

The Nexus between Entrepreneurship Education and Socio-economic Development of Enugu State Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract--- Entrepreneurship Education has both social and economic benefits. It produces knowledge that enables individuals to identify problems and find creative solutions. Similarly, it highlights the importance of having better livelihood, participating in societal issues, and gives sound meaning to the socio-economic development of the society. In this study, we examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development of Enugu State in the midst of covid-19 pandemic. The study used a quantitative research approach, whereby a sample of 115 marketing and economics students was drawn from the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. To select the school, simple random sampling was used while purposive sampling technique was used to reach the respondents. A structured questionnaire formed the instrument for data collection. Findings confirmed that entrepreneurship education is apt for the socio-economic development of Enugu State. Also, results showed that the covid-19 pandemic has devastating effects on the socio-economic development of Enugu State. Based on these findings therefore, it is recommended that in as much as tertiary institutions have adopted entrepreneurship education in their curriculum, there is urgent need to integrate such at all levels of education. The study also calls for the government to nurture the learning environment by providing working digital technologies that will help to incorporate more creativity and innovation into entrepreneurship education in this COVID-19 pandemic period.

Keywords--- Covid-19 Pandemic, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Livelihood, Socio-Economic Development.

I. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the novel pandemic COVID-19 has caused serious health and socio-economic development hazards that the global world, including Nigeria has faced in the past 100 years (International Labour Organization & World Bank, 2021). The first place that COVID-19 was discovered was in Wuhan China in 2019 as an infectious upper respiratory disease and since then spread worldwide presenting among others, high socio-economic costs (UNCTDA, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March 2020 declared this contagious disease a pandemic and by then, over 118,000 cases of Covid-19 illness have spread to more 110 countries and territories of the world and there is still great and continued risk of spreading further in the various parts of the world (Durchame, 2020). As this study is going on, there have been 226,844,344 confirmed cases of corona-virus infection globally, 4,666,334 deaths while 5,634,533,040 have been administered vaccine doses (WHO, 2021). Nigeria has a total of 201,630 confirmed cases, 2,654 deaths and 190,288 recovered cases (Worldometer, 2021). It has been indicated that Enugu State has 2,675 confirmed cases, 112 infected patients on admission, 2,534 discharged cases and 29 deaths (NCDC, 2021).

The spread of Covid-19 made much demands on the government and other parastatals to seek for alternative ways and to look for adequate safety measures to reduce the spread of the virus (WHO, 2020). The governments of various countries instituted lock down, movement or travel restrictions to and from various areas, and school closure. Further still, large event organizers, sports events and

corporations also took an array of safety measures which included travel restrictions, cancellation of events of all forms, work from home mandates, and holding events or occasions with few number of individuals or even without any audience (Zraick & Garcia, 2020). For the fact that Nigeria and some other African countries are densely populated, have weak health facilities, have an increased poverty rate, low socio-economic conditions, poor social protection system, poor access to water and sanitation, poor educational technologies and poor living space necessary to maintain physical distancing, they were hit hard by the wobbly situation caused by Covid-19 (Rascal et al, 2021). High rate of unemployment and the problem of under –employment are also tragic effects of covid-19 in almost all the countries affected by the virus, Nigeria inclusive. According to National Bureau de Statistics, Nigerian unemployment hit 33.3% in 2020 which was highest ever in the history of unemployment in Nigeria. This means that about 23.18 million Nigerians were jobless in the year 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Based on the above statement, entrepreneurship education can be acknowledged as one of the main spheres of influence in developing and advancing the national economy through rebuilding a better and more flexible labor market and creating adequate job opportunities. One can refer to entrepreneurship education as one of the major ways of imparting entrepreneurial skills and knowledge in a learner. This will enable the learner handle the complexities associated with being an entrepreneur or owner of a business at the end of the learning period. This type of learning or training is to give the learner the opportunity to acquire the required skills that will help him or her to be independent at the end of the learning process (Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabi, 2012). It is obvious that entrepreneurship education can provide adequate opportunities for students in this COVID-19 pandemic era. This is because students can develop a more spirited educational environment which is thought to be as an essential way to reinforce the efficiency of any nation, business enterprise or any establishment (Winkler & Liguori, 2020). The notable challenge however, is highlighting the differences found in entrepreneurship education in higher institutions that rely on thorough and practical training, for learning requirements towards changes that are based on the digital transformation for socio-economic development (Ratten, 2020; Ratten & Jones, 2021). Hence, there lies a powerful link between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development of every country.

