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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN POLYTECHNICS, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

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Abstract
This paper examined Entrepreneurship Education in Polytechnics, National Development and poverty reduction in Nigeria: issues, challenges and solutions. The paper considers major issues, challenges and situations negatively impacting Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Polytechnics such as large class sizes, absence of workshops, studios and Entrepreneurship centers for practical's; as well as absence of well-trained teachers/lecturers. The paper is of the opinion that if National Development and poverty reduction must be attained in Nigeria, Entrepreneurship education must be taken seriously by everyone who is a stake holder in our country. On the basis of all the obvious negative situations identified, it was suggested amongst others, that government should urgently provide bigger and more spacious classroom blocks in higher institutions, provide practical Entrepreneurship centers and studios in higher institutions, assist in the training and retraining of Entrepreneurship teachers and lecturers so as to make them well equipped to tackle the basic challenges ahead.
Key words: Entrepreneurship, Education, National Development, Poverty Reduction, Nigerian Polytechnics.

INTRODUCTION

If a society must go forward especially in recent times and if any society will follow the trend of events, that society must appreciate the benefits of education in all ramifications.
According to Lucas (1988), and Griliches (1997) in their study of Human Capital Models, Lucas (1988) in particular, reported that education adds to an individual's productivity and therefore increases the market value of his labor.
According to Griliches (1997), the meeting point of the models is that Human Capital Development (HCD) is a veritable growth factor in increased labor productivity and reduction in income inequality and poverty.
Deininger (2014) stated that Human Capital is a production function input and its development through education, improves human skills, knowledge and competence, raises per capita Gross National production and reduces poverty. Oruta (2015) remarked that both capital and buildings are important in business but it takes adequate and appropriately educated people to build a business.
Education has generally been regarded as the training and development of the mind and character of an individual. It is necessary if human beings must live meaningfully and attain their individual needs, desires, goals and aspirations. Education is no doubt the process through which people are exposed to every relevant knowledge, skills and values needed for the sake of stability and sustainability of the recipients and the society in general. Education is therefore a means to a good end in all ramifications. The importance of Entrepreneurship Education both to individual and national growth and development cannot be over emphasized. That is why several scholars have researched and are still researching on the importance of Entrepreneurship in the economic development of a country. Research work on entrepreneurship have also centered on reasons for entrepreneurship, challenges, benefits and the future of Entrepreneurship, etc.
Entrepreneurship as a concept has been defined in many ways by several scholars, Drucker (1985) in Ugiagbe and Nwaogwugwu (2008) defines an entrepreneur as one, who always searches for change, responds to it

and exploit it as an opportunity. According to Njoku, Nwosu and Ogechi (2007), Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to identify and successfully carry out investment opportunities in an environment. It is the mobilization of resources to take advantage of an opportunity to provide new or improved goods or services. It refers to the capacity and attitude of a person or group of persons to undertake ventures with the probability of success or failure. It is the service rendered by an entrepreneur. It involves the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risks created by dynamic environment and making the best of opportunities for profit purpose. Nwachukwu (1990) defines an entrepreneur as a person who can see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. Hisrich et al (2008) view entrepreneurship, as the process of creating something new with value, by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

While scholars have agreed that there is no "one best definition" of entrepreneurship, it is also agreed that the legion and myriads of definitions we have in literature, bother on three main components as earlier suggested by Shapero (1975).

These components are;

- Initiative taking
- The organizing and re-organizing of social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical accounts.
- The acceptance of risks or failure.

From the foregoing, it implies that individual involvement in entrepreneurial education is paramount and critical if entrepreneurship education must succeed in higher institutions in Nigeria. Moreso, for entrepreneurship Education and orientation to succeed, several ingredients must be at work and once these ingredients are not in place, there are bound to be challenges. This paper which is an opinion paper, seeks to consider Entrepreneurship Education and orientation in higher institutions, National Development and poverty reduction in Nigeria; issues, challenges and solutions.

2.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS/BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE;

Here, we shall both define, review and overview some related terms and concepts, as follows;

a) Entrepreneurship;

Entrepreneurship is the totality of self-asserting attribute that aids an individual to map out latent business opportunities in conjunction "with the capacity to organize requisite resources with which to profitably take advantage of such opportunities in the face of calculated risks and uncertainty", (Nwosu & Ohia, 2019, in Babalola, 2010). According to Ojeifo (2013), entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual or firm to Identity environmental challenges and exploit them, such as an opportunity to produce goods and render services for public consumption.

However, both Sexton and Smior (2007) in Enyekit, and Enyekit (2014) view Entrepreneurship as conceptualized in a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in students/trainees the ability to identify, screen and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition.

It is popularly said that entrepreneurs are the driving force in any economy, and when these Entrepreneurs are educated, they are likely to do better in the expansion and advancement of the economy, leading to National Development, and poverty reduction.

According to Nnaa (2013), National Development is generally speaking an offshoot of individual development.

b) Entrepreneurship Education:

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Education is the means through which people acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes. This is made possible through a teacher. Teachers are the human points of contact with, students. Who the teacher is and what the teacher does, mediate all other influences on the quality of education. Teachers have the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to curiosity and self-directed learning. (Awotuu - Efebo, 1999).

