YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS THROUGH TVET FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the correlation between youth employment and sustainable economic development. The total population of the study amounted to 1091, while a sample size of 284 was determined using the Kercie and Morgan sample size determination models. Primary data collected by means of questionnaire was adopted for this study. Cronbach Alpha statistic was engaged for reliability test while Content and construct validity (component factor) were used for validation of the instrument. Both descriptive statistic (percentage and average) and inferential statistic (multiple regression) were adopted for data analysis with the aid of SPSS version 26. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education (EE) and skill development (SD) have a significant impact on sustainable economic development with p 0.01; t = 9.795) and p 0.01; t = 10.449 respectively. In conclusion, youth employment has a great influence on sustainable economic development and it was further recommended that the government should promote entrepreneurship education through varieties of strategies.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Skill *Development, Sustainable Economic Development,* TVET, Youth Employment

Introduction

Both government and development specialists are increasingly recognizing the role of entrepreneurship in the process of socioeconomic development of countries (Kurya, 2006). It is critical to any nation's advancement because of its contributions to the economy in terms of job creation and generation, increasing value-added, generating wealth, and contributing value to maintain growth and general social development. Entrepreneurship has the potential to develop human resources and traditional apprenticeship in a variety of ways and occupations, thereby improving young people's economic independence. A country's growth and development are dependent on the level of resourcefulness of its citizens, particularly young people (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017). Growth and development can also be supported when youths in society work voluntarily and the economy's per capita income rises. Job creation and young self-sufficiency might be boosted by purposeful government initiatives aimed at a viable entrepreneurial program in the country. It is meaningless to assert that entrepreneurship is the remedy to developing-country unemployment if the government is unable to commit to policy objectives in this regard. (Olajide and Akojenu (2017)

One of the most malignant issues preventing continuous economic growth and development in Nigeria is youth unemployment. Numerous societal vices have been caused by youth unemployment. Among them include terrorism, political thuggery, abduction, armed robbery, prostitution, poverty, and internet and other scams (Okoye, Iloanya, & Udunze, 2014). Every nation's capacity for innovation, especially among its youth, determines its rate of growth and development (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017).

However it is not simple to empower and prepare young people in Nigeria to prosper in the unstructured and unpredictable environment of modern business. Nigerian youths have several obstacles that can only be overcome by ingenious, intelligent, and enterprising people who possess the drive and curiosity to think creatively as well as the bravery to confront and overcome the challenges they encounter in all parts of life (Aja & Adali, 2013).

A crucial part in African development is played by technical and vocational education and training (TVET). TVET is now regarded as a means of reducing poverty in many African nations. Two crucial roles of TVET in the economic development of African nations were noted by UNESCO (2004). These roles are the urgent need to prepare the workforce for independence and the requirement to increase the productivity of the informal sector (Patrick & Emmanuel, 2017).

Education is essential for influencing culture, skills, and attitudes in individuals. To do these, the targeted population must be mentally prepared sooner. Therefore, it is crucial to start addressing technical and vocational education, and entrepreneurship education at an early age. Enterprise education is "the process of providing students (or graduates) with an expanded capacity to produce ideas and the abilities to make them materialize," according to the Quality Assurance Agency (2012). The development of young people's perspectives and the dissemination of information and skills that are vital to the emergence of an entrepreneurial culture are both facilitated by entrepreneurial education.

Students that receive education in entrepreneurship are given the extra skills, information, and abilities needed to utilize them while starting a new firm or enterprise. These are all necessary conditions for entrepreneurial effectiveness, or the capacity to work efficiently as an entrepreneur or in an entrepreneurial setting. In order to properly convey the information, educational institutions must have experts who are trained to teach these abilities. This is possible if the schools have an entrepreneurial focus and are able to provide the right environment for students to explore and learn about business ideas.

Institutions need to establish "entrepreneurship education (EE) programs that can contribute to the issue of codifying entrepreneurial abilities like marketing, managing people, and product creation into a teachable curriculum," (Fagge and Sawaba, 2018). In order to successfully operate an entrepreneurial program, it is recommended that the curriculum for such programs should be enhance towards a "mirror learner-centered programs that better engage students rather than teacher-centered ones." Achieving this learner-centered strategy entails teaching students how businesses operate, and the course material should offer a portfolio of abilities that will promote entrepreneurial traits including opportunity detection, business planning and innovation, adapting to change and anticipating it, and accepting failure, among others.

