

Influence of Tertiary Education on Empowerment and Job Creation through Emerging Technologies and Innovations in Udenu Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was on influence of tertiary education on empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State. Specifically, the study examined influence of tertiary education on empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies and innovation in Udenu LGA of Enugu State. The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The population for the study was 40 Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs) graduate trainees. The population was not sampled due to the manageable size. A 20 item questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation, the reliability coefficient was .72 got through the use of Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research questions and t-test statistics for testing the hypotheses. Following data analysis, the findings revealed that entire pre-nure programmes for youths' empowerment in higher education influence development of communities amongst other findings. It was recommended amongst others that entrepreneurship studies in tertiary institutions be made compulsory for youths either through conventional or part-time programmes.

Keywords: Empowerment, job creation, technologies, innovations, entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education, more commonly referred to as post-secondary, is an academic pursuit undertaken after high school. This level of education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields of learning. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. This includes diplomas undergraduate and post graduate certificates. Tertiary education is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity. It benefits not just the individual but the entire society. This is the aspiration of more and more young people around the globe and a fundamental requirement for employment in the industries that derive the global knowledge economy. In view of

Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment means people having power and control over their lives. In other words, people getting support they need,

that, it provides unique opportunities for individual development and equality of opportunity as well as promoting shared prosperity. However [1] reporting on world development on the future of work and the increasing role of technology, tertiary education becomes imperative for workers to compete in the labour market. Based on the argument, it show cased the necessity of tertiary education on individual development and opportunities. It is on this level of argument that youth empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies and innovation in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State is viewed. Youth Empowerment in this work is gender sensitive. It involves both male and female graduates.

is right for them. It is about ways of working and supporting someone, enabling people to have control and

responsibility for their own lives. However, [2] saw it as an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources. The author further stated that it is not only a process but can be thought of as the life and look-changing outcome of such a process for individuals, organizations and whole communities. One may say that it is a collective rather than just an individual process. It is no doubt, important for individuals to take control over their fears, addictions and other self-destructive or socially disruptive thoughts and behaviours. In the same vein, [3] described empowerment as a multidimensional and interdependent process involving social, political, economic and legal changes that will enable people living in poverty and marginalization to participate meaningfully in shaping their own futures. Furthermore, [3] stated that without meaningful participation, empowerment

Concept of Job Creation

The role of creating a job in economic development cannot be under-estimated. The fact being that job creation whether in the form of a paid job or starting up a small business or large scale business is a product of economic growth that must have necessitated job creation in the first place. On the contrary, any country that decided to embark on massive job creation to empower her citizens without it being necessitated by economic growth may find herself in recession. Sustained economic growth seems to enhance job creation that consequently brings about economic development. This concept varies from scholars, depending on their notion of what job creation should be. For instance, one time Director General of Small and Medium Enterprises and Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) Umar, Muhammad Madada, defined job creation as the process of providing new jobs for unemployed people, the process of providing jobs for yourself and the process of providing more paid jobs[5].

can remain an empty and unfulfilled promise. Thus, one may say that it is the process of self-empowerment and professional support of people, which enables them overcome their sense of powerlessness and lack of influence and to recognize and use their resources. Empowerment can be of many types such as cultural, practical, national, societal, and economic empowerment [4]. Cultural empowerment has to do with language, food, clothing, religion, customs and history. Political empowerment talks about government voting and politics. National empowerment has to do with decision making while societal empowerment talks about the community, other people, protesting or complaining when one section of the society is treated unfairly. Finally economic empowerment involves jobs, money, needs and wants. Supporting the above ideas, one would say that it is a necessity in life more especially in the education sector since it instills confidence in individuals and makes them self-reliant especially in a bid to controlling one's life and claiming ones right.

The above definition is fair but failed to capture the category of under employed people. A group of scholars, Cray, [6] defined job creation as the net new job that is created without displacing any other economic activity. The definition is good but equally failed to capture the category of people who are underemployed that will seek a better one. Based on the above definitions, job creation can better be defined as the process of creating new jobs for the unemployed and the underemployed without necessarily displacing people who are already employed in other economic activities. Furthermore, a 2006 survey of young entrepreneurs in 14 Latin American countries as stated by Miller [7] found that most businesses created by youths' tend to have a relatively small impact on jobs creation as they often provide jobs and a source of income to their owners. In another development, the creation of a new business in itself could help young people transit into paid employment or

their first attempt at being an entrepreneur could eventually turn into a growing company.

