

**A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF ADEQUACY OF CONTENTS OF EDE
CURRICULUM OF POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION TOWARDS MEETING
ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF OTM GRADUATES**

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ABSTRACT: *This study appraised the adequacy of the contents of EDE curriculum of polytechnic education towards meeting entrepreneurship skills of OTM graduates. The study utilized survey research. Research question was raised for the study. An instrument which consisted of 28 items was administered on 30 respondents who taught EDE courses in the Delta State Polytechnics. The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the mean (\bar{x}) statistics. The results derived from the study revealed that the contents of EDE courses are adequate in scope and coverage towards meeting entrepreneurial skills of the OTM graduates for self-employment and employers of labour. It was recommended that EDE curriculum should be revised and reviewed every five years by practising practitioners in collaboration with industries so as to meet the needs, interests and aspirations OTM graduates and the society.*

KEYWORDS: EDE Curriculum, Self-employment, Entrepreneurial Skills, Polytechnic Education, OTM Graduates.

INTRODUCTION

It has been reported that Nigeria is the most populated nation in Africa with a population of about 158 million according to 2006 census and she has the fourth largest economy in the continent. Ironically, Nigerian is categorized among the poorest in the world with more than 60% of the country's population living below poverty line, that is, they live on less than one U.S Dollar per-day according to National Planning Commission (NPC, 2004). This situation persists inspite of the fact that the country exports huge quantities of crude oil daily (Terdo, 2014). The problem with Nigeria stems from the fact that a vast percentage of her population is made up of peasant farmers, petty traders, civil servants (some of who are underemployed) and the unemployed. The unemployment rate in the country was put at about 3 million by 2004 (NBS, 2004); while the polytechnics, monotronics, colleges of education and the universities continue to churn out graduates annually into the labour market that is already saturated.

Worried by the high rate of graduate employment which has been put at 1.8 million yearly, Esene (2014) reported that the Presidency had in 2006, issued a directive to all higher educational institutions in Nigeria to include on its curriculum of studies, Entrepreneurship Development Education (EDE) as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of the students' areas of discipline. Today, this directive is in force in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. As a result of the growing rate of unemployment and poverty in the country, there has been increased crisis and insecurity in the country since the last decade. While government continues to make concerted efforts to curb increasing insecurity and unemployment in the country that seems not to be yielding results, the introduction of Entrepreneurship Development

Education (EDE is seen as one of the right steps taken in the right direction. It should be noted that the introduction of basic education in Nigeria (FRN, 2012) has provision for entrepreneurship education and it is also embedded in the secondary education as well as tertiary education curriculum.

Osuala (2004) stated that EDE is a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation of and/or operation of small business enterprises which also includes franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service with emphasis given to the social responsibilities, legal requirements and risks for the sake of profit making in the conduct of a private enterprise. This implies that entrepreneurship programmes prepares or equips learners with the skills that make them not just capable but also willing to undertake and run a small business of any kind with the sole aim of making profit. This they can achieve because they have the acquired skills that are required for that task. Such business ventures could be in the area of product or service business.

According to NBTE (2007), EDE curriculum is designed to develop in young people enterprising skills and attributes and an awareness of how their community, including business and industry works. Young people need to be “opportunity ready”. It went further to state that the present curriculum and course specification of EDE was drawn after due consultation with external bodies so that it can stand the test of time. According to NBTE, the course specification meet set standards in terms of the depth and coverage, believing that with time, revision and review would take care of any observed shortcomings. In line with above, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs in Australia adopted the following definition of EDE:...learning directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, understandings, and attributes which equip them to be innovative, and to identify, initiate, and successfully manage personal, community, business, and work opportunities, including working for themselves...

Okebukola (2005) defined curriculum implementation as the translation of the curriculum objectives from paper to practice. And to Doggoh (2007), it is the process of putting into actual practice what has been planned in the curriculum document. The implication here is that curriculum implementation is a process of bringing the paper plan of what should be taught to learners and how it should be taught using specified materials and learning experiences to achieve set goals. When this is done appropriately and according to the curriculum plan, the implementation can be termed effective and it is the effective implementation that guarantees the actualization of the curriculum objectives.