Fafunwa (1974) gave seven aspects or objectives of any form of education as follows;

- To inculcate the child's latent physical skills.
- To develop character.
- To inculcate respect for elders and those in position of Authority.
- To develop intellectual skills
- To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labor.
- To develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs.
- To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

To this end, the importance of Entrepreneurship Education both to individual and National growth and development as well as poverty reduction cannot be overemphasized. That is why research on entrepreneurship appears to be a never-ending process, with the introduction of several types of entrepreneurship all over the world.

With the recent recessionary season that was experienced by the country, it is no longer news that we can no more depend on oil for both individual and national survival. This paper is of the opinion that entrepreneurship education remains one of the best options, for National Development and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship education can therefore be described as a situation where entrepreneurial lessons, skills, attitudes and behaviours are passed across to students through formal classrooms and other associated media. However, the operational definition of Entrepreneurship education is the willingness and ability of a person or persons to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit successful business enterprise.

c) Concept of National Development;

National Development as a concept has today become a Professional industry of highly specialized practitioners. The practitioners according to Enyekit et al (2017) play two major roles as follows; to provide leadership in policy making and to administer policy, programs and projects. National development has its own compartments such as, Economic Development, Political Development, Educational Development, etc. However, it appears that most often, National Development tend to principally tilt towards economic Development indices. In actual fact, Economic Development is a term very familiar to both economists, politicians and others since the beginning of the 20th Century. The concept as a matter of fact does not have a concise meaning; however, it has been in existence in West Africa for centuries. Economic Development can be said to be the process by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people. It also has a direct relationship with the environment. Economic development can also be considered as a static theory that documents the state of an economy at a certain time. According to Mansell & Wehn, 1998, economic development has been understood since world war II to involve economic growth, as it has to do with increase in per capita income. It is said that Economic Development practitioners generally work in public offices in the state, Federal or local level, or in public - private partnership organizations that may be partially funded by federal, state or local tax money.

These economic development organizations function as individual entities and in some cases as departments of local government authorities. Their role is to seek out new economic opportunities and retain existing business wealth.

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As can be seen above, National Development has a direct relationship with economic development in more ways than one.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES AFFECTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN POLYTECHNICS IN NIGERIA

One of the six goals of the "Education for All" (EFA) established at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, 2000 'by UNESCO is to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and Adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and, life skills programs. To this end, the provision of vocational skills training constitutes an important component in our bid as a country to achieve these EFA goal. Unfortunately in recent times, there has been a decline in technical and vocational education enrolments, all over the country. When the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) was created, one of its aims is to better equip our large population of young people for the world of work (UNESCO, 2000 in Babalola, 2010). In February, 2001, NBTE began the implementation with a radical review of the curricula for 28 disciplines including electrical, mechanical and civil Engineering areas of specialization.

Consequently, as part of the goals of the then president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, to make the Country become one of the 'world's top 20 Economies by the year 2020, he mandated that all University and other tertiary institution Students in Nigeria, regardless of their course of study, be exposed to entrepreneurship Development study. This is because Nigeria realized that she would need to increasingly globalize education in two key areas namely;

Information and Communication Technology and Entrepreneurship. (Olaitain, 2017).

Some of the thorny issues and challenges affecting Entrepreneurship education, in polytechnics in Nigeria include the following:

- Inadequate classrooms/dilapidated classrooms (in some institutions, students learn under the trees).
- Large class size due to merging and over population of students in some departments.
- Lack of practical lessons due to the unavailability of studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.
- Absence of trained teachers/poorly trained teachers.
- Lack of information / adequate information.
- Lazy attitude of students in not wanting to take Risks in practical Entrepreneurship ventures.
- Belief in the acquiring of degrees to catch a white collar job.
- The ICT age where video games have overshadowed creativity/Creative mindsets.
- Teachers/Lecturers of Entrepreneurship courses not showing any practical interest in what they teach by way of going into venture capitals themselves etc.
- Entrepreneurship teachers/lecturers handling courses only for the purpose of making money, by way of selling text books, etc.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS AN OPTION AGAINST
UNEMPLOYMENT IN AN ERA OF INFLATION, FOOD SCARCITY AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Entrepreneurship Education remains the vehicle through which National Development, unemployment and poverty reduction can easily be attained. This is because of the enormous benefits drivable from it. Some of these benefits include;

- Job Security
- Financial rewards for success.
- Independence (of the Entrepreneur).
- Opportunity to be creative and innovative.
- Psychological satisfaction.
- Enhancement of social status in the community.

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- Stimulation of indigenous entrepreneurs.
- Modernization/transformation of local industries and technologies.
- Employment generation.
- Economic linkage/support services.
- Contribution to general wellbeing and international cooperation.
- Development of rural areas.
- Self-reliance, etc.

Njoku, Nwosu & Ogechi, 2017, Ugiagbe and Nwaogwugwu, 2008).

