? The national policy on education, a policy stating the overall information about the need and use for education in Nigeria did not even claim that the university education will create and search for job for anyone, so, why the pressure that because the university degree did not guarantee a job, therefore, it is a scam? These are the issues that we must put into perspective.

Now, let us examine step by step, the basics of the National policy on education. First, education is meant to develop you into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen. Ask yourself, how better is your life after graduation? Must it be job alone? How far have you allowed education to lead you? You still quarrel indiscriminately, misbehave, and sometimes greedy. You have not even learnt community service. You think that to progress, you must think of your own pocket. The fact remains that there is more profit working for others (not job in this case) than thinking of our own pockets. Be a problem solver. Be a solution generator. I can still remember in my NYSC days, when my fellow corpers were agitating for N3,000 payment from the place of primary assignment (PPA), I was busy planning. I had all the names of students in the secondary school in my laptop. From JSS1 till SS2. Who does that? So, when I produce documents like scoring sheets, I already had the names of students on it. So, I just enter grades instead of queuing up to get the register to get the names of the students like other corpers and start writing them manually.

I did all in my own volition. Free of charge. Later, fellow corpers saw my works and requested for their classes which I already did. Permanent teachers saw it, and then to the Vice Principal. Before you look well, Vice Principal had given me a document to produce, consisting of names of students. Then N3,000 will just fall like rain. Just close your eyes and shout cheese! Another N5,000 will just fall. Before long, my capacity was already speaking in my behalf. I was called to handle examination questions. I so packaged the first job to the extent that even four years down the lane, my vice principal still want me to come back to handle all those jobs. Meanwhile, my fellow corpers then were looking for N3,000 MONTHLY pay. How sarcastic? Be up and doing. Be effective in your own lane. Money pours in from generating solutions. Ideas now rule the workplace. Be conceptual. See problems and challenges and recommend.

Another dimension of the national policy on education is the total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world. Education do not only teach you and prepare you for job but make you to be outspoken, be quick and efficient decision making and develop a psyche that is good enough to face a dwindling economy like that of the Nigerian society. So, use your knowledge to your advantage and create wealth. Don't focus on job alone.

The national policy on education also includes the provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system. This aspect of the policy will not be our focus for now. This is because in as much as you have achieved or about to attain a degree, you have passed this stage – the quality of such degree, inconsequential here. Another aspect that I will not love to focus on is the inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity. This is because in my own view, the Nigerian government from the start has not been so meticulous in paying attention to national unity through effective policies.

Finally and most interestingly is the last philosophy - that of the development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society. Here, the agreement is that you will be trained, and after training, you use your wealth of experience to contribute to society. It must not be job. You can also create something to contribute to society. Imagine these orphanage homes, foundations and outreaches – do you know how much they make even as they are called Non Profit Organizations? So, you see my argument? Even though they are there to help the public free, income stream in even more than some business endeavours. Some are contacted by international organizations, some are

supported by the government and even contributions from the general public. So, wealth also comes from being a solution yourself. Think solution and monetize it.

Sometimes, you just have to put this job mentality aside and think positive. There are thousands of businesses that you can do without necessarily waiting for job. Your major problem now is that now you are a graduate, you have already hyped your level up, you can never start small again. This is just your pitfall. Just reset yourself and start small. Do not despise the days of your humble beginning. Those are the days of hard lessons. They build you up. If your early foundations are poor, life may become difficult for you later. It is just like having a poor undergraduate foundation, at post graduate level, you begin to feel academic heat for knowing nothing. Meanwhile, postgraduate studies is merely a continuation of undergraduate studies.

So, are you a university student or a graduate? Drop the job mentality, be creative. You will be employing people. If though you have a job already, you can still dream and be very creative. Yes you can! Creativity and not only intelligence now drives the world. Generate ideas. Look into the immediate environment and see problem and use even a whooping five years to think of one thing. Yes, 5 whole years. Some ideas don't come easily. You must immerse yourself in the problem before inspiration and ideas will pop up from it.

Is University Education Really A Scam?

It is hard to conclude that University education is a scam. How can that be? If you maintain the right view of education, it will never be a scam. Your expectation may have been well misplaced. Since you want a sparkling new car, a house, beautiful wife and kids like those in the movies, while you have no corresponding plans to attain those dreams, university education will always be a scam to you. But if while in school, you understand the concept of “learning and earning”, things will be easier for you. This is an assurance. While in school, many students had engaged themselves in business endeavours and other engagements that are high in economic value. Now, after graduating, they followed through and never had to search for job. On the other hand, many were too busy requesting to money. Lavishing all penny given to them without investigating into any business endeavour. At the end, their certificate became useless because there is no job at all. This mentality and euphoria of “God exist” and “miracle alerts” within the Christian community also undermine the very essence of quality growth. Meanwhile if truly that the existence of God makes things easier, then, life would have been better. We must learn that everything that happens to us is a creation of our mind. Understand the power of the mind and build a world. Leave behind these religious beliefs. They are there to mould you into a shape of obedience and consequent milking.

Earlier in 2018, I had expounded a model called the “Tripartite Taxonomy of Career Choice Relevance”. This model proposes that a career can be relevant in three dimensional phases – the job relevance, the business relevance and the social relevance (Michael, 2018). The problem here is with the first tripart – job. The job mentality has killed many. Have I not had friends whom after graduating spent hundreds of thousands in naira searching for jobs? Yet nothing came out? It was that bad. So, I think instead of searching for job, be creative, develop yourself and set yourself up. Once you are up and doing, job will fly past you one day, just grab it. What we are now happy for is that before the job came, you did not suffer nor thought of committing suicide as a result of depression.

So Much Money in the Bank While Youths are Jobless in Need of Finance

The youths need to wake up and realize how much money is in the various banks. Maybe if they realize, they will wake up. The problem society is facing is the problem emanating from the youths – especially the so-called graduates. So many business angels looking for ideas to invest, but the youths have failed woefully. They lack ideas to a very robust extent. Contemporary youths cannot even come up with a sellable idea to drag money from the older rich folks for business. Even many that tried, they failed in the business endeavour because of what I called “a rose-coloured sunglasses

view” of the world around. Women, enjoyments, lobbying, empathy, generosity, offering along with many other expenses have crumbled many. Hence, when the younger folks contact the older folks for businesses, the older folks have mixed feelings towards investing in their endeavours.

How to Get Business Angels to Invest in your Endeavours

It is just one thing to create ideas, it is another thing altogether to sell the idea. At least, many business endeavours died at this stage because of inability to communicate their ideas. This is another reason why you need university education. You also have to endeavour to test a model of your business. If it is a business that can be started small, why not start small, check the profit, be good at what you do and see what happens. This stage is really essential for you. When contacting investors, they must be made to understand their profits and that strong assurance that their investments will not be in vain. This should be especially so because they must have invested in some other failed endeavours before.

How Can University Education Work for You?

You see one thing, two students gained admission at the same time, the same course and the same age. Unfortunately, while one graduated with first class, the other graduated with third class. In the same way, the labour market will never favour every graduate in the same manner. Some will spend more years searching for jobs, while some already

have job waiting. In fact, others were working while in school. For education to work for you, you must be creative anywhere you are - in business, on the job and even on the social environment. If you have the needed psyche, society will rush you. In the voice of the Nigerian man – “na them go dey rush you”.

References

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