The young employment dilemma is increasingly seen as having a potential answer in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). TVET is ideally positioned to address the skills mismatch concerns that have hampered many young people's smooth transitions from schooling to employment due to its focus on the workplace and the acquisition of employable skills. It alludes to intentional efforts to promote learning that would increase productivity in certain spheres of economic activity, such as industries, professions, and particular job duties. Thus, TVET provides people with a wide variety of information, skills, and attitudes that are widely seen as essential for meaningful involvement in work and life, in addition to providing them with vocational and technical abilities. It involves developing the talents that affect a person's effective psychomotor or cognitive domains in preparation for entering the workforce in order to fulfil their intrinsic and extrinsic wants, values, work, and goals so that local and national demands would be addressed.

The National Youth Development Strategy in Nigeria (Undiyaundeye and Otu, 2015) refers to youth as all people between the ages of 18 and 33. Jega (2012) describe youth as a specific category of people with high resilience and zeal for achieving certain goals and purposes. However, the current focus on tertiary education in Nigeria limits the economic opportunities of those who are more interested in work than academia. Not everyone needs a tertiary education, but who would hire them if everyone graduated? Youth empowerment and sustainable development through TVET can be a crucial tool for youth to participate in the labor force and to improve their living conditions and social status. Many of the so-called "expatriate engineers" who are paid enormous sums of money in dollars to build roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of vocational colleges, but Nigeria is not taking this sector seriously. Graduates of vocational and technical institutions are the empowered youths who are highly skilled entrepreneurs. Youth empowerment by TVET education may be a sure means to aid sustainable development if utmost consideration is given to the sector.

The term "youth empowerment" refers to a variety of situations in which a young individual or group of young people acquires authority and control over their own lives in a certain situation. It is one of the several ways in which a young person changes and transforms, going from being one who lacks power or is otherwise disempowered to being one who has gained authority in some way (Aja Accord, 2020).

However, it is not easy to empower and prepare Nigerian youths to prosper in the unstructured and unpredictable character of today's entrepreneurial climate. Nigerian youths encounter several obstacles that can only be overcome by inventive, intelligent, and enterprising people who possess the drive and curiosity to think creatively and the confidence to confront and overcome the obstacles in all parts of life (Aja & Adali, 2013). The Nigerian government, through NGOs and even private-sector benefactors, has recently targeted Nigerian youngsters and devoted significant resources to their entrepreneurship in a number of projects (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2012).

There is more to entrepreneurship than just "creating a business." It is a method through which people seek opportunities, distribute resources, and produce value. Identification of unmet requirements or of change-related

possibilities frequently serves as the catalyst for this value generation. Being an entrepreneur is the act of "undertaking creativity and commercial acumen to translate ideas into economic products. (Riti & Kamah, 2015). Entrepreneurs therefore view "challenges" as "opportunities" and act to find both the problems' remedies and the customers willing to pay to have them fixed. Entrepreneurial success is only a result of one's capacity to spot chances in the market, bring about change (or seize opportunity in it), and generate value via solutions (Sunday & Miriam, 2015). The ability and mindset of an individual or group to engage in business initiatives with the possibility of success or failure is known as entrepreneurship. It necessitates that the person be very inventive as well as be a competent leader and willing to take on some level of risk. The "primary mover" of a successful corporation is considered to be entrepreneurship in business management, much as a leader in any organization must be an environmental change agent. (Riti & Kamah, 2015))

An entrepreneur, according to Kanothi (2009), is "the initiator of entrepreneurial events for so long as they occur." Entrepreneurship is defined by Tijani-Alawiye (2004) as the process of increasing the number of entrepreneurs or the stock of small, medium, and large businesses that are already available to a nation through the creation and promotion of numerous competent entrepreneurs who can successfully nurture and promote their businesses with the aim of achieving broad socio-economic development goals. One of these goals is to sustain employment.

Sustainability is a broad concept that encompasses both sustainable environment and sustainable economic growth, encompassing agricultural, regional, and urban development (Espinosa, Alonso Neira, Huerta de Soto, 2021). Simply said, sustainable development is the growth that is dependable, long-lasting, and steady. In the past, efforts by local and international societies to protect the planet's human component gave rise to sustainable development. It is an update to the United Nations' proclamation of the Millennium Development Goals. The idea of sustainable development makes the assumption that development must first take place before it can be maintained. Although growth is necessary for development, concerns about growth's sustainability have persisted among those involved in development, leading to research and the quest for a new approach to sustainable development (Aja Accord) (2020).

Economic sustainability refers to a manufacturing system that meets current consumption levels without jeopardizing the demands of the future (Ba Siago, 1999). In the past, economists overemphasized the market's ability to distribute resources effectively because they believed the availability of natural resources to be limitless. Additionally, they thought that as economies grew, technology would advance, allowing for the replacement of natural resources used up during manufacturing. However, it is now widely acknowledged that natural resources are finite. The natural resource base has been stretched by the expanding scope of the economic system.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) cites the following objectives of TVET: To provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology, and business, particularly at the craft, advanced craft, and technical levels; To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial, and economic development; To provide training and have an impact on the necessary skills to individuals who shall be economically self-reliant. Although the aforementioned objectives of technical and vocational education are quite admirable, the program's execution has fallen short of expectations. Evidence for this can be found in the country's inability to provide its citizens with the necessities of life, the slow pace of unemployment, the rising unemployment rate, and other factors (Raheem and Ayika, 2019).