II. Problem Statement

Covid-19 has interrupted our livelihood and socio-economic development with serious consequences for our daily lives including labour market and education system. Covid-19 pandemic which began as a health emergency with severe pain on populations has created economic and fiscal crisis with a high risk of negative social-economic implications. This is worsened by high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment and economic-depression which affect the livelihood of Nigerian citizens. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been escalating especially at the trying period of Covid-19 pandemic and its rate was 33.3% in 2020 according to Bureau of Statistics (2021) as we have seen earlier. Therefore, the need for entrepreneurship education could be very necessary for socio-economic development. It seems that entrepreneurship education has been initiated in Nigeria education sector, but the impact has not been felt much in the society. Based on the above backdrop, therefore, there is need to investigate the nexus between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development in Enugu State.

Scholars have similarly pondered deeply on how to contain the challenges fronted to the society by the present COVID-19 pandemic and advance the socio-economic development of the society (see for instance, Ratten, 2020; Rauf, Wijaya & Tari, 2020; Ratten & Jones; Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). These studies are important for identifying the challenges posed by COVID-19 era and their way out. They are appreciated for suggesting dire need for distribution of palliatives, building modern infrastructures and etcetera. However, there is little or no in-depth research on the nexus between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development of Enugu State in the midst of covid-19 era. This paper therefore fills the gap by taking onerous approach in understanding how the socio-economic development of Enugu State can be achieved within the present covid-19 pandemic.

III. Literature Review: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Socio-Economic Development

Entrepreneurship education means many things to different people. Gautam and Singh, (2015) see entrepreneurship education as the method of application of knowledge, attitude, skills and competencies

in a professional way, which is something more than teaching students how to become independent business owners or entrepreneurs. Rather, this is simply about creating and fostering a learning environment which supports entrepreneurial traits and behaviours, such as becoming ingenious and autonomous thinker, risk taker, taking up responsibility, and valuing diversity. For Usman (2012), entrepreneurship education is the process of recognizing, developing and making a vision feasible. The vision in question may be an innovative idea, an opportunity, or basically a better way of achieving one's aims and objectives. The end result of this process nevertheless, is the formation of a new venture, formed under conditions of risk and significant uncertainty. Borrowing from Wilson (2009), entrepreneurship education is the overall development of activities, behaviours and skills that can be used during a person's career as an entrepreneur or business investor. Paul (2005) in his description of entrepreneurship education states that it has been designed to achieve such objectives as offering wholistic and well-designed education that will enable the youth to be independent, industrious and self-contained; provide sufficient training to the undergraduates and graduates that will enable them to be responsible, creative and self-sufficient as well as being inventive in identifying and classifying new business ventures; to serve as a medium for economic progress and advancement; recommend adequate training in risk management to higher institution graduates; to suppress high rate of poverty; generate jobs especially in the private sector; have a drastic reduction in the urban and rural migration; provision of adequate training and support to the young graduates that will help them establish their own small scale businesses; to create smooth movement from ancient to modern industrial way of business by inculcating in the youth and adults the spirit of perseverance. Nzegebulem and Odionye (2016) confirmed that entrepreneurship education is the training given to a learner in different areas of specialization so as to enable them identify business opportunities for the purpose of self-sufficiency. Furthermore, after the training, the graduates of the various programmes must have acquired some entrepreneurial skills that would enable them to be responsible, self employed as well as offer job opportunities to the youth, and be employers of labour in the society.

The above descriptions and definitions of entrepreneurship education buttress the fact that it is an incorporated and structural learning and skill acquisition opportunities which gears towards how individuals can struggle and become successful entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education is also seen as learning attributes channeled towards inculcating in young people those useful skills, competences, understanding and attributes which equip them to be innovative and creative, to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal and community businesses, as well as job opportunities including working for themselves and the society at large (Adenipekun, 2004).

In furtherance, entrepreneurship education could be promoted through adequate research and technical assistance programme. When there is a high quality research on diversify issues which are common with the performances of entrepreneurs, small and large businesses, it will be a huge support to entrepreneurship development in any nation. More importantly, this is a fact if entrepreneurship education is to attain an equivalent stand with other disciplines within the institutions of higher learning. We can equally promote entrepreneurship education through in-service training and other kinds of training. This is because skills acquisition cannot be depended only upon an individual's fundamental natural competences, but it has to be developed through experience, continuous training and practice. To equip individuals with entrepreneurial skills is one of the major objectives of entrepreneurship education, and so, the in-service training for entrepreneurship education is in a better position to provide apprentices and workers with necessary education tools and training that would enable them engage themselves directly in the entrepreneurial activities (Ewelum, Madu & Ogadi, 2014). For Martlay (2008), Entrepreneurship education is encouraged in colleges and universities in different countries in an attempt to solve practical problems such as unemployment, and also to meet the need of economic restructuring or changing dynamics of economic growth. Further still, youth unemployment in different nations especially countries of Africa harmfully impacts the economy. The fruitless and ineffective labour force in Africa lead to poor output when it comes to the production of goods and services. More still, all the nations with many unemployed youths have insufficient income tax base and lose returns from direct taxes constantly (Bellemare & Poulin-Simon, 1994).

