

**ASSESSMENT OF THE ADEQUACY OF ECONOMICS CURRICULUM IN  
ACQUISITION OF PRODUCTION SKILLS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY  
STUDENTS IN NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

*The paper assessed the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the State owned Senior Secondary School Economics Teachers in North Central, Nigeria with a total number of six hundred and forty nine (649) Senior Secondary Schools, four thousand-four hundred and ninety six (4,496) Economics teachers across the North Central States, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample three hundred and fifty one (351) Economics teachers, 222 male and 129 female from four states in North Central, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled, "Assessment of Economics Curriculum for Production Skill Questionnaire" (AEC PQ). The instrument was structured on a four (4) point rating scale. Mean, frequency scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research*

*questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the contents of Economics curriculum for acquisition of skills for production of goods among Senior Secondary School students in North Central, Nigeria was adequate and also the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria does not depend on gender. The study recommended that government through curriculum planners should amend and reshape the Economics curriculum in line with production skills acquisition. They should review and re-design more inclusive Economics curricula to recognize the importance of acquiring production skills.*

**Keywords:** *Adequacy, Acquisition, Assessment, Economics curriculum, Production skills.*

### **Introduction**

Economics is one of the school subjects that is offered at the senior secondary level which studies human behaviours in relation to how his numerous wants can be met, considering the limited resources around him. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2016) advocates that Economics be taught in Secondary Schools to equip recipients with the knowledge on how to allocate scarce resources, make choice, and to take rational decisions on pressing economic issues. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2013) emphasizes that the teaching and learning of Economics in our schools must be seen as one of the avenues for establishing a strong base for the production of effective citizens who will champion the drive for the attainment of the Structural Development Goals.

Economics is a school subject that aims at studying the wants of humans and finding means of producing through innovation of new concepts and managing both human and material resources to satisfy those wants. An Economist can be said to be an entrepreneur (Rychen & Salagnik, 2003). An entrepreneur is someone who sees investible opportunities, harness available resources to make goods available in order to meet the needs of the consumers. The activity which an entrepreneur does is called entrepreneurship, which involves the creation (production), distribution (income/reward), exchange (marketing), and consumption of goods and services to satisfy human wants which are the basis for Economics as a school subject (Rychen & Salagnik, 2003). Economists are entrepreneurs; this is because studying Economics gives students' many skills which are useful in running a business. Learners can acquire some of the qualities which they will gain from training in Economics which are valuable for entrepreneurship: These qualities include; good numeracy and a solid understanding of statistics, basic understanding of finance; understanding risk and probability; critical thinking and logic; communication skills like oral presentation. Studying Economics is not just a path to a career as an economist. It can also set you up

well for other careers, as it gives students' plenty of transferable skills. The particular skills required to be a successful entrepreneur are often skills that students' can pick up while studying Economics (Inomics Team, 2020). Entrepreneurial skills can also be acquired through training in Economics and it emphasizes the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that enable an individual to *maximize* the resources around him within the limits of his capability (Rychen & Salagnik, 2003).

Economics is the study of consumption, production, exchange and distribution of wealth by men engaged in the ordinary business of life (Marshall in Jhingan, 2003). According to him, Economics as a social science, deals with the activities of mankind that include; the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services. The above assertions by Marshall were the four parameters that the investigator built this study on (Jhingan, 2003). Marshall, in particular, confined to the consumption, production, exchange and distribution of wealth by men engaged in the ordinary business of life. Marshall's definition of Economics is the pillars on which skills acquisition in Economics rest to produce students Entrepreneurs that can create jobs and wealth as well as to make profit as a means of livelihood (Marshall in Jhingan, 2003).

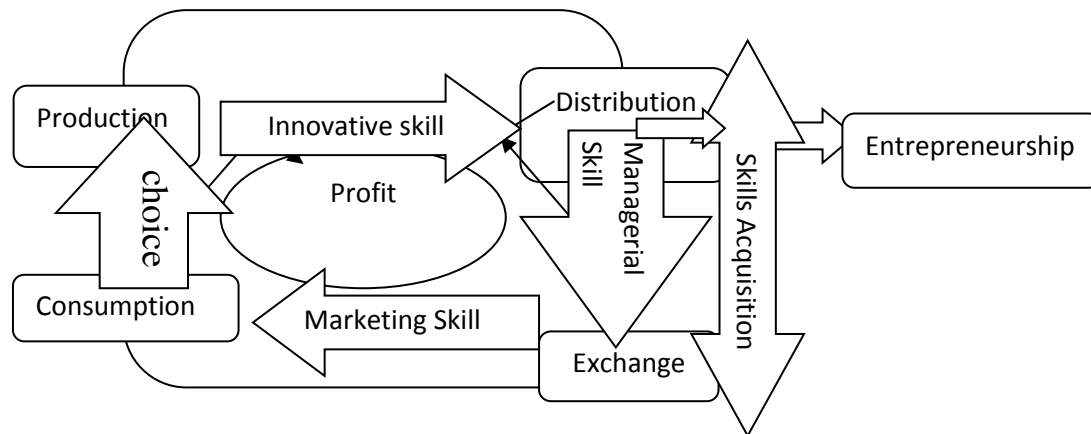
It can therefore, be said that production involves the creation of utility. It is the creation of wealth in the form of goods and the provision of services which are capable of satisfying human wants. It could also be described as any activity involving human effort, leading to the satisfaction of human wants (Anyanwuocha, 2010). Production include; changing the form of raw materials to semi-finished and finished products; changing the position of goods in a geographical space; changing the position of goods in time and the provision of services as the direct services of teachers, doctors and lawyers. The entrepreneur co-ordinates and organizes the other factors of production (land, labour, capital) to produce goods and services.

