



## **UTILIZATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES BY STUDENTS FOR SELF-SUSTAINABILITY: THE CASE OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, NEKEDE, OWERRI, IMO STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study was carried out to determine the extent of utilization of entrepreneurship training opportunities by students for self-sustainability. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised four hundred (400) final year Higher National Diploma (HND) students from School of Business and Management Technology (SBMT). systematic sampling technique was adopted to sample 247 HND II students representing 62% of the population. A four Point Likert Rating Scale questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in School of Business and Management Technology and one expert in Technology Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri. Mean and Standard Deviation were the statistical tools used to analyze the data while Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test (CART) was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient value of 0.77 showing that the instrument for the study was reliable. The results of the data indicated amongst others that entrepreneurship training opportunities by HND II students are available and are utilized at high extent. It was therefore concluded that entrepreneurship training opportunities are available at Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri, and the students are interested in utilizing the knowledge and skills acquired when they graduate. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that tertiary institutions should consolidate entrepreneurship training in such a manner that students would develop more positive attitude with good mind-set of becoming entrepreneurs, self-sustained or secure paid employment after graduation. Secondly, Government assistance to graduates in the form of soft loans and good access road are other ways of ensuring that the diverse entrepreneurial skills acquired from school could be put into productive use.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship, Training, Opportunities, Skills, Utilization, Self-Sustainability, paid employment*



## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship training is the education that is aimed at inculcating into students the awareness, skills and attitudes required for creating new small business ventures for self-employment, (Iwuamadi, Ofoegbu & Ajeka, 2017). It focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in different contexts. These behaviours can be practiced, developed, and learned. UNESCO (2008) stated that entrepreneurship education consists of all kinds of experiences that give students ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds into profitable economic ends. This definition sees entrepreneurship training as a means of developing a business ability and vision in an individual. Ability and vision in this case speak of foresight, competencies and acumen for profitability in business.

Furthermore, Entrepreneurship has been recognized as one of the necessary conditions for economic development and empowerment. In Nigeria, entrepreneurship training, amongst other things, seeks to provide graduates with knowledge, skills and attitude required to work and earn a living. According to Ezeonwurie (2017), entrepreneurship is a lifelong learning which is essential to the competitiveness of every knowledge-based economy. Lifelong learning is an ongoing voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons, which enhances not only social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also self-employment and employability (Wikipedia, 2018).

Due to the inability of graduates to secure jobs after graduation and the high rate of unemployment across the nation, it becomes imperative that the students of tertiary institutions acquire entrepreneurial skills in order to become relevant and add value to the nation's economy. Ekpo (2010), in a study carried out by the Federal Ministry of Education from 2005-2010 showed that seventy one percent (71%) of graduates from Nigeria Universities and other forms of tertiary institutions are yet to secure job. Salami (2013) blamed the high rate of university graduate unemployment on lack of collaboration between lecturers and students bearing in mind methods of pedagogy delivery. In a similar development, Nwachukwu (2012) reported that Economic survey in 2011 doted unemployment rate in Nigeria at 23.9%. Put differently, over 38 million Nigerians are unemployed. It is disturbing to acknowledge that a greater number of these percentages are graduates from Nigeria universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.

In order to make Nigerian graduates more resourceful and self-reliant, the Federal Government in 2006 directed Nigeria Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to include Entrepreneurship Education (EE) as a compulsory course for all students with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session, (Aliu, 2008) which led to the inclusion of EE in the curriculum of all universities and other higher education in Nigeria. Westerholm and Takanen-kor Perich (2018) agreed that Entrepreneurship, as well as starting business met with much success in National government policies due to its ability to drive creativity, innovation, competitiveness and growth which are key component in any sovereign country's welfare. Most of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education now have a centre for entrepreneurship education in their respective institutions. This became expedient so that the endemic problem of unemployment facing the nation could be solved. Thus, entrepreneurship education has been made compulsory at the three levels of tertiary education irrespective of students' areas of specialization (Yahaya, 2014). Despite this intervention, unemployment is still devastating.