The submission after the survey research shows that job creation especially for the youths have no significant effect as the employment they can create, can only pay for their bills and few others, a development that will still leave many youths unemployed since the job created cannot employ great significant of the youths. There is doubt if the above survey is representative enough of a developing country like Nigeria. The above doubt is whether job creation specifically for the youths can create enough jobs even among the youths. However, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is a major drive of economic growth and job creation. According to [8], SMEs account for more than half of GDP in high income formal work force, yet these companies have difficulty securing financing which limits their ability to grow and thrive. Access to financing by SMEs is an area that challenges almost every government. The financing needs of SMEs so far are met, largely by informal service providers, government, state agencies, development organizations and non-governmental organizations. Most SMEs end up borrowing from family and friends, or at exorbitant rates from money lenders and pay day lenders. SMEs need financial products and services that are appropriate for them, at the right price and design, with ease of access and fast processing.

Concept of Emerging Technologies

Emerging technology is a term used to describe a new technology, but it may also be referred to as continuing development of an existing technology. It can have slightly different meaning when used in different areas, such as media, business, science or education. According to [10] the term commonly refers to technologies that are currently developing, or that are expected to be available within the next five to ten years, and is usually reserved for technologies that are creating, or are expected to create significant social or economic effects. Technology, over decades has changed drastically from the first bulky phone, the size of your face to

Job creation is of great importance as it will boost both individual and national economy. According to [9], it reduces poverty, increases tax revenue, reduces unemployment and increases economic stability. This can be discussed thus:

- Reduces poverty: When jobs are created and jobs created are great, it will lift many people out of poverty. The more people work, the more they will be able to provide for their families. Hence reducing poverty in our country.
- Increases tax revenue: The more people work, the more they pay tax and the more government fund welfare and public services.
- Reduces unemployment: When the government start to encourage people about entrepreneurship, the better. Hence, we must create jobs for ourselves, such as starting small businesses which will help to reduce unemployment in the country.
- Increases economic stability: Job creation and economic growth are related. Job creation is necessary because the more people work, the more the economy becomes stable.

From the forgoing, job creation can only thrive if micro Small and Medium Enterprises are given access to finance at a very low interest rate for sustainability and growth. Finance therefore, is the backbone of almost every successful business.

the iPhone 6 which is as thin and light as air. Emerging technology according to [11] can be classified into five characteristics. These include radical novelty, relatively fast growth, coherence, prominent impact and uncertainty and ambiguity. We as humans cannot be held or forced to conform to any technology but from time to time, we need the change and progression of technologies in our lives. Nowadays, teachers are trying to use the device that children use for fun into something to broaden their learning. The use of the internet in the classroom helps with faster learning and also helps in computer education which will be of great

importance and usage in our lives. For instance in many secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Enugu State, online applications for learning are used like modules and whiteboards. These application are useful because they help students see every agenda of their courses and the interactions between teachers and students. Inviting devices into the classroom is not a change for students

because at this age, students know about every aspect of technology. Technology, therefore, should not be seen as a burden, but as a helpful tool. Education has transformed from the classroom to the internet, giving access to students, from home and students around the world. This has led to a lot of innovations in the education system, exposing the youths to entrepreneurship ventures.

Concept of Innovations

Innovation is a word derived from the Latin word “innovare” which means “into new”. Innovation is a word that is often used in the business world and for companies. However, [12] saw it as something risky, costly and time consuming. Increasingly, innovation in education, at school is more than buzz word. It is fast becoming a way of learning and teaching for both students and teachers respectively. Innovation in education encourages students and teachers to research, explore and use all tools to uncover something new. It involves different ways of looking at problems and solving them. It also improves education because it compels students to use higher level of thinking to solve complex problems.

- Checking the extent to which students have understood the concepts.
- Ensuring that students find innovative uses of everyday objects.
- Conforming that students have an idea of what they still need to learn and address the issues there in.
- Ensuring that students are graded on the extent to which they are innovative and creative.

Innovation according to [13] can be introduced in the classroom by:

From the foregoing one would understand that innovation in education means doing what is best for all students. Teacher’s lessons and curriculum ought to be flexible. We have to get our students to think and ask questions as the need arises. Their curiosity need to be attended to and find ways to keep them interested. Since innovation means change, we have to address our minds to the fact that our students need more than the skills to pass termly or sessional examinations but also require tools that will assist them to be productive in their future careers and creating in them the ability of going the extra mile to get assigned function concluded with little or no supervision what so ever.