In the past forty years, various governments in Nigeria have done a few things geared towards poverty reduction in Nigeria. For instance, as far back as 1971, the Military Government led by General Yakubu Gowon established the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), with the following functions/terms of reference;

- To render training and advisory service for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) after identifying their training needs.
- To co-ordinate the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and pay the students some stipends as incentive.
- To provide incentives to SME's and allow them use their training facilities.
- To carry out research and consultancy services on matters relating to manpower training.
- To promote the acquisition of skills sufficient to meet the needs of the economy. (Ledee, Okonu and Dapper, 2019).

Between 1972, 1977, and 1989, the Nigerian Enterprises promotion Decree, popularly known as the indigenization policy or Act, was promulgated to regulate the ownership and control of business enterprises in Nigeria. Before these decrees, foreigners appeared to dominate the various business sectors in Nigeria as there were no precise restrictions on the type of businesses foreigners could operate in our country Nigeria. Little opportunities also existed for indigenous Entrepreneurs. Thus, the main objectives of the indigenization Act includes;

- To limit foreign participation in the ownership and control of businesses in the country so as to avoid further domination.
- To create an Economically independent country with increased opportunities for indigenous Nigerian entrepreneurs.
- To maximize local retention of profits from multi-national companies operating in the country. The 1972 version of the Decree specifically reserved 22 Enterprises for Nigerians; that is, Enterprises in which Nigerians must have 100% ownership and control. (Ledee, Okonu, and Dapper, 2019).

UNEMPLOYMENT / POVERTY REDUCTION; THE ROLE OF POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION.

According to Ezirim O.N (2017), polytechnic Education in Nigeria was established by the Act of 1979 Cap 139 of the National Assembly (as Amended by the Federal Polytechnics Amendment), Decree No.5 of 1993 and now Federal Polytechnics Act CAPF 17, laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, to provide full-time courses in technology, applied sciences, management and other fields of studies and to make provisions for the general administration of such polytechnics.

The principal aim is to turn out the manpower needed for industrial and technological Development of the country. Consequently, students are trained in courses and programes such as Engineering, Urban and Regional planning, architecture, arts and design, agricultural technology, estate management, hospitality management, management science and technology. Polytechnic Education offers not only an opportunity for students to personally practice the theoretical models in the classroom, but also to enhance their chances of securing employment after graduation, to be self employed and reliant, and even to train others.

ISSN: 2992-3727 Published 25th May, 2025

As a matter of historical transmission of knowledge, polytechnic education was conceived by the French and perfected by the British and the Russians. It was aimed at discouraging elitism and geared towards the practical preparation of its recipients to fulfill prescribed norms of the Economy which the other higher Education arrangements do not address. The polytechnic education ideology is to produce highly trained technological manpower capable of responding to the new demands generated by expected high rates of economic growth. Structured on mandatory one year industrial attachment or internship to complete the Higher National Diploma programe; Polytechnic education is designed to emancipate the citizens of Nigeria from technological mediocrity. Unfortunately, the greatest challenge of polytechnic education is the embarrassment the holders of its certificates (ND and HND) face in the society. The most genuine concern of polytechnic education is to accord the system its pride of place for it to be part of the technological development of the nation; it is not necessarily the technology of neutron bombs or such other killer weapons but rather, the technology that makes it possible for India's almost five billion population to feed itself cheaply and comfortably; or what enables Japan, South-Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Romania to invade Europe and America with high quality and cheaply prized manufactured and even agricultural products. The major emphasis here is the fact that adequate investment in polytechnic education will make the sub-sector alive to its responsibilities. All these will eventually bring about sound practical Entrepreneurship Education, unemployment/poverty reduction and of course National Development.

5.1 CONCLUSION

This paper has revealed some of the terrible situations prevalent in Nigerian polytechnics with reference to Entrepreneurship Education. Students learning and interaction is not possible when class sizes are too large. Entrepreneurship is a practical course which needs proper mental stimulation, and so when there are no practical centers, laboratories, studios and workshops, creativity is not also possible as innovation is thrown overboard.

6.1 SUGGESTIONS

- To bring about National development by the means of Entrepreneurship Education, and to reduce the rate of unemployment and poverty, the following suggestions are made by the authors;
- Both State and federal governments should look into the issue of large class size by way of providing more spacious classroom blocks in our higher institutions.
- Government should also urgently renovate all dilapidated classroom blocks in our tertiary institutions.
- Government budget on Education should urgently be reviewed and increased.
- Workshops, laboratories, studios and other practical centers meant for Entrepreneurship education should be provided.
- Teachers/Lecturers of Entrepreneurship courses should also endeavour to get involved in Entrepreneurship ventures so as to create the desired effects on the students.
- Young Entrepreneurs should be celebrated to encourage others.
- Attention should be focused more on entrepreneurship endeavours in the area of Agriculture.
- We also recommend that Entrepreneurship time table should be divided into two equal parts; one half for theory and the other for practical.
- There should be training and retraining of entrepreneurship lecturers by the government.
- Entrepreneurship education should henceforth go beyond lip service in Nigeria.

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