Scholars in their opinions have supported the need for higher institutions to inculcate entrepreneurial mindsets into their products to make the students self-sustainable after graduation. This statement is in line with Airebanmen (2004), as according to her, self-reliance requires that



people depend first and foremost on their own ingenuity, resourcefulness and natural resources to achieve the material condition for them. Nwanaka and Amaewhule (2011) are of the view that Nigeria's social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if students are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment. To Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), the modern world economy requires innovation, training, reinventing in vocational education and entrepreneurship training that will significantly favor the youths. Dhenak (2010) laments that though there is abundant labor supply yet there is generally scarcity of skills at all levels of socio-economy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is no doubt that joblessness and unemployment continue to grow unabated in Nigeria due to lack of entrepreneurship and vocational skills. Nwangwu (2000) in his view supported entrepreneurship education and argued that graduates with adequate skills and training will be creative and innovative in identifying noble business opportunities. In a similar way, Isiaka in Nwosu (2017) viewed entrepreneurship skills as abilities to develop human capital formation. In his opinion, Isiaka stated that "human capital" includes skills and knowledge; while machines, tools, land improvement, breeding stock and so on constitutes "physical capital". Isiaka went further to state categorically that the coming together of these two is what makes entrepreneurship education an attractive, complete and practical course. This therefore suggests that the provision of physical capital is a necessary ingredient that will enable graduates to start-up businesses on their own, no matter how small, without having to wait for the government to provide them with jobs. This would alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment and societal crimes such as kidnapping, human-trafficking and political thuggery among others which are prevalent in our society today. Entrepreneurship teacher must be seen to be versatile, flexible to be able to come into reality with the ever-changing business environment as to be able to direct the minds of students as is appropriate.

Furthermore, Skills and knowledge are the engines of economic growth and social development of any country. Countries with higher and better levels of knowledge and skills respond more effectively and promptly to challenges and opportunities of globalization. Thus, this study investigated the extent to which students utilize the available entrepreneurship training opportunities, and whether or not these entrepreneurship training opportunities stir up self-sustainability initiatives.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the available entrepreneurship training opportunities provided by the institution for the students?
2. What is the extent of the utilization of each of the available entrepreneurship training opportunities by students?
3. What are the support programs available to the students that would add value to the entrepreneurship training opportunities provided?

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The researcher considered this design appropriate for the study since it intended to collect data from HND II students of School of Business and Management Technology (SBMT), Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri as basis for



generalization. The population of the study comprised 400 students spanning across eight departments in the School of Business and Management Technology which included Office Technology and Management, Accountancy, Cooperative Economics and Management, Business Administration and Management, Marketing, Banking and Finance, Public Administration and Procurement and Supply Chain Management. The researchers chose final year HND students because Entrepreneurship Education courses are seen to be domiciled in the business school. This was to establish the facts of Zunaed (2011) that business education is all embracing, ranging from entrepreneurship education to basic business processes which are among the basic vocational practices. Secondly, the researchers wanted to determine whether business students have interest in the utilization of the entrepreneurship opportunities available to them in the institution. A sample size of 247 (62%) was taken and a well-structured questionnaire titled Utilization of Entrepreneurship Training Opportunities by Students for Self-Sustainability Questionnaire (UETOSSSQ) was administered to this number and collected with the help of three research assistants. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in School of Business and Management Technology (Office Technology and Management (OTM), and Cooperative Economics and Management (CEM)) and one expert in Technology Entrepreneurship Development Centre (TEDC) in Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri. The three experts went through the questionnaire items and made corrections. The corrections were strictly adhered by the researchers.

A 70- item structured questionnaire was used to gather data for the study in this order. 31 items were to find out the availability of the entrepreneurship training opportunities, the same number of items were used to determine the extent of utilization of the available entrepreneurship training opportunities and 8 items were to identify actual support programs provided for the students. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale with response categories as “Very High Extent”, “High Extent”, Low Extent, and “Very Low Extent”. Two hundred and forty-seven (247) copies of questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for data analysis. The research questions were answered using mean ratings and standard deviation. In analyzing the data, 3.50 to 4.0 were regarded as Very High Extent, 2.50 to 3.49 as High Extent, 1.50 to 2.49 as Low Extent, and 0.50 to 1.49 as Very Low Extent. Mean and Standard Deviation were the statistical tools used to analyze the data while Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test (CART) was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient value of 0.77 showing that the instrument for the study was reliable.

## Results

### Research Question 1:

1. What are the entrepreneurship training opportunities available to HND II students of SBMT?

**Table 1: Mean responses on the entrepreneurship training opportunities available to students of SBMT**

S/N	Extent of Utilization of entrepreneurship training opportunities by students	Mean	Deviation	Squared	Remarks
1.	Bead making	2.98	0.37	0.1367	HE
2.	Paint making	3.09	0.51	0.2601	HE
3.	Bar soap production	2.89	0.31	0.0961	HE
4.	Liquid soap production	2.93	0.35	0.1225	HE