Economics is concerned with how people produce and distribute goods and services that are required for the maintenance of human existence (Ande, 2018). In line with this, In production the members of society appropriate (create, shape) the products of nature in accord with human needs; distribution determines the proportion in which the individual shares in the product; exchange delivers the particular products into which the individual desires to convert the portion which distribution has assigned to him; and finally, in consumption, the products become objects of gratification, of individual appropriation. Production creates the objects which correspond to the given needs; distribution divides them up according to social laws; exchange further parcels out the already divided shares in accordance with individual needs; and finally, in consumption, the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need, and satisfies it in being consumed. Thus production appears as the point of departure, consumption as the conclusion, distribution and exchange as the middle, which is however itself two fold, since distribution is determined by society and exchange by individuals. Therefore,

Economics is a social science which studies human behavior or man's activities in relation to production and production involves exchange, distribution and consumption.

The researchers in line with the definition of Economics given by Marshal, presented the pictorial figure of the relationship that exist within the four parameters of the definition. These linkages are presented to display the interrelatedness of the four parameters with skill acquisition and entrepreneurship in figure 1.

**Fig. 1: Model on Interrelatedness of Economics, Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship**



**Source: Researchers (2020)**

Figure 1 shows the four (4) parameters that define production. Production which is studied in Economics takes the form of transformation of raw materials into finished good and the distribution and provision of goods and services in order to satisfy human wants. Production takes innovative skills in order to make a difference in the business world. Innovative skill is needed in order to produce or create something unique to attract the target market through distribution. After production comes exchange.

Exchange refers to giving out something in return for another thing. The entrepreneur produces goods, gives to the consumers and in return collects consumers' money for the product produced. Exchange requires marketing skills in order to make the right goods available to the target consumers at the right time through distribution.

Distribution refers to the process by which goods pass from producers to consumers. Distribution involves managerial skill, the ability to coordinate human and material resources before consumption.

Consumption refers to the process of using up resources in order to satisfy human wants. This includes eating food, wearing shoes, riding a bicycle, reading a newspaper, writing with a pen, and listening to music. Consumption demands ability to make choice which in turn requires a reasonable level of financial discipline or management.

Skills acquisitions are developed through Economics training for entrepreneurship. Innovative skills refer to the ability to produce commodities using creative methods. Marketing skills refer to the ability to take the produced goods closer to the consumers and managerial skills refer to the ability to coordinate and organize human and material resources in the circle of production. These Marshall's definition of Economics is the pillars on which skills acquisition in Economics rest to produce entrepreneurs that can create jobs and wealth as well as to make profit as a means of livelihood.

Production skills in Economics include innovative, managerial and marketing skills. Igbo (2008) noted that the acquisition of these skills has the capability to augment and inspire productivity, and to further income generating life endeavours among people. By teaching production skills, Economics enables an individual to learn, explore and prepare for a job or trade. Thus, Economics could play a significant role in achieving the goals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). These goals include wealth creation, employment generation and reduction of poverty, elimination of corruption and the general reorientation of values (NEEDS, 2005) cited in Benson (2007). The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator - a designer of new ideas and business processes. Management skills and strong team building abilities are often perceived as essential leadership attributes for successful entrepreneurs. Political economist Robert Reich considers leadership, management ability, and team-building to be essential qualities of an entrepreneur (Muhammed, 2018). The ability of entrepreneurs to innovate relates to innate traits, including extroversion and a proclivity for risk-taking. According to Craig (2012) the capabilities of innovating, introducing new technologies, increasing efficiency and productivity, or generating new products or services, are characteristic qualities of entrepreneurs.