According to Baliyan and Baliyan (2018), entrepreneurs are referred to as owners or creators of new businesses, small, growing and successful businesses. They are individuals who set up small businesses, or change from being employees of organizations to become self-employed. They are seen as most common characteristics of socio-economic development, progress and growth because they

bring a lot of changes in the current economic setup and as well as organizing and regulating the areas of socio-economic development.

In human society, development is seen as a many sided process (Rodney, 2009). The term development can be defined in various and unique ways by different people and disciplines. Development could be seen as the establishment of stable democratic regimes, possible only if certain prerequisites of democracy are met (Russett & Starr, 1996). Defining development using economic terms,

“it has traditionally meant the capacity of national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP)... and also the use of income per capita to measure the overall economic well-being of a population - how much of real goods and services is available to the average citizen for consumption and investment” (Todaro, 1994).

Furthermore, the term development is understood as a social condition within a nation, whereby the genuine needs of its population are satisfied. It includes the condition by which the people have access to basic services such as education, housing, health services, and nutrition, and above all else, that their cultures and traditions are not boycotted but are respected within the social structure of a given nation (Reyes, 2001).

Socio-economic development refers to the process of social and economic transformation in a given society. It is the product of development (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). Some indicators like Gross National Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy level, employment rate, investment rate, and production level among others are some of the indicators used to measure socio-economic development of a country. Other factors such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm, and the extent of participation in civil society are also counted as indicators of socio-economic development of a nation (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 1974; Ewetan, 2013). Socio-economic development is the totality of the welfare of individuals, thus the communal progress of man together with his economic wellbeing which actually defined a developed man (UNEP, 1974).

The need for entrepreneurship education is as a result of ever-increasing unemployment and underemployment mostly in the developing countries. More still, many unemployed graduates remain redundant in the society because they lack the required skills to engage themselves in entrepreneurial activities and eventually become nuisance in the society instead of contributing economically to the growth and development of the society in which they live, and also contributing to their social well being (Panigrahi & Joshi, 2016). A remarkable relationship exists between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development in the sense that awareness about entrepreneurship through education will enable students to learn skills that will help them equip themselves in the future as well as contributing positively to the economy especially in this era of covid-19 pandemic.

IV. Methodology

Design of the Study

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. This design is most appropriate for this study because it collected data and described it in a sequential and systematic manner of the attributes of a specific population.

Participants and Procedures

500 marketing and economics students of the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu were the population of the study. Alien Taro Yamane (1967) method of sample size determination was used, with a 95% confidence level and level of maximum variability ($P = 0.07$), a sample of 145 was computed—out of which—115 respondents were used after data collation, gleaning, cleansing and analysis.

Data Collection and Procedures

The researcher adopted quantitative approach in data collection in this study. Structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, which was administered by the researcher and one research assistant. The research assistant was an undergraduate student in the Department of Sociology and

Anthropology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, who has fair knowledge and skills required for Social Sciences researches. The research assistant was educated on the aims of the research, especially issues concerning COVID-19 pandemic and entrepreneurship education. The participants were well informed and their consent was obtained. In addition, participation in the research was risk-free, anonymous, voluntary and confidential. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 145, out of which 115 were returned. A total number of 19 questionnaires were not properly completed and therefore, were rejected while 11 of the questionnaires were not returned. In all, we had a total of 115 copies of questionnaires for analysis.

Data Analysis

International Business Machine (IBM) Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to perform the quantitative data analysis. The results of IBM SPSS were further analyzed, interpreted and organized using tables and frequencies.

