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IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CASE STUDY OF NIGER STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of entrepreneurial education on women empowerment for national development in Niger state. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Two research objectives and two questions guided the study. Three local government areas were randomly selected from the three senatorial districts of the state. The population for the study was 5,314 with the sample size of 512. It comprised registered women in entrepreneurial education programme and programme facilitaors in Niger state. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the responses to the research questions. The study concludes that adequate provision of entrepreneurial education programmes particularly for women contributes to the national development. It further recommended among others that government should provide entrepreneurial education centres across the communities to enable the women acquire skills that will change their attitudes and assist them to have better income. Also that entrepreneurial education should also be given more priorities among the people to provide the entire citizens with the skill of alleviating the high incidence of poverty which is the major obstacle to national development.

Key Words: Entrepreneurial Education, Impact, Empowerment, National Development, Women

Introduction

Education has remained the most veritable tool for personal and national transformation. This is because education has been the major instrument for national development for many countries of the world. According to Agi and Yellowe

(2013), education is important for the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization and a highway to global knowledge economy. Education could therefore be viewed as a veritable platform for tackling socio-cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological challenges facing many nations of the world.

The goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value reorientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values. In view of the benefits of education enumerated above, Nigeria has provided education for decades with available manpower. However, what keeps agitating the nation endlessly borders on the slow and inefficient economy, near primitive democracy and violent social coexistence in the society (NEEDS, 2014).

Entrepreneurship education refers to the form of education which makes humans to be responsive to their personal, family and national needs and aspirations. Entrepreneurship awareness carries with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of an already existing business (Anho,2014). Entrepreneurship education is essential not only to shape the mindset of young people, but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are central to the development of an entrepreneurial culture. These skills include creative ability, innovativeness, risk taking, managing of ventures and utilizing of available opportunities.

Changes in the economic conditions in the country have necessitated women to awake from slumber by participating actively in Adult education programmes to enable them increase their productivity in money-yielding ventures Education has played an important role in the life of women presently. It is also an instrument for social transformation because it attempts to construct a new society, which will conform to the interests and aspirations of the popular sectors.

As it relate to the psychological factors, some women tend to enroll in Adult education programmes to boost their ego. According to Obetta Omeje and Omeje (2003), the need for self-respect is strong among those people generally classified as common people. These needs also motivate women to participate in Adult literacy education programmes and to work harder. They want to understand the changes that are going on in their society and enjoy freedom to act as socially responsible members of the community.

According to Eyibe (1999), the Nigeria women still lag behind their counterparts in several parts of the world in the area of education of women in the country as can be seen in the various functional literacy programmes that have been designed to provide them with courses in family health, food and nutrition, child care, domestic science and basic education. It can therefore be seen that a lot of Adult education programmes have enabled the women to advance educationally, socially, politically, psychologically and economically.

The empowerment of women is a long-term process that requires changes in the behavior and attitudes of women and men in the ideology of sets of ideas that society holds about gender. In the specific case of women empowerment, Enemuo (2001), stated that empowerment entails improvement in the political, economic and social conditions. This would include the

dismantling of the cultural norms and traditional practices that devalued, disempowered, and dispossessed women.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education according to Azubuike (2010), is conceptualized as a type of education that deals with acquisition of skills and ideas which transform an individual into being self-reliant through self-employment. It prepares people especially youths to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute meaningfully to economic development and sustainable national security. Osakwe (2011) viewed entrepreneurship education as the development of personal skills and qualities that enable the individual gain knowledge and understanding of the way in which the economy works and react to market forces. This, according to the author involves ways and methods in the development of creativity, problem-solving, taking calculated risks, time management, communication skill, leadership skills among others which can lead to improved employment prospect.