Economics curriculum is confronted with many issues such as the broad nature of the curriculum (Ede, Oleabhiere & Modebelu, 2016) and Akin-Ibidiran (2020) observed that the most identified one is the inadequacy of Economics curriculum. Students learn more effectively if the curriculum is adequate with practical applications. The effective disposition of the students has direct relevance to their ability to learn, their interest in learning, and their attitude towards the value of education. From the foregoing, it is not enough to gain Economics knowledge and skills if such knowledge does not enable the recipient to be creative with knowledge, resources and the environment. Functional Economics education, therefore, is that which is geared towards capacity building through creativity. The question that arises is how can Economics in Nigeria key into this structure of developing creative production skills in students to enable them become self-dependent and creative with knowledge and skills gained from the teaching and learning of Economics subject. The concern of this study is to assess the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem**

Economics education plays a crucial role in contributing to economic and human development. The nation's professional and highly skilled personnel such as economists, entrepreneurs, managers, and teachers among others are products of universities which have all passed through secondary school education. Economics curriculum was prepared towards integrating relevant skills with diversity in considerations to enable graduates gain job and enhance their performance in the fieldwork. Curriculum of Economics was geared towards equipping the recipients with the basic knowledge and skills to appreciate the nature of economic problems in any society and adequately prepare them for the challenges in the Nigeria economy. Despite the laudable philosophy of Economics programme in Nigeria, recent studies have shown that graduates of Economics programme have not adequate skills for life and services to society in various spheres of human endeavor. Indeed, most graduates of the programme lack adequate skill and knowledge for production and entrepreneurship in the country. In view of this, the study sought to assess the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to assess the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria. Specifically to;

- i. assess the views of teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.
- ii. Compare the mean response of teachers' among the four States on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following research question was raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the views of teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria?
- ii. Is there any difference in the mean response of teachers' among the four States on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria?

**Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>. There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This study employed the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the State owned Senior Secondary School Economics Teachers in North Central, Nigeria with a total number of six hundred and forty nine (649) Senior Secondary Schools, four thousand-four hundred and ninety six (4,496) Economics teachers across the North Central States, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample three hundred and fifty one (351) Economics teachers; 222 male and 129 female using the balloting technique from four states: FCT, Kogi, Nassarawa and Niger states in North Central Nigeria. Questionnaire was used for data collection titled, "Assessment of Economics Curriculum for Production Skill Questionnaire" (AEC PQ) structured on a four (4) point rating scale.

The instrument contained nine (9) items to elicit feedback from the respondents. The reliability was test through test re-test of the instrument on three teachers outside the study area. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data collected at the test-retest and coefficient index of 0.82 was realized implying that the instrument was reliable.

The researchers used descriptive statistics of frequencies, mean score and standard deviation to answer the research questions at 2.50 decision rule. Any mean score from 2.50 and above was accepted or agreed and mean score below 2.50 was rejected or disagreed. T-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Result****Table 1: Teachers' views on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills****N=351**

S/ N	Questionnaire Items	Male Teachers			Female Teachers		
		N=222			N=129		
		Fx	Mean	Decision	Fx	Mean	Decision
1	Economics contents provide skills necessary for identification of what to produce.	792.54	3.57	Agree	448.92	3.48	Agree
2	Economics contents provide skills necessary for identification of how to produce.	406.26	1.83	Disagree	225.75	1.75	Disagree
3	Economics contents provide skills necessary for setting of new business outlet.	732.60	3.30	Agree	424.41	3.29	Agree
4	Economics contents provide skills on how to improve Production.	743.7	3.35	Agree	442.47	3.43	Agree
5	Economics contents provide skills on how to diversify the Market.	739.26	3.33	Agree	411.51	3.19	Agree
6	Economics contents provide skills necessary for practical production of goods and services.	377.40	1.70	Disagree	171.57	1.33	Disagree
7	Economics contents provide skills necessary for identification of good source of raw materials.	703.74	3.17	Agree	436.02	3.38	Agree
8	Economics contents provide skills for capacity to cope with pressure.	617.16	2.78	Agree	389.58	3.02	Agree
9	Economics contents provide skills necessary for creative thinking for improvement of the quality of goods	710.40	3.20	Agree	424.41	3.29	Agree
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>2.91</b>		<b>2.91</b>		<b>Agree</b>



Table 1 shows the analysis of the views of teachers' on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria. From the analysis, the table reveals that both male and female Economics teachers' disagree with items 2 and 6 that Economics contents provide skills necessary; for identification of how to produce and for practical production of goods and services. However, both male and female Economics teachers' agree that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 which states that Economics contents provide skills necessary: for identification of what to produce; for setting of new business outlet; improving production; diversify the market; identification of good source of raw materials; cope with pressure and creative thinking for improvement of the quality of goods. This revealed that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 had mean scores above 2.50 and so are accepted hence, Economics curriculum contents are adequate for acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Research question 2:** Is there a difference in mean response of the respondents among the four States on the effectiveness of the contents of Economics curriculum for acquisition of skills for production of goods?