V. Results

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Socio-economic development of Enugu State amidst covid-19 Pandemic

Entrepreneurship Education and socio-economic development of Enugu State	SD	D	A	SA
1. Entrepreneurship education introduces innovative technologies, products and services	0(0%)	2(1.7%)	50(43.5%)	62(53.9%)
2. Entrepreneurship education teaches students practical skills that will enable them become independent	0(0%)	7(6.1%)	39(33.9%)	74(64.3%)
3. Entrepreneurship education helps individuals to economically contribute to the nation and the state	0(0%)	7(6.1%)	40(34.8%)	68(59.1%)
4. Entrepreneurship education helps individuals to acquire knowledge on how to help the society and promote healthy livelihood	1(0.9%)	10(8.7%)	41(35.7)	63(54.8%)
5. Entrepreneurship education helps to reduce high rate of poverty	1(0.9%)	2(1.7%)	3(46.0%)	66(57.4%)
6. Entrepreneurship is the engine of socio-economic development	5(4.3%)	6(5.2%)	44(38.3%)	60(52.2%)

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 1 shows the degree of agreement/disagreement of respondents on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and socio-economic development of Enugu State. The above result shows that 1.7% of respondents disagreed that entrepreneurship education introduces innovative technologies, 43.5% agreed on that, while 53.9% strongly agreed to the idea. Also, 6.1% disagreed that entrepreneurship education teaches students practical skills that will enable them to be independent, 33.9% agreed to the idea while 64.3% strongly agreed to that. Again, 6.1% of the respondents disagreed that entrepreneurship education helps individuals to economically contribute to the nation and the state, 34.8% agreed to the idea while 59.1% strongly agreed to the idea. The result also shows that 0.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that entrepreneurship education helps individuals to acquire knowledge on how to help the society, 8.7% disagreed to that, 35.7% agreed to the idea while the majority, 54.8% strongly agreed to the idea. More still, 0.9% strongly disagreed that entrepreneurship education helps to reduce high rate of poverty, 1.7% disagreed to that; 46% agreed to that while 57.4% strongly agreed to the idea. Furthermore, 4.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed that entrepreneurship is the engine of socio-economic development, 5.2% disagreed to that; 38.3% agreed to the idea while majority, 52.2% strongly agreed to the idea.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents on the Effects of Covid-19 on Socio-economic wellbeing and development of Enugu State

Effects of Covid-19 on Socio-economic wellbeing and development of Enugu State	SD	D	A	SA
1. The decline in oil prices in Nigeria due to covid-19 affects socio-economic development of Enugu State	11(9.6%)	21(18.3%)	53(46.1%)	30(26.1%)
2. Reduction in salary and disengagement from work as a result of covid-19	13(11.3%)	13(11.3%)	57(49.6%)	32(27.8%)
3. It worsened poverty level in Enugu State	13(11.3%)	14(12.2%)	49(42.6%)	39(33.9%)
4. There are persistent hunger and high rate of crime	3(2.6%)	6(5.2%)	56(48.7%)	50(43.5%)
5. Increase in corruption in all sectors of economy	5(4.3%)	5(4.3%)	51(44.3%)	54(47.0%)

Source: Field work, 2021

Responses on the Table 2 show that 9.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the decline in oil prices in Nigeria due to covid-19 affects socio-economic development of Enugu State; 18.3% disagreed to that; 46.1% agreed to the idea while 26.1% of the respondents strongly agreed to the idea. Again, 11.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that high rate of unemployment and underemployment was as a result of covid-19; 49.6% of the respondents agreed to the idea while 27.8% strongly agreed to the idea. Also, the table indicated that 11.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed that covid-19 worsened the poverty level in Enugu State; 12.2% disagreed to that; 42.6% agreed to the idea while 33.9% strongly agreed to the idea. The table also indicated that 2.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that there are persistent hunger and high rate of crime; 5.2% disagreed; 48.7% agreed to that while 43.5% strongly agreed to that. Again, 4.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that there was increase in corruption in all sectors of economy; 44.3% agreed to the idea while 47% strongly agreed to the idea.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents on how Entrepreneurship education could be improved in covid-19 era in order to enhance socio-economic development of Enugu State.

How Entrepreneurship education could be improved in covid-19 era in order to enhance socio-economic development and better livelihood?	SD	D	A	SA
1. The government needs to invest on entrepreneurship education programs in times of crisis	7(6.1%)	5(4.3%)	51(44.3%)	52(45.2%)
2. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated in school and university curriculum at all levels	0(0%)	7(6.1%)	55(47.8%)	53(46.1%)
3. Entrepreneurship education programme should be made accessible to more people	0(0%)	1(0.9%)	52(45.2%)	62(53.9%)
4. Government should support entrepreneurship that can bring increase in socio-economic growth	0(0%)	1(0.9%)	58(50.4%)	56(48.7%)
5. Government should provide working digital technologies in schools	3(2.6%)	4(3.5%)	51(44.3%)	57(49.6%)