Entrepreneurship education means a formal training to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which can direct human and material resources towards business objectives for self-reliance. It is aimed at helping the students acquire necessary skills which can help them become self-reliant citizens and problem solvers in their environment (Ubah, 2012). Entrepreneurship education is also seen by Ezeani (2012) as teaching students, learners and would be business men the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees. Fashola (2006) added that, entrepreneurship education creates the willingness and ability in the person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

From the above definitions, it could be inferred that entrepreneurship education is that type of education that equips the students with entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, abilities and competences as well as the means of livelihood in the face of unemployment. It emphasis on the starting of new business venture and tends to draw the interest of students who want the opportunity to operate their own businesses, make their wealth and live a successful life.

According to Ebele (2008), entrepreneurship education is the teaching of knowledge and a skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their business. Okon and Firday (2015) asserted that entrepreneurship education aims to stimulate creativity in students, enables them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivates them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context. Entrepreneurship education should be available to all college students regardless of major courses and choice of studies to enhance competitive advantage, not only for students but for the societies and nations where they are involved.

National Development

National development means the ability of a nation to improve the lives of its citizens. The measures of improvement may be material, such as an increase in the gross domestic product,

or social such as literacy rates and availability of healthcare. National development according to Longman dictionary of contemporary English refers to a phenomenon that embraces a whole nation. National development can therefore be described as the overall development or a collective socioeconomic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country's collection of strategies mapped out by the government.

Objective of Entrepreneurship Education to National Development

Entrepreneurship education and training began to engage the attention of researchers, government institutions and agencies and intervention strategies for tackling many of the constraints in the national developmental efforts. Entrepreneurship education entails the philosophy of self-reliance which includes creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attributes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Arogondade, 2011).

The objectives of entrepreneurship education as identified by Ojeifo (2012) include;

i. To offer functional education for youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
ii. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
iii. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
iv. Offer tertiary institution graduates training in risk management, to make certain risk bearing feasible.
v. To reduce rule of poverty.
vi. Create employment generation.
vii. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
viii. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
ix. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youth and adult which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark upon.
x. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.
xi. Ubah (2012) has also highlighted the following as the objectives of entrepreneurship education.
    1. Empowerment of economic growth for the individual and the notion.
    2. Poverty alleviation.
    3. The solving of the problems of youth restiveness, customs, armed robbery, vandalization of oil pipelines among others.
    4. Reducing the issue of kidnapping and loss of life and property.
    5. Minimizing human trafficking and prostitution.
    6. The reduction of level of unemployment, and
    7. The increase of income per capital.

In agreement with the above objectives, Akanbi (2002) stated that with a comprehensive entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, poverty will be eliminated, sustainable growth of the

economy will be assured, and the development of many people cannot be contested. Osakwe (2011) noted that the rationale for establishing entrepreneurship education in higher institutions stems from the fact that most of the tertiary institutions' graduates (graduates of business management inclusive) are not self-employed due to the fact that, while many are very risk aversive, some do not possess the knowledge, the skills and experiences to become entrepreneurs and others lack creativity, innovation, ideas and are negative thinkers. Entrepreneurship education therefore prepares and equips people to be responsible and enterprising individuals capable of deep entrepreneurial thinking that contribute to economic and sustainable development.

Roles of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education plays significant roles. Some of these roles as identified by Okon and Firday (2015, p.17) include:

1. Entrepreneurship education can positively impact on learner at all levels in awider number of contexts. This may explain why there are such a wide entrepreneurship education programmes, all of which can provide important outcomes at various stages of learner's life.
2. Entrepreneurship education is a key driver to economy wealth and a high majority of jobs created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. Thus, it would make learners to be relevant in today's economy.
3. Entrepreneurship education equips people with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and foresight or promoting high level technology. Entrepreneurship activities are a real-life vehicle for developing academic skills, hence, trained entrepreneurs are always empowered to tap from local resources in their immediate environment. This is a phenomenon that has been demonstrated in China, Japan, India and other emerging economies of the world.
4. Entrepreneurship education inculcates in learners the mentality of hard work, one of the keys to unlock poverty doors in developing areas. Entrepreneurs are trained to work hard to be able to run business profitably and successfully.
5. Entrepreneurship education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their own development in meeting the challenges and solving the problem faced in today's world and in the new millennium.
6. Entrepreneurship education develops good support skills including commenting, decision making, interpersonal abilities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing, managerial, and financial skills.
7. Entrepreneurship education also provides individuals with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative relevance to skills acquisition which encourages self-employment and self-reliance.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigerian society in recent times, most women are denied the opportunity of being educated due to some negative factors such as culture, religion, sex, poverty, ignorance, discrimination among others. Empowering women with education will eliminate these inhibiting factors.