5. Perfume/Air freshener	2.92	0.34	0.1156	HE
6. Cake making	2.84	0.26	0.0676	HE
7. Chin Chin production	2.82	0.24	0.0576	HE
8. Burger/Meat pie/Fish pie	2.68	0.10	0.0100	HE
9. Tailoring (Fashion design)	2.72	0.14	0.0196	HE
10. Disinfectant production	2.67	0.09	0.0081	HE
11. Knitting (cardigan/sweater)	2.55	-0.03	0.0009	HE
12. Decoration/Event Management	2.58	0	0	HE
13. Headgear preparation	2.54	-0.04	0.0016	HE
14. Hair dressing	2.58	0	0	HE
15. Barbing	2.81	0.23	0.0529	HE
16. Computer maintenance	2.73	0.15	0.0225	HE
17. Rapping/MC/Music	2.61	0.03	0.0009	HE
18. CCTV/Security Camera installation Network	2.70	0.12	0.0144	HE
19. Fresh fruit production	2.65	0.07	0.0049	HE
20. Bread making	2.52	-0.06	0.0036	HE
21. Tie dye/batik	2.47	-0.11	0.0121	LE
22. Screen printing	2.41	-0.17	0.0289	LE
23. Binding	2.38	-0.20	0.0400	LE
24. Lithography	2.36	-0.22	0.0484	LE
25. Computer networking	2.31	-0.27	0.0729	LE
26. Snailry	2.18	-0.40	0.1600	LE
27. Photography	2.26	-0.32	0.1024	LE
28. Hat making	2.25	-0.33	0.1089	LE
29. Yam and wheat flour production	2.15	-0.43	0.1849	LE
30. Leather work	2.19	-0.39	0.1521	LE
31. Ankara bags/shoe making	<u>2.09</u>	-0.49	<u>0.2401</u>	LE
<b>Mean of Means</b>	<b>2.58</b>		<b>2.1463</b>	

Data in Table 1 indicated the mean ratings of availability of entrepreneurship training opportunities to students. Items No. 1-20 rated as high extent (HE) while items No. 21-31 rated as low extent (LE).

The “mean of means” for availability of entrepreneurship training opportunities by the HND II students of school of business and management technology is 2.58 indicating high extent (HE). This means that entrepreneurship training opportunities by HND II students of business and management technology are available at high extent (HE).

### **Research Question 2**

**What is the extent of utilization of the entrepreneurship training opportunities by students?**



**Table 2: Mean responses on the extent of utilization of entrepreneurship opportunities by students**

S/N	Extent of Utilization of entrepreneurship Training opportunities by students	Mean Deviation	Deviation Squared	Remarks	
32.	Bead making	2.87	0.15	0.0225	HE
33.	Paint making	3.00	0.28	0.0784	HE
34.	Bar soap production	2.95	0.23	0.0529	HE
35.	Liquid soap production	2.98	0.26	0.0676	HE
36.	Perfume/Air freshener	2.80	0.08	0.0064	HE
37.	Cake making	2.92	0.20	0.04	HE
38.	Chin chin production	2.96	0.24	0.0576	HE
39.	Burger/Meat pie/Fish pie	2.77	0.05	0.0025	HE
40.	Tailoring (Fashion design)	2.87	0.15	0.0225	HE
41.	Disinfectant production	2.74	0.02	0.0004	HE
42.	Knitting (cardigan/sweater)	2.62	-0.10	0.01	HE
43.	Decoration/Event Management	2.86	0.14	0.0196	HE
44.	Headgear preparation	2.54	-0.18	0.0324	HE
45.	Hair dressing	2.64	-0.08	0.0064	HE
46.	Barbing	2.79	0.07	0.0049	HE
47.	Computer maintenance	2.54	-0.18	0.0324	HE
48.	Rapping/MC/Music	2.55	-0.17	0.0289	HE
49.	CCTV/Security Camera installation Network	2.56	-0.16	0.0256	HE
50.	Fresh fruit production	2.72	0	0	HE
51.	Bread making	2.58	-0.14	0.0196	HE
52.	Tie dye/batik	2.55	-0.17	0.0289	HE
53.	Screen printing	2.48	-0.24	0.0576	LE
54.	Binding	2.85	0.13	0.0169	HE
55.	Lithography	2.50	-0.22	0.0484	HE
56.	Computer networking	2.46	-0.26	0.0676	LE
57.	Snailry	2.76	0.04	0.0016	HE
58.	Photography	2.69	-0.03	0.0009	HE
59.	Hat making	2.89	0.17	0.0289	HE
60.	Yam and wheat flour production	2.69	-0.03	0.0009	HE
61.	Leather work	2.48	-0.24	0.0576	LE
62.	Ankara bags/shoe making	2.61	0.17	0.0289	HE
	<b>Mean of means</b>	<b>2.72</b>		<b>0.8399</b>	

Data in Table 2 indicated the mean rating of utilization of the entrepreneurship training opportunities by the students. Items 32-52, 54 – 55, 58 – 60 and item 61 rated High Extent while items 53, 56, and



59 Low Extent (LE). The mean of means for table 2 is 2.87 indicating high extent (HE). This means that entrepreneurship training opportunity is utilized by students at high extent in Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri.