- Challenging them and giving them a problem that is both authentic and interesting.
- Giving students the basics but keeping it short.
- Encouraging students to research independently.
- Building complex skills in students.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the above discussions, emerging technologies and innovations have been the order of the day. Nigeria as a nation and Enugu State in particular has cued into this trend through the establishment of Small Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) centres. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are businesses that maintain revenues, assets or a number of employees below a certain threshold. SMEs centre in Enugu State has been training and retraining youths (male and female) of

different categories and in different fields of endeavor. The involvement of all the 17 local government areas of Enugu State in the laudable programme is in line with the rural development agenda of Governor Lawrence Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi’s administration. This however, has impacted positively on the lives of the rural dwellers in so many ways. To concretize the above statement, the Governor in his opening address during 31st Enugu International Trade Fair held at

the Trade Fair Arena in Enugu, stated that his administration in 2020 budget appropriated, ₦3.4 billion for the establishment of Small Medium-Sized Industries in the 17 Local Government Areas of the state. On the average every Local Government Area got ₦200 million each. The training has been ongoing for some years now. The head of the SMEs centre in Enugu State and the Special Adviser on SMEs Development, Hon. Arinze Chilo-Offiah has organized enlightenment campaign tagged "Local Government Area Sensitization Tour. This has been on-going since 2021. Though, Udenu LGA has no tertiary institution located in the area but

the turn-out of youths from the area, from different institutions of higher learning has been very encouraging. These graduate youths have found SMEs training very beneficial and have cued in. It is against this background that the researcher is motivated to carry out a research on the "Influence of tertiary education on empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State. The problem of the study is therefore put in a question form thus: what is the extent to which emerging technologies and innovations are used for empowerment and job creation in Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which tertiary education influence empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies and innovations. Specifically the study:

1. Investigated the extent to which tertiary education influenced empowerment through emerging

technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

2. Examined the extent to which tertiary education influenced job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State?

2. What is the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female graduates on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female graduates on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used descriptive survey research design for the study. According to [14] descriptive survey research are those studies which aim at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given populations. The design was adopted because the study involves the use of structured questionnaire to elicit responses. The population for the study is

40 graduates SMEs trainees from Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. The entire population was used due to small nature of the population. The instrument for data collection was a twenty (20) items questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Influence of Tertiary Education on Empowerment and Job Creation Questionnaire (ITEEJCQ). The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B.

Section A is on personal data of the respondents while section B is on the items show casing the response of the respondents. The response to the research questions are: Very High Extent (VHE) - 4 points, High Extent (HE) - 3 points, Very Low Extent (VLE) - 2 points and Low Extent (LE) - 1 point. The instrument was face validated by 3 experts, 2 from the

Department of Educational Management and 1 from Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was tested using test-retest method and the measure obtained was 0.72. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis.

Data analysis and interpretation

For data collection 40 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the 40 graduate SME trainees in Udenu Local Government Area of Enugu State. These

were collected and used for data analysis. Data is analyzed using mean and standard deviation and presented in tables in line with the research questions

Research Question 1:

What is the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging

technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State?

Table 1: Influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State

S/N	Items: Influence of tertiary education on empowerment	Male Graduate Trainees N=20		Female Graduate Trainees N= 20		Average N= 40		Decision
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1	Entrepreneurship programmes for youths empowerment in higher education influence development of communities	3.50	0.51	3.50	0.51	3.50	0.51	Very high extent
2	Youths participation in higher education programmes influence their contributions for sustainable development	3.00	1.02	2.85	1.08	2.92	1.05	High extent
3	Youths involvement in emerging technologies automates the business processes of SMEs	2.50	0.51	2.60	0.82	2.55	0.66	High extent
4	Youths pursue courses in higher education for empowerment and employment	3.00	1.02	3.10	1.02	3.05	1.02	High extent
5	Programmes of National Orientation Agency such as vocational skills development benefits the youths	3.00	0.99	3.20	0.61	3.10	0.80	High extent
6	Youths are empowered through qualitative functional education with unlimited life enhancing opportunities	2.95	1.05	3.05	0.99	3.00	1.02	High extent
7	Youths education for empowerment is a necessity for sustainable development in developing communities	3.25	0.63	3.05	0.88	3.15	0.75	High extent
8	Information Communication Technologies (ICT) education among youths is now considered an enabler for organizational change	3.20	0.62	3.25	0.85	3.22	0.73	High extent
9	Educational attainment is attained through participation in skill acquisition	2.50	0.94	2.70	0.97	2.60	0.95	High extent
10	Youth empowerment through education is imperative for self actualization as independent thinkers	3.25	0.63	3.30	0.73	3.27	0.68	High extent
	GRAND MEAN & SD	3.01	0.79	3.06	0.84	3.03	0.81	High extent

Table 1 shows the responses of the graduate trainees on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment

through emerging technologies and innovations. Results here show that the trainees saw entrepreneurship

programmes for youths' empowerment in higher education and its influence on development of communities as influencing empowerment to a very high extent with a mean rating of 3.50. Other items were rated as influencing empowerment to a high extent ranging

from youths empowerment through education being imperative for self-actualization as independent thinkers with a mean score of 3.27 to youths' involvement in emerging technologies as automating the business processes of SMEs with a mean rating of 2.55.

Research Question 2:

What is the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging

technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State?

