SMEs CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INTO TECHNICAL COLLEGE PROGRAMS

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Abstract
Technical and vocational education play a serious role in the worldwide economy. The advent of integrating technical education with entrepreneurial competencies in some institutions of Sub Sahara African countries Nigeria inclusive advocates transformative changes both at the conceptual and technological levels. It is obvious to solicit the participation of relevant stakeholders such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for collaboration in funding the program. The purpose of the study was to explore the SMEs contributions towards the integration of Entrepreneurship education into technical college into curriculum. This study uses phenomenological research design method was guided by interview protocol, thus the data were qualitatively collected. This research involves participants from three technical institutions and three registered SMEs in Kano state Nigeria. The study found that funding, qualified teachers, attitudinal change, curriculum, business opportunity and SMEs growth are issues considered more relevant for the participation of small and medium enterprises in the integration of entrepreneurial competencies into technical college programs in Nigeria. There should be an efficient and relevant cooperation between SMEs and technical colleges.

Keywords: contribution, entrepreneurship education, SMEs, technical college
Introduction

Entrepreneurship education is an educational training that prepares an individual to become a responsible and enterprising person by developing entrepreneurial competencies (European Commission, 2017). This education helps individuals to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for the achievement of their set goals. Research has shown that people with entrepreneurial education are more employable (European Commission, 2017). Hence, the significance of entrepreneurship education for sustainable industrialization and poverty reduction cannot be overemphasized.

Therefore, the role of entrepreneurship education in the development of entrepreneurs and the improvement of entrepreneurial activities in every economic could not be over stressed. Because of this it can be clearly understood that there is a need for integrating entrepreneurial training in Nigeria technical colleges. Chekole (2014) observed lack of integration between the curriculum taught in the colleges and the required skills in the workplace at the small business and enterprise is a major hindrance to the growth and development of SMEs. Regarding this Syed (2013); Enombo, Hassan and Iwu (2015) suggested the need for new school curriculum that would adopt the teaching of entrepreneurial education, this will serve as a solution to the current issues of unemployment and high poverty rate.

Entrepreneurship Contribution

Entrepreneurship contribute enormously in the development and economic growth of Sub Sahara African (SSA) this is in line with opinion of (Joshi, 2014) who opined that entrepreneurship has high impact on nation building and its catalyst effect to the socio-economic development cannot overemphasized. According to (Mallett, 2016) entrepreneurship has been offered for a long time as a response to a series of economic and social problems, from the recovery after the financial crisis to unemployment and social exclusion. Consequently entrepreneurial competencies help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) generate growth and development of new ventures in developing economies (Mohammed & Obeleagu-Nzelibe, 2014).
SMEs has great contribution towards the economic development, income, GDP growth and sustainability of many nations (Mohammed & Obelaghu-Nzelibe, 2014).

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to explore the SMEs contributions towards the integration of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Technical Colleges.

Research Question:
What are the contributions of entrepreneurship in the economic development through SMEs in Nigeria?

Methodology
Quantitative method was used as research method in this study, the data was gathered using interview method. This research involves participants from three technical institutions and three registered SMEs in Kano state Nigeria namely Institution A (IA), Institution B (IB) and Institution C (IC). The experts were chosen purposively as participants in this research. In order to get saturated data for this research, three experts were interviewed in IA, three experts were interviewed in IB and four experts were interviewed in IC. In the end, the data was transcribed and analysed by using thematic analysis.

Research Findings
The findings of this study were discussed according to the responses of the participants based on the interview questions. Views of the experts were recorded under the key issues in the study concerning the challenges facing the integration of entrepreneurial education into technical colleges’ in Nigeria. The contributions of entrepreneurship in the economic development through SMEs development in Nigeria was also discussed.
1. How do you explain the issues and challenges facing the integration of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Technical Colleges?
All the participants (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10) have agreed that “one of the challenges facing the integration of entrepreneurial program into technical college curriculum is the lack of appropriate
funding from the government. “Therefore, lack of adequate funding for the program has to be tackled appropriately in order to build a strong entrepreneurial training among the technical college students that would enable them to become prospect novice entrepreneurs that would help in bursting the economy of the country and enhance poverty alleviation among the teaming youth.

The study also explored that lack of qualified teachers is one of the vital challenges confronting the integration of entrepreneurial program into technical colleges. 100% of the participants, (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10) believed that “inadequate experienced professional in the field and lack of involvement of experts in the field is aggravating the integration of the entrepreneurial education into the technical colleges.” Therefore, it is highly important to employ qualified entrepreneurial teachers for the success of the program.

Attitudinal change, according to the participants (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5 and E6) “one of the problem facing the integration of entrepreneurial education into technical college program is lack of proper awareness among the populace. In the same vein lack of interest among the stakeholders may hinder the inculcation of entrepreneurial competencies into technical college programs. This lack of awareness give birth to misconception between technical skills and entrepreneurial competencies. Because most of the technical education stakeholders believed that for technical college students no need to teach them entrepreneur education since they already have the technical skills need for employment.” Therefore, it is important to address this issue of misconception among the stakeholders. This study will contribute for the clarification of this misconception.