The organization of EDE courses at the polytechnic level is divided into three groups, since the polytechnic education runs two programmes – viz, the National Diploma (ND) and the Higher National Diploma (HND) respectively. The EED 126 called Introduction to Entrepreneurship is offered in second semester of year one of ND, while EED 216 (The Practice of Entrepreneurship) is offered in the first semester of ND year two. At the Higher National Diploma (HND) level, EED 413 (Entrepreneurship Development) is offered in the first semester of year II.

According to Asuquo (2011), EDE has been generally accepted as unique courses now offered and taught among tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria aimed at equipping students with

skills and competencies to make them (students) self-reliant on graduation and/or put them at vantage position for paid-employment in the Nigerian economy.

The goals of EDE curriculum as offered in polytechnic are to inculcate in the trainees/students the ability to:

- identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking;
- work effectively with others as a practice team member and cultivate that ability to resolve conflicts;
- organize and manage oneself and one's ability;
- collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information (to make decisions that must be carried through);
- communicate and negotiate effectively;
- reflect on experiences and explore various strategies for effective learning (to learn at all times);
- become curious leading to readiness to experiment and innovate being never satisfied with the status quo and considers self-employment as a viable option upon graduation from their institutions (NBTE, 2007).

In order to achieve these goals, NBTE listed in great detail, the infrastructural facilities, workshops, laboratories and instructional materials and equipment for effective teaching and learning EDE courses. It was emphasized by NBTE (2007) in the policy document that if students must acquire the practical skills for application needed in the world of work, these items must be on ground for use by the students and lecturers.

There seems to exist a relationship between EDE, economic development and effective curriculum implementation. As stated earlier, EDE is concerned with training learners to recognize, take advantage and explore existing opportunities to enhance for themselves economic benefits. It makes them not only self-reliant, but also employers of labour. An effective curriculum implementation of EDE will equip the learners with entrepreneurship skills and consequently guarantee economic development both of the individuals and the society. This means that it is the effective implementation of EDE that will elicit the benefits thereof the creation of employment, increased economic income and poverty reduction.

According to Logic Models and Outcomes for Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (2001) as reported by Olu-Obafemi and Onajinrin (2014), EDE gives positive outcomes that includes:

- Improved academic performance, school attendance, and educational attainment.
- Increased interpersonal relationships, team-work, money management and public speaking skills.
- Job readiness.
- Enhanced social psychological development (self-esteem, ego development, self-efficacy), and
- Perceived improved health status.

Okwuanaso (2004) stated that the determination of the contents of EDE courses at the tertiary education level should be based on the objectives of the course in order to ensure that students acquire the skills and understanding needed for self-employment and/or paid employment. On his part, Olaitan (1996) noted that higher education graduates who acquire entrepreneurial skills are adequately prepared to meet entry-level employment skills in the competitive world of work.

One remarkable thing about the present EDE courses of polytechnic education is that the office technology and management students (OTM) offered, in addition to EDE courses, OTM courses as contained in the curriculum and course specification which includes information and communication technology, general studies, professional, vocational and management courses. The idea is to broaden the horizon of the students in terms of job preparation and self-reliance.

Okolocha and Ile (2011) observed that the aim of various governments to eradicate poverty and increase the standard of living of citizens through the establishment of poverty reduction programmes have failed due to lack of entrepreneurship skills by graduates of the educational system. These authors observed that while millions of jobs are awaiting to be done because people with the right education and training cannot be found.

The growing rate of unemployment and poverty in the nation has increased substantially, crises and insecurity in the country, especially, since the past decades. While government continues to make concerted efforts to curb the increasing insecurity and unemployment in the country that seems not to be yielding results, the introduction of entrepreneurial education is seen as one of the right steps taken in the right direction. Government's efforts can be seen from the introduction of basic education in Nigeria which has provision of entrepreneurship development education (EDE) and it is also embedded in the secondary as well as tertiary curriculum. In particular, polytechnic education consists of theoretical and practical learning activities because its graduates are expected to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work where they reside either as paid employment or be self-reliant.