Table 2: Influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State

S/N	Items: Influence of tertiary education on job creation	Male Graduate Trainees N=20		Female Graduate Trainees N= 20		Average N= 40		Decision
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1	Entrepreneurship training is compulsory	3.00	1.02	2.95	0.99	2.97	1.00	High extent
2	Government provides adequate funds	2.70	0.54	2.50	0.51	2.60	0.52	High extent
3	Adequate infrastructural, instructional facilities are available	2.65	1.53	2.50	1.46	2.57	1.49	High extent
4	Qualified lecturers with attractive conditions of service are deployed	2.70	1.21	2.55	1.43	2.62	1.32	High extent
5	Training and retraining of students, youths are organized	3.00	1.02	2.85	1.13	2.92	1.07	High extent
6	Successful private industrialists are periodically engaged to deliver lectures on entrepreneurship	3.15	0.81	3.30	0.57	3.22	0.69	High extent
7	Government agencies give support in form of grants to small and medium enterprises	3.50	0.51	3.10	0.51	3.30	0.51	High extent
8	Hard work, competency is the yardstick for certification	3.25	0.71	3.15	0.74	3.20	0.72	High extent
9	Increased digital engagements aloe SMEs to explore new markets	3.15	0.58	3.25	0.63	3.20	0.60	High extent
10	Entrepreneurship education is properly accommodated in tertiary institution curriculum	2.95	0.75	3.50	0.51	3.22	0.63	High extent
	GRAND MEAN & SD	3.00	0.86	2.96	0.84	2.98	0.85	High extent

Table 2 shows the responses of the graduate trainees on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations. Results here showed that the trainees agreed to all the different items as ways through which tertiary education influence

job creation rating all to a high extent. These ways ranged from successful private industrialists being periodically engaged to deliver lectures on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education being properly accommodated in tertiary institution curriculum with mean ratings

of 3.22 to adequate infrastructural, instructional facilities being available with a mean rating of 2.57.

Hypotheses testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment

through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 3: T-test of significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State

Gender of graduate trainees	N	X	SD	df	t Crit.	t Cal.	Decision
Male	20	3.01	0.84	38	1.96	0.193	Not Significant (Not Rejected)
Female	20	3.06	0.79				

Table 3 shows the results of t-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State tested at 0.05 level of significance and at 38 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value of t was 0.193 and less than the table value of t (t-crit.) which is 1.96, the null hypothesis is not rejected indicating that there is no

significance difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 4: T-test of significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State

Gender of graduate trainees	N	X	SD	df	t Crit.	t Cal.	Decision
Male	20	3.00	0.86	38	1.96	0.148	Not Significant (Not Rejected)
Female	20	2.96	0.84				

Table 4 shows the results of t-test analysis of significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State tested at 0.05 level of significance and at 38 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value of t

was 0.148 and less than the table value of t (t-crit.) which is 1.96, the null hypothesis is not rejected indicating that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study on influence of tertiary education on empowerment through emerging technologies and innovation in Udenu LGA of Enugu State revealed that entrepreneurship

programmes for youths' empowerment in higher education influence development of communities to a very high extent. The study also revealed that youths' empowerment through education in

imperative for self-actualization as independent thinkers. Also it was found that youths' involvement in emerging technologies automate the business process of Small, medium Enterprises (SMEs). On influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, it was revealed that the trainees agreed on all the items as ways through which tertiary education influence job creation. These ranged from successful private industrialists being properly accommodated in tertiary institution curriculum to availability of adequate infrastructural and instructional facilities. However, test of hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees on the influence of tertiary education on

empowerment through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State. Also on the influence of tertiary education on job creation through emerging technologies and innovations in Udenu LGA of Enugu State, the results of t-test analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the male and female graduate SME trainees. The findings of this study is in line with [1] which reported on development on the future of work and the increasing role of technologies, that tertiary education becomes imperative for workers to compete in the labour market. Also, [9] in agreement with the study postulated that job creation reduces poverty, increases tax revenue, reduces unemployment and increases economic stability.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, tertiary education becomes imperative in the lives of our youths, analyzing its influence on empowerment and job creation through emerging technologies

and innovations. The researcher therefore, solicits for exposure of our youths on the essence of tertiary education to enable them acquire better skills for self-reliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Entrepreneurship studies in tertiary institutions be made compulsory for youths either through conventional or part time programmes in Udenu LGA and beyond.
2. Government at all levels should have plans for the expansion of entrepreneurship programmes so as to

- accommodate every youth at Udenu LGA, Enugu State and Nigeria in general.
3. Successful private industrialists should be engaged by government, tertiary institutions for the success of entrepreneurship programmes.
4. Entrepreneur programmes should be well funded by all levels of government.

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