### Research Question 3

**What are the support programs available to the students that would add value to the entrepreneurship training opportunities?**

**Table 3: Mean responses of support programs available to students that would add value to the entrepreneurship training opportunities**

S/N	Support programs provided for the students	Mean Deviation	Deviation Squared	Remarks
63.	Institution's tailored program (SIWES)	2.73	0.11 0.0121	HE
64.	Special recognition to student(s) whose projects are outstanding to stimulate self-reliance	2.67	0.05 0.0025	HE
65.	Soft loan scheme to young entrepreneurs	2.69	0.07 0.0049	HE
66.	Proper mentoring relationship between successful entrepreneurs and the students	2.60	-0.02 0.0004	HE
67.	Creating enabling environment free from security threat, good access roads for SME to thrive	2.57	-0.05 0.0025	HE
68.	Removing bureaucracy such as unfair Taxation by the government to encourage young entrepreneurs	2.61	-0.01 0.0001	HE
69.	Public spirited Nigerians, civil society groups, and NGOs support to young entrepreneurs	2.59	-0.03 0.0009	HE
70.	Business plan competition organized by institution, successful entrepreneurs, corporate bodies like Tony Elumelu, Dangote etc.	2.52	-0.10 0.0100	HE
<b>Mean of Means</b>			<b>0.0334</b>	

The result in Table 3 indicated the mean rating of support programs available to the institution, government, and the industries to add value to the entrepreneurship training opportunities by students after graduation. Items 63 to 70 rated as high extent. The means of mean from table 3 is 2.62 indicating high extent. This means that, if the institution, government, and industries support



entrepreneurship training opportunities programs, it would help the students to develop positive attitude with good mind-set of becoming entrepreneurs, self-sustained or secure paid employment thereby providing financial assistance to the students after graduation.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The result of the findings presented in Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed on the availability of the entrepreneurship training opportunities. This is in line with Yahaya (2014), who noted that entrepreneurship development serves as a mandatory program for the three levels of tertiary education irrespective of students' areas of specialization. Students are required to offer entrepreneurship training both as a general course and as compulsory course in their various departments. The aim being to ensure that students on graduation have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to enable them set up their own businesses and run them effectively and successfully. The business students need to be trained to utilize the entrepreneurship training areas provided for them to be empowered to become self-sustainable upon graduation.

Results on Table 2 also agreed on the utilization of the entrepreneurship training opportunities by students. This is in harmony with Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), who were of the opinion that the modern world economy requires innovation, training, and re-invention. Furthermore, graduates of educational institutions must possess self-management, conceptual, critical analytical and life-long skills beyond the basic training that would significantly favour the youths.

Finally, results on Table 3 disclosed that the respondents agreed on all the items as the support programs that if they were provided for the students, it should help to develop the economy of the country. This is supported by Isiaka in Nwosu (2017) on the provision of physical capital that would help the graduates to start up business. Hence, create jobs to the graduates, and make them self-sustaining. The extent to which these support programs especially the financial aspects are made available to graduates is yet uncertain.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the paper concluded that entrepreneurship training opportunities are available at FPNO and the business students are interested in utilizing the knowledge and skills received upon graduation. The study concluded that the need for business lecturers to diversify in the various areas of entrepreneurial skills acquisition will help them to identify the areas of global competitiveness to impact positively on the students. The paper also concluded that the support programs available would also enhance job creation and self-sustainability. If tertiary institutions especially, Polytechnics empower their students by providing them with standard entrepreneurship centres to inculcate entrepreneurship training opportunities in the students outside their core courses/disciplines, unemployment, poverty and other social vices that are presently prevalent in the society would be greatly reduced.

### **Recommendations**

1. Since many graduates are jobless in Nigeria, tertiary institutions should consolidate their entrepreneurship training in such a manner that students would develop positive attitude with good mind-set of becoming entrepreneurs or become self-sustained after graduation.
2. Government should provide enabling environment and map-out policies that would make the soft loans accessible to the young graduates who wish to start up enterprises without much stress.
3. The Polytechnic Management should encourage their students to put more interest in the items that are of high and low extents to bring out the best in their graduates. Management should also invite successful entrepreneurs such as our graduates who have excelled in their



various businesses, Tony Elumelu, Dangote Group of Companies among others to the institutions to share experiences as a way of mentoring and encouraging the students.

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