Despite the teaching and learning of EDE courses, one still observes a large number of graduate unemployment in the country. Evidence abound that with proper teaching and learning of EDE courses, using the right educational resources as prescribed by the regulatory agency (NBTE), OTM graduates will achieve will achieve positive outcomes such as:

- Improved academic performance, school attendance, and educational attainment.
- Increased problem-solving and decision making abilities.
- Improved interpersonal relationships, team-works, money management and public speaking skills
- Job readiness.
- Job creation
- Enhanced social psychological development (self-esteem, ego development, self-efficacy), and
- Perceived improved health status.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of entrepreneurship development education courses at the tertiary education level is a recent innovation and development in the Nigerian education system. The whole essence is to prepare and equip creation of employment, increased economic incomes and poverty reduction. However, one of the major constraints in having tertiary educational institutions students properly equipped with the relevant skills that can provide them with self-employment is that at the higher education level, the content of EDE courses appears to be inadequate in terms of depth and coverage. This problem observed necessitated the basis for which this study is undertaken.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to appraise the adequacy of the content of EDE curriculum for tertiary institutions in Nigeria towards preparing and equipping OTM graduates with entrepreneurship skills for the creation of employment, increased economic income and poverty reduction. Specifically, the study tries to determine the adequacy of the content of the EDE courses of polytechnic education towards equipping students for self-reliance in the Nigerian society.

Research Question

The study answered the following question raised.

How adequately do the contents of the EDE curriculum taught in polytechnics meet graduates need?

Significance of the Study

The results derived from the study will highlight the adequacy or otherwise of the contents of EDE courses offered by OTM students in Polytechnics in Delta State. Such findings which reveal the status of these courses would be used by lecturers, polytechnic administrators and the regulatory body – the National Board for Technical Education for the purpose of up-dating the present EDE curriculum.

Procedures used for the Study

The study adopted the descriptive survey research. It sought information from lecturers who teach EDE courses in the three polytechnics located in Delta State with reference to the adequacy of the contents. The population of the study consisted of 30 (thirty) lecturers. See Table 1 for the population distribution.

Table 1 – Population Distribution.

State of Location	Institutions	Number of Lecturers	%
Delta	Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku	10	33.33
Delta	Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara	8	26.67
Delta	Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro	12	40.00
	Total	30	100.00

Source: Field Studies, (2014)

There was no sample and sampling techniques used for the study since the population was small and adequately managed. The instrument which was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was developed from the literature reviewed based on the research question raised in the study. The instrument was a 5-point rating scale designed to attract the followings: HA – Highly Adequate 5 points; A – Adequate 4 points; I – Inadequate 3 points; HI – Highly Inadequate 2 points; Und – Undecided 1 point. The instrument was validated by three experts in OTM and in measurement and evaluation. The first part of the instrument sought for the bio-data of the respondents, while the second part sought the respondents' rating on the statements. A total of thirty copies of the questionnaires were administered and all were retrieved back. The test-retest reliability method was used to determine the stability of the questionnaire items. A reliability co-efficient of stability of the

items yielded a correction of 0.72 which was considered high enough. The data collected were analyzed using the mean statistical method. A decision rule for accepting any factor as accepted was set at mean (\bar{x}) equal to or above 3.50 was adequate while those with 3.49 and below were considered inadequate.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presented and analyzed the data collected in the study. See Table 2.

Question One

How adequately do the contents of the EDE curriculum taught in polytechnics meet graduates need?

To answer this question, the data in Table 2 were used.

Table 2 – Adequacy of the Contents of EDE Curriculum.

Q/I	Adequacy of EDE Courses	Total	(\bar{x})	Decision
1	(EED 126) Introduction to Entrepreneurship	30	4.16	Adequate
2	Meaning and scope of enterprise and entrepreneurship	30	3.82	=ditto=
3	History of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria	30	3.64	''
4	Types, characteristics and Rationale of Entrepreneurship	30	3.67	''
5	Role of Entrepreneurship in Economic Development	30	3.77	''
6	Entrepreneurial Characteristics and Attitude	30	3.86	''
7	Key Competencies and Determining Factors for success in Entrepreneurship	30	3.95	''
8	Motivational Patterns of Entrepreneurs	30	4.00	''
9	EED 216 Practice of Entrepreneurship	30	3.90	''
10	Techniques for Generating Business Ideas and the Process of Identifying and Assessing Business Opportunities	30	3.93	''
11	Methods of Product/Service Selection	30	3.82	''
12	Process and Procedure for starting an Enterprise	30	3.80	''
13	Operational Techniques in Managing an Enterprise	30	3.66	''
14	Various Existing Industries and Support Agencies in Nigeria	30	3.85	''
15	Role of Commercial and Development Banks in Small and Medium Scale Industries Development	30	3.94	''
16	Role of Personal Savings and Portfolio Investment in National Economic Development	30	4.23	Adequate
17	EED 413 Entrepreneurship Development	30	4.20	=ditto=
18	History of Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria	30	4.40	''