**Table 2: Mean Response on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills**

N=351				
States	FX	N	Mean	Decision
FCT	231.00	77	3.00	Agree
Kogi	270.48	92	2.94	Agree
Nassarawa	236.50	86	2.75	Agree
Niger	287.04	96	2.99	Agree
<b>Sectional Mean</b>			<b>2.92</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 2 shows the difference in mean scores of respondents on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills for the production of goods among four states in North Central, Nigeria. Economics teachers' from; FCT indicated a mean score of 3.00; Kogi indicated 2.94; Nassarawa had 2.75 while Niger indicated 2.99. The mean score are relatively close hence; all the states agreed that the curriculum contents of Economics are adequate for the acquisition of Economics skills for production. The sectional mean was  $2.92 > 2.50$  and was agreed.

### Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>.** There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

**Table 3: t-test result on the views of teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills**

Status	N	X	SD	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	222	2.91	0.33						
Female	129	2.91	0.48	3.003	.084	.087	349	.930	Accepted

The result in Table 3 shows that P-value of  $0.930 > 0.05$  at 0.05 level of significance at degree of freedom of 349. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted, implying that there was no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that the respondents agreed that Economics curriculum is suitable for acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria. Economics Curriculum was found to be adequate; it will enable students know about the different entrepreneurship skills such as production of goods and rendering of services. Economics Curriculum would offer its students the necessary knowledge and skills to organize and coordinate other factors of production.

The result of the finding is in affirmation of the objectives of Senior Secondary Economics curriculum which among others is to show Economics and its link with production, to provide a course which develops the skills for production for students while it is at the same time, a reasonably adequate foundation for students to participate actively in national economic advancement through entrepreneurship. It is expected that Economics students would be resourceful and contribute towards national development with knowledge and skills acquired. This avails them with the practical knowledge and skills that will make them to be producers of goods and services (Nigeria Educational Research Development Council, 2013). Thus proper studying of the subject Economics will actually prepare an individual to be able to be a producer of goods and services after school, especially now that unemployment is the order of the day. This notwithstanding, there is the need to include more concepts from entrepreneurial education proper which is solely tailored towards training the students on how to acquire the skills of production. Furthermore, production skills in Economics include innovative, managerial and marketing skills; the acquisition of these skills has the capability to augment and inspire productivity, and to further income generating life endeavours among people. By teaching production skills, Economics enables an individual to learn, explore and prepare for a job or trade.

This finding is in consonance with the findings of Oleabhiere & Oleabhiere (2015) who posited that the contents of Economics curriculum are adequate in scope and provides the basis for acquisition of production skills for economic advancement of the nation. The finding agreed with Iheanacho (2011) who asserted that Economics curriculum sharpens students' creative and innovative skills to identify a need that can be satisfied with a product or service. Again FCT, Kogi, Nassarawa and Niger States Economics teachers' based on their mean scores which are relatively close to each other agreed that the curriculum contents of Economics are adequate for the acquisition of Economics skills for production.

Further findings revealed that the acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria based on gender was not significant. This implies that the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria does not depend on gender. Therefore, both curriculum planners and implementers should be careful with the curriculum as it has the capacity of enhancing or destroying the skills acquired by students. This finding agree with that of Ekele and Davou (2009) who found out that gender had no influence on the development of entrepreneurial skills in sports among physical educators. Also, this finding is in agreement with the views of Adonu (2006), Ugwu (2009), Njoku and Jacks (2011), Akinbobola and Afolabi (2012) and Ibe, Adah and Ihejiamaizu (2013) who found that gender had no significant influences on science process skills acquisition.

### **Conclusion**

It was found in this study on that the contents of Economics curriculum for acquisition of skills for production of goods among Senior Secondary School students in North Central, Nigeria was adequate and that the FCT, Kogi, Nassarawa and Niger States Economics teachers' agreed that the curriculum contents of Economics are adequate for the acquisition of Economics skills for production and also that the adequacy of Economics curriculum in acquisition of production skills among Senior Secondary Students in North Central, Nigeria does not depend on gender.

### **Recommendations**

Drawing from the findings and conclusions, the researchers recommends that;

- i. Government through curriculum planners should amend and reshape the Economics curriculum in line with production skills acquisition. They should review and re-design more inclusive Economics curricula to recognize the importance of acquiring production skills.
- ii. Government should establish entrepreneurship centres in all the schools areas to enable the students acquire skills in the production goods and other services.

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