The goal of entrepreneurship education is to provide students the information, abilities, and inspiration to support successful entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship requires comparing one's ideas to the world around them. Government can encourage future innovations by concentrating on youth entrepreneurship education. TVET would have been successful in Nigeria if young people began creating technologies that included local resources, employed and trained residents, created goods, and sold them for both domestic and international consumption. Only if entrepreneurial education is incorporated into the TVET curriculum, particularly at the postsecondary institutions. (Vincent, Nsini, and Caleb, 2013)

Need for Achievement theory:In 1961, McClelland advanced this notion. According to the theory, people need connection, strength, success, and performance. Entrepreneurs are motivated to achieve and get better by this goal. People that have a strong drive for success seem to be strongly motivated by situations of difficult and competitive labor. According to him, there is a direct correlation between high expectations for performance and high outcomes in the national population, which is necessary to start and sustain a high rate of economic growth. The high accomplishment is linked to the risk-taking mindset needed to increase a nation's economic capital through entrepreneurship.

Theory of Empowerment: Zimmerman introduced this theory in 1995. According to the theory, empowerment and entrepreneurship development heavily depend on a series of actions that encourage people/youth to engage in

entrepreneurial activities, enhance their decision-making quality, and create situations and opportunities where youths' learning, practice, and skills can be improved (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). The theory goes on to claim that encouraging young people to participate in worthwhile, pro-social, and community-based activities that are organized and operate by young people gives them the chance to develop crucial knowledge, skills, and self-assurance that will make them more independent, healthy, and successful in the future (Reischl, Zimmerman, Morrel-Samuels, Franzen, Faulk, Eisman, & Roberts, 2011)

Exposure Theory of Entrepreneurship:Numerous studies have demonstrated that the key factor in creating a new business is the willingness to consider concepts and opportunities for creativity and innovation. According to this view, innovation and creativity are facilitated by being open to new ideas and resources. Education, cultural values, encouragement, economic factors, the desire for success, religious convictions, and a person's capacity for taking risks all play a role in exposing them to new ideas and possibilities, which in turn fosters innovation and creativity.

Empirical Review

Ekong and Ekong (2016) were interested in how to tackle unemployment problems through skill acquisition in Akwa Ibom State. The study, which utilized descriptive statistics, used survey data and yearly time-series data from 1987 to 2012, and discovered a beneficial relationship between skill development and a decline in unemployment in Akwa Ibom State. The study concluded that more National Directorate of Employment (NDE) training facilities should be distributed throughout the state's local government areas.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the School of Management Studies (SMS), Federal Polytechnic Ilaro. *The total population of the study are* 2022 final year students from the departments running HND programs in the School of Management Studies *amounted to 1091*. Consequently, a quota of forty-one (41) students were allocated to each seven (7) departments comprising the school (SMS). Sample size of 284 students was determined by means of Kercie and Morgan (1970). A survey research design in which a self-administered questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale was used to elicit the necessary information from the respondents was adopted, while secondary data was obtained from the institution's record (Students statistic). *Cronbach Alpha statistic was engaged for reliability test while Content validity and Construct validity (Component factor) analysiss were used for validation of the instrument. Both descriptive statistic (percentage and average) and inferential statistic (multiple regression) were adopted for data analysis with the aid of SPSS version 26.*In the analysis, entrepreneurship education and skills development were proxy for youth employment.

The model for the analysis is specified thus:

SED = f (YE)

YE= f (EE, SD)

SED = ß0 + ß1EE + ß2SD + e_t

Where;

SED =Sustainable Economic Development

YE = Youth Employment

EE = Entrepreneurship Education

SD = Skills Development

e_t = Error Term

ß 0 = Constant

$ß_1$, $ß_2$ = Correlation co-efficient

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 Reliability Statistic

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.896	.900	12

Author's computation 2022

Table 1 revealed a reliability statistic of ά value of 0.896 and this suggest that the measurement instrument is highly reliable.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SED	10.8250	3.22758	280
EE	11.6786	3.08370	280
SD	10.7179	2.76221	280

Author's computation 2022

Table 2 presents a brief description of the data for the study. Sustainable economic development has a mean value of 10.8250 with a standard deviation of 3.22758, entrepreneurship education has a mean value of 11.6786 with a standard deviation of 3.08370, and skill development has a mean value of 10.7179 with a standard deviation of 2.76221. This implies that the likelihood of a spurious regression is much reduced and the sample has a standard deviation of zero since the deviation are not far from the mean score of the data.