19	Role of Personal Savings and Portfolio Investment in National economic Development	30	4.14	''
20	Various Life skills Needed by an Entrepreneur.	30	4.46	''
21	Various Sources of Information for Entrepreneurship Development.	30	3.83	''
22	Roles of Commercial and Development Banks in Small Scale Industrial Development	30	3.91	''
23	Functions of Various Support Agencies in Small and Medium Scale industrial Development	30	4.16	''
24	Activities of Different Industrial Associations in Relation to Entrepreneurship.	30	4.09	''
25	Functional Areas of Business.	30	4.02	''
26	Need for Business Planning.	30	3.95	''
27	Strategies for Consolidation and Expansion of a Business Enterprise.	30	3.88	''
28	Need for Management and Business Succession Plan	30	4.09	''
Grand Mean (\bar{x})		-	3.98	

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Questionnaire items 1 – 28 in table 2 are the responses to the question on the adequacy of the contents of entrepreneurship development education as taught to the polytechnic education students. An average high mean score of 3.98 was recorded from the analysis of the data obtained. From this result of the study, it would seem that the contents of EDE courses are adequate in scope.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to appraise the adequacy of the contents of the Entrepreneurship Development Education curriculum of polytechnic education towards meeting entrepreneurial skills of office technology and management graduates. It was found that the contents of EDE curriculum are adequate. This finding was supported by the earlier studies by Olaitan (1966), Okwuanaso (2004), and Okolocha et al (2011) which noted that the contents of EDE curriculum are adequate enough to equip OTM graduates to acquire the necessary entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment in the competitive world of work.

CONCLUSION

As in the past, polytechnic education curriculum was seen as a dysfunctional education that was devoid of entrepreneurial skill acquisition. The present curriculum under the supervision of the National Board for Technical Education has been designed with the current situation in the country in mind. Irrespective of students' areas of specification, all polytechnic students now offer EDE courses as compulsory. The adequacy of the present EDE curriculum will aid students in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills which will help the OTM graduates to recognize the abundant opportunities in the country, take advantage of them, establish and nurture into fruition, viable middle and small scale enterprises capable of yielding income for them and as well as create employment opportunities for others. In this way, the offering of

EDE courses will be seen as training learners to recognize, take advantage and explore opportunities to enhance for themselves economic benefits not only for self-reliance, but also employers of labour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the results derived from the study, and the conclusion reached, it is hereby recommended that:

- the present EDE curriculum should be reviewed and revised as it is now seven years old of implementation. Such review and revision by practitioners in collaboration with industries will help to standardize the curriculum in line with best global practices.
- the teaching of EDE courses should be placed in capable hands who will teach the courses practically.
- the present EDE curriculum should be expanded to accommodate more topics that would broaden the horizon of the OTM graduates as they enter into the world of work.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This research study revealed that the content of entrepreneurship development education is adequate in scope and that its curriculum offerings would lead students to acquire entrepreneurial skills needed by OTM students to function effectively and efficiently in a complex and dynamic society. The study also shows that students can improve academic performance, school attendance, educational attainment, increase problem solving, and decision making abilities with reference to setting up, and managing personal business enterprises. Although, prior to the conduct of this study, many authors/researchers had written on the need to expand the scope of EDE content of polytechnic curriculum, but there were not empirical evidence in literature available to the researcher which shows the extent to which the teaching and learning can practically reduce unemployment, insecurity and poverty among OTM graduates of tertiary education. This unsatisfactory state of affairs created a gap in the body of knowledge which this study has successfully and substantially filled.

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