When a woman is professionally empowered, she will make use of her endowment in a positive way and being a master in her profession, she will not be deprived to practice, so as to benefit the nation.

However, the present low status of majority of Nigerian women cannot be neglected. This is because the major objective of entrepreneurial education programme in Nigeria is to empower the Nigerian citizens. The achievement of the objectives of entrepreneurial education programme cannot be effective without empowering the high women population in Nigeria. This can be realized through their involvement in entrepreneurial education programme.

In Niger State, the task of providing entrepreneurial education Programme to its populace, especially the women folk are in progress. This is in realization of enormous role women play in national development. The objective of the programme was aimed at achieving social, economic and political emancipation and the empowerment of women folk. It is therefore a fact that the process of entrepreneurial education programme cannot be sustained without the participants particularly the women being adequately being informed on the contribution entrepreneurial education has towards their empowerment. Therefore the study aims to investigate the contribution of entrepreneurial education towards empowerment of women for national development in Niger State.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the impact of creative abilities on job creation for national development among the women of Niger State
2. To examine the impact of risk taking abilities on investment continuity for national development among the women of Niger State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the impact of creative ability on job creation for national development among the women of Niger State?
2. What is the impact of risk taking ability on investment continuity for national development among the women of Niger State?

Objectives of Entrepreneurial Education Programme for Women

1. The objectives are as follows:- Long-Range objective which should be that of getting women to take advantage of new opportunities that would lead to productive profitable lives in the rural and urban areas.
2. Long –Term objective is to increase women's participation in development programmes and the implementation of vocational education by evaluating and strengthening existing programmes that reach women in various places.
3. Short-Term objective, this includes the following
   i. To develop criteria for planning, evaluating and coordinating rural programmes in relation to expansion of women's participation in development efforts as related to social and family problems and development goals of Nigeria.

ii. To device ways of strengthening existing programme, vocational improvement of women education in Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design for the study was descriptive survey research and the study was Niger state.

The population of the study was five thousand three hundred and fourteen (5,314). (5, 215 registered women and 99 facilitators) in entrepreneurial education programmes in Niger state. The sample size was five hundred and seventy-two (572), (512 women, and 60 facilitators) across three (3) local governments that were randomly selected across the state, one local government from each of the three geo-political zones of the state. The sampled local governments included: Zone 'A' Lapai, Zone 'B' Paikoro and zone 'C' Wushishi through the use of simple random sampling technique. Researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "The Impact of Entrepreneurial Education on Women Empowerment" containing eight (8) items was used for the study. The researcher administered the questionnaire to respondents with the support of three research assistants**.** Mean statistic was used to answer research questions.

Results

Impact of creative ability on job creation for national development among the women of Niger State

Table 1: Responses on the impact of creative ability on job creation

Items	Registered		Facilitators		Decision
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. Creative abilities bring about availability of goods and services	**3.62**	**1.90**	**3.54**	**1.88**	**Agree**
2. Creative abilities encourage establishment of more industries	**3.64**	**1.90**	**3.50**	**1.87**	**Agree**
3. Creative abilities encourage processing of local resources	**3.42**	**1.85**	**3.58**	**1.89**	**Agree**
4. Creative abilities encourage the creation of new market	**3.52**	**1.87**	**3.44**	**1.85**	**Agree**
Overall	**3.55**	**1.88**	**3.51**	**1.87**	**Agree**
Grand mean	**3.53**				**Agree**