Table 3 Correlations

		SED	EE	SD
Pearson Correlation	SED	1.000	.717	.729
	EE	.717	1.000	.605
	SD	.729	.605	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	SED	.	.000	.000
	EE	.	.000	.000
	SD	.000	.000	.
N	SED	280	280	280
	EE	280	280	280
	SD	280	280	280

Author's computation 2022

Table 3 demonstrates the link between the variables. Sustainable economic development correlates with entrepreneurship education at .717, while with skill development at .729. There is a strong positive correlation between sustainable economic development and entrepreneurship education, as well as skill development.

Table 4 Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df
1	.807[a]	.652	.649	1.91104	.652	259.413	2

a. Predictors: (Constant), SD, EE

b. Dependent Variable: SED

Author's computation 2022

The R-square estimations of .652 (R^2 = 0.652) revealed in Table 4 indicated that about 65% of total variation in the dependent variable was accounted for by the youth employment proxy by entrepreneurship education and skill development.

Table 5 ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1894.798	2	947.399	259.413	.000[b]
	Residual	1011.627	277	3.652		
	Total	2906.425	279			

a. Dependent Variable: SED
b. Predictors: (Constant), SD, EE
Author's computation 2022

Table 5 estimates the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The probability value of the F statistic indicates a P-value that is less than 5% [F (2/277 = 259.413); P < 0.05]. This means that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between sustainable economic development and youth employment was rejected at 5% significant level and the alternative hypothesis accepted at 95% confidence interval.

Table 6 Coefficients[a]

		Unstandized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
1	(Constant)	-.331	.503		-.658	.511
	EE	.456	.047	.436	9.795	.000
	SD	.544	.052	.465	10.449	.000

Author's computation 2022

Table 6 measures both the relative effect and joint significance relationship between the variables. Sustainable economic development increases by 0.456 for every unit of increased in entrepreneurship education while sustainable economic development improves by 0.544 for every unit increase in skill development. Based on the p values of the t- statistics which revealed that P < 0.05 for both entrepreneurship education and skill development, the null hypotheses were rejected and it was concluded that there were significant relationships between sustainable economic development and entrepreneurship education as well sustainable economic development and skill development.

Table 7 Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.175	41.167	41.167	6.175	41.167	41.167
2	2.965	19.765	60.932	2.965	19.765	60.932
3	1.365	9.097	70.030	1.365	9.097	70.030
4	1.007	6.714	76.744	1.007	6.714	76.744
5	.792	5.282	82.025			

Author's computation 2022

Table 7 shows a cumulative total variance explained of 77% against the bench mark of 50%. This implies that the research instrument was well loaded, that is the observe variables were well loaded on the latent variables, and can also measure what it intends to measure.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study investigated the relationship between youth employment and sustainable economic development in Nigeria using Federal Polytechnic Ilaro as a study area and established a strong positive significant relationship between youth employment and sustainable economic development. Entrepreneurship education instills the knowledge and

mentality to fearlessly begin in creating and expanding commercial or economic ventures while mindful of the risk they may be bearing, TVET provides the practical skills for entrepreneurship growth. As a result, entrepreneurship education and skill development are two essential elements in increasing the economy since they give students the technical skills and knowledge for self-employment and the professional mentality to manage their own firm after school. It is undeniable that TVET and entrepreneurship will change how business start-up and management are conducted. More and more young entrepreneurs will emerge as a result of this development in TVET and entrepreneurship, contributing to the economic sustainable development of the nation.

On the basis of the study's findings, the following recommendations will pave way for improvement.

Inviting professionals from the business world to give lectures and discuss their personal experiences with students, particularly those in their final year of entrepreneurship education.

Create partnerships between academic institutions and for-profit businesses to collaborate on entrepreneurship training for young development.

In order to decrease the number of underqualified and unqualified lecturers, TVET colleges must introduce entrepreneurship education to produce quality manpower.

Since many students originate from low-income families where parents cannot afford the expense of tertiary or even vocational education, the government should subsidize students who are pursuing entrepreneurial education.

Stakeholders (institutions, the government, and the private sectors) must be included in the establishment of an entrepreneurial curriculum so they may advise the college on the kinds of skills that are in demand on the labor market.

To guarantee that businesses contribute money in the form of bursaries to students who are practicing entrepreneurship, firms and TVET colleges must collaborate.

Additionally, a supportive atmosphere should be established to guarantee industrial production efficiency. In this situation, governments must play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurship as a method of reducing unemployment, creating more job prospects for the jobless youth, and engaging them in productive activities.

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