Another important challenge that facing the integration of entrepreneurial education into technical program is the issue of curriculum all the participants (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10) agreed with the issue of having an appropriate curriculum that contain entrepreneurial competencies for the training of technical college students. “Effective curriculum at technical level that will contain entrepreneurial competencies are essential. Because at moment there is no sound curriculum aimed at producing entrepreneurs. Therefore, the issue of curriculum is sensitive it has to be handle urgently by the National Board
for Technical Education (NBTE) and all the stakeholders in education to infuse the entrepreneurial competencies into the curriculum. Another important segment is the implementation process of the curriculum this should also be taken into consideration.” It is important to note that an appropriate entrepreneurial competencies model will make things better for the technical college programs.

2. How do you explain the contributions of entrepreneurship in the economic development through SMEs development in Nigeria?

Business opportunity is highly important in Africa sub-Saharan though not only in Africa sub-Sahara but across the globe. All the participants agreed that “entrepreneurship contribute immensely to the economic development of a nation more especially in emerging economic countries. So it is a clear indication of incipient business opportunities among the teeming youth. This in turn will enhance the GDP of a country.” Therefore, it has been understood that entrepreneurship help in the economic growth of a country and nurturing venture start-up opportunities most especially through SMEs.

Second theme under the second interview question is SMEs contribution. Also 100% of the participants asserted that “SMEs has great role in the contributions of economic development of a nation. Because they provide business opportunities and employment which is not necessary be found in government organizations. They also help in training youth that would be self-reliant.” Consequently, SMEs contributions help community to solve the most challenging problem of a nation. Because through SMEs property will doused.

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<th>Interview question</th>
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<td>How do you explain the issues and challenges facing the integration of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Technical Colleges?</td>
<td>Funding</td>
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<td>Qualified teachers</td>
<td>E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10</td>
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<td>Attitudinal change</td>
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<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10</td>
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How do you explain the contributions of entrepreneurship in the economic development through SMEs development in Nigeria?

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<th>E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9 and E10</th>
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<td>Business opportunity</td>
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Discussion

The result shows that 100% of the participants agreed that lack of funding from the government will hinder the integration of entrepreneurial competencies into technical colleges program in Nigeria. This finding is in line with (Agbonlahor, 2016); (Ubong, 2017) they enumerate poor funding as one of the major challenges facing the integration of entrepreneurship into technical colleges programs. Consequently, this poor or lack of funding will lead to the second issue at stake that is lack of qualified teacher. All the participant agreed that lack of qualified entrepreneurship teachers is a great challenge to the integration of entrepreneurship into technical colleges programs. This is in agreement with (Agbonlahor, 2016); (Ubong, 2017) even at the tertiary level apart from the lack of qualified teachers institutions are left to demine who will be the teacher.

The result also shows that there is lack of awareness among most of the populace about entrepreneurship education. 50% of the participants are opined that this scenario has to be tackled in good time to give way for the integration of the entrepreneurship into technical colleges programs. This is in accordance with the assertion of (Unachukwu, 2009) majority of Nigerians have utopian ideas about entrepreneurship education.

The result also described the scenario that could face the integration of entrepreneurial course into technical colleges programs is the issue of curriculum. All the participants were opined that curriculum is one of the major challenges of the integration. This is in agreement with (Okuta & Dawha, 2014) who observed that lack of practical based entrepreneurial curriculum is a major obstacle in the integration of entrepreneurship into technical colleges program.

Business opportunity is one of the important contribution of entrepreneurship in developing country’s economic. 100% of the
participants agreed that entrepreneurship contribute immensely in developing business of opportunities of its citizens. This is in line with (Sofoluwe, Shokunbi, Raimi & Ajewole, 2013) who ascertained that entrepreneurship is a margin for job creation, wealth creation, youth empowerment, peaceful society and economic development.

SMEs contributes to the economic development of a nation, all the participants agreed that SMEs have great role in the development of the economic growth in a country through entrepreneurship activities. This assertion is in agreement with (Igwe, Onjewu & Nwibo, 2018) SMEs contributions in the economic development of many nations cannot be over emphasized.

**Recommendations**

There should be an efficient and relevant cooperation between SMEs and technical colleges for appropriate entrepreneurial activities in the college, through collaboration with National Board for Technical Education and Small Micro and Medium Scale Enterprises of Nigeria (SMEDEN). SIWES program should be revisited to include entrepreneurial activities so that technical college students will be familiar with entrepreneurial activities thus they will be willing to become prospective entrepreneurs.

**Conclusion**

The researcher is optimistic that this study will be as facilitator in bridging the gap between technical colleges and SMEs, so that they collaborate in assisting our teaming youths to overcome their yarning aspiration. Accordingly, it will lead to self-reliance, job creation, poverty alleviation and crime reduction among our youths.

**References**