Item one in the table had the mean of 3.62 with standard deviation of 1.90 for registered women while mean 3.54 with standard deviation of 1.88 was recorded for facilitators. Item two in the table had the mean of 3.64 with standard deviation of 1.90 for registered women while facilitators had the mean of 3.50 with standard deviation of 1.87. Item three in the table

had the mean of 3.42 with standard deviation of 1.85 for registered women while mean 3.58 with standard deviation of 1.89 was recorded for facilitators. Item four had the mean of 3.52 with standard deviation of 1.87 for registered women while mean 3.44 with standard deviation of 1.85 was recorded for facilitators. The overall mean for registered women was 3.55 with standard deviation of 1.88 while mean 3.51 with standard deviation of 1.87 was recorded for facilitators. The grand mean for the items under this research question was 3.53. This implied that creative ability has impact on job creation for national development among the women of Niger State.

Impact t of risk taking ability on investment continuity for national development among the women of Niger State

Table 2: Responses on the impact of risk taking ability on investment continuity

Items	Educated		Uneducated		Decision
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
5. Risk taking abilities encourage women participation in business	**3.64**	**1.90**	**3.62**	**1.90**	**Agree**
6. Risk taking abilities makes women manage their business properly	**3.56**	**1.88**	**3.63**	**1.90**	**Agree**
7. Risk taking abilities encourage proper utilization of business resources	**3.46**	**1.86**	**3.55**	**1.88**	**Agree**
8. Risk taking abilities encourage more investment	**3.50**	**1.87**	**3.60**	**1.89**	**Agree**
Overall	**3.54**	**1.87**	**3.60**	**1.89**	**Agree**
Grand Mean	**3.57**				**Agree**

Item five in the table had the mean of 3.64 with standard deviation of 1.90 for registered women while facilitators had the mean of 3.62 with standard deviation of 1.90. Item six in the table had the mean of 3.56 with standard deviation of 1.88 for registered women while facilitators had the mean of 3.63 with standard deviation of 1.90. Item seven had the mean of 3.46 with standard deviation of 1.86 for registered women while facilitators had the mean of 3.55 with standard deviation of 1.88. Item eight had the mean of 3.50 with standard deviation of 1.87 for registered women while mean 3.60 with standard deviation of 1.89 was recorded for facilitators. The overall mean for registered women was 3.54 with standard deviation of 1.87 while facilitators had the mean of 3.60 with standard deviation of 1.89. The grand mean for the items under this research question was 3.57. This implied that risk taking ability has impact on investment continuity among the women of Niger State.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study based on the responses to the research questions showed that:

1. Creative ability has impact on job creation among the women of Niger State.
2. Risk taking ability has impact on investment continuity among the women of Niger State

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that creative ability has impact on job creation among women in Niger State. This was in line with the view of Swarland (2008) in Okon and Firday (2015) who asserted that entrepreneurship education aims to stimulate creativity in students, enables them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivates them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context.

The findings of the study also revealed that, risk taking abilities has impact on investment continuity among women in Niger state, and which was in line with the view of Fashola (2006) added that, entrepreneurship education creates the willingness and ability in the person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

Conclusion

Adequate provision of entrepreneurial education programmes particularly for women contributes to the national development. Entrepreneurial education is considered a tool for empowering the women at all levels. This educational programme is usually provided by government or non-governmental bodies. Proper execution of entrepreneurial education programmes contributes immensely in boosting the economic sector of the nation. This because would be encouraged citizens to exercise their potentials in their daily businesses

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should provide entrepreneurial education centres across the communities to enable the women acquire skills that will change their attitudes and assist them to have better income.
2. Women should be provided with the entrepreneurial materials so as to enable them practice what they have learnt in order to enable them utilise the skills and acquired.
3. Entrepreneurial education should also be given more priorities among the people to provide the entire citizens with the skill of alleviating the high incidence of poverty which is the major obstacle to national development.
4. Entrepreneurial education programmes be made compulsory in all levels of school as part of their learning task.

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