Source: Field work, 2021

Table 3 above shows that 6.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that government needs to invest on entrepreneurship education programs in times of crisis; 4.3% disagreed to the idea, 44.3% agreed while majority, 45.2% strongly agreed to the idea. Again, 6.1% disagreed that entrepreneurship education should be integrated in school and university curriculum at all levels; majority, 47.8% agreed to the idea while 46.1% strongly agreed to the idea. The table also indicated that 0.9% of the respondents disagreed that entrepreneurship education should be made accessible to more people; majority, 45.2% agreed to the idea while majority, 53.9% strongly agreed to the idea. Again, 0.9% disagreed that government should support entrepreneurship that can bring increase in socio-economic development; majority 50.4% agreed to the idea while 48.7% strongly agreed to the idea. Also, 2.6% of the respondents

strongly disagreed that government should provide working digital technologies in the schools; 3.5% disagreed to the idea; 44.3% agreed to that while majority, 49.6% of the respondents strongly agreed to the idea.

VI. Discussion of the Findings

In an actual sense, entrepreneurship education plays an important function in the socio-economic development of any given country. Findings from the present study revealed that entrepreneurship education helps to reduce high poverty rate as indicated in Table 1. This finding is in line with the findings of Habib, Aamir and Ullah (2020) that entrepreneurship education easily influences students' entrepreneurial attitude by enhancing their competencies and skills that will eventually result in creation and development of small and medium businesses leading to eradicating high poverty through generation of business and job opportunities, better social welfare and economic growth within any country. The study also revealed that entrepreneurship education introduces innovative technologies, products and services and this confirms the findings of previous research by Ajdoulina, El Baz and Jebli (2020) who found out that innovation plays a major role for entrepreneurs. The findings also showed that entrepreneurship education teaches students practical skills that will enable them become independent, helps individuals to economically contribute to the nation as well as helps individuals to acquire knowledge on how to improve their livelihood, which confirms the findings of Afolabi, Kareem and Okubanjo (2017) who revealed that entrepreneurship education is a good policy and it has positive effect on self-employment initiatives, and entrepreneurship education has influenced students' interest in entrepreneurial activities and building their choice of business. The study also found that entrepreneurship is the engine for socio-economic development. This is in conformity with the findings of Zvacahera, Chigora and Roselyn (2018) who revealed that entrepreneurs certainly, create wealth and job opportunities for the majority of people of Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the authors noted that through payment of taxes to the government and creating employment in comparison to mere branding of the country, that entrepreneurship is a contributing factor to economic growth and development.

On Table 2, majority of the respondents indicated that there was reduction in salary and disengagement from work as a result of covid-19. This confirmed the research by Djoumessi (2021) who revealed that workers in Cameroun suffered temporary suspension from their jobs a wage cut during covid-19 era. The findings also revealed that covid-19 worsened poverty level in Enugu State. This is in line with the findings of Bukari et al, (2021) who argued that in Ghana, covid-19 had significantly increased the poverty levels of households in the country while worsening standard of living of the Ghanaians. The findings as well revealed that decline in oil prices in Nigeria due to covid-19 pandemic affects socio-economic development of Enugu State. And that covid-19 pandemic causes persistent hunger, high rate of crime and increase in corruption in all sectors of the economy.

Findings from Table 3 revealed that entrepreneurship education should be accessible to more people as well as integrated into higher institutions at all levels. Further still, the government should invest on entrepreneurship education programme. These are line with the recommendations from the findings of Igomu, Elaigwu, Apochi, Igomu and Ajah (2018) who recommended that for the immediate improvement and overall performance of Benue State, entrepreneurship education should be given the necessary attention and support by all the institutions in the area. They further recommended that the state and nation should assist tertiary institutions in deepening entrepreneurship education with the needed curricula, practical skills, and teaching methods that will result in national competitiveness, development and growth especially in this era of covid-19.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been acknowledged that entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for socio-economic progress and development of Enugu State. Efforts have been made in Nigeria to encourage entrepreneurship education and training among students of tertiary institutions through training and entrepreneurship education. This very approach however will enhance innovativeness, creativity and ingenuity in graduates to start small and medium scale businesses of their own after graduating from school, thereby making them to contribute economically to the nation and the state, hence, improving their socio-economic wellbeing and social welfare.

From the findings, covid-19 affected the socio-economic development of Enugu State through increased unemployment and under-employment, increased poverty level, persistent hunger and decline in livelihood. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Enugu State government should invest on entrepreneurship education programmes by providing the necessary materials for teaching of the course especially within the present COVID-19 period. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into the tertiary institution curriculum at all levels. The government should also make entrepreneurship education available to more people. More importantly, government should nurture the learning environment by providing working digital technologies that will help to incorporate more creativity and innovation into entrepreneurship education.

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