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MODERN TECHNOLOGY AMONG WOMEN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN NIGERIA
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Abstract

Women entrepreneurs have in recent times been identified as catalysts and novel contraptions for growth as well as uprising luminaries bringing prosperity and improved welfare in several developing economies. Eighty per cent of the world's anticipated 650 million individuals living with frailties reside in developing economies, with the largest chunk below poverty line. The involvement rate of incapacitated women in the labour market is ominously lower than that of incapacitated men (16.6 per cent and 52.6 per cent, respectively). Young women are excessively disadvantaged in the employment world; they are sometimes marginalized for being young, female and impaired. Technology, thankfully, has an essential contribution to make in generating decent jobs for individuals with disabilities and their incorporation into the labour force. This paper therefore attempts to explore and review the role of entrepreneurship education in the tutelage of female students with special needs and the role of technological device in their integration into their workplace. This paper therefore attempt to explore and review the place of entrepreneurship education in the education of female students with special needs and the role of technological device in their integration into their workplace. It also examined the impact of the technological devices since their introduction for some female students in the schools for persons with special needs. Primary data were collected from 50 respondents from two special needs school in Ibadan Oyo State and two special needs school in Osogbo, Osun State Nigeria who have been provided with some of this technological devices. The study found that 80% of the respondents found the device useful and have better output than the time without the device. The 100% of their instructors agreed on the improved output of their students. Passing rate has improved with about 50% in all the schools sampled. Suggestions and laudable recommendations that will further enrich the full

execution of entrepreneurship tutelage in these unique schools for optimal achievement and self-sustenance were then provided.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Gender, National Interest, Technology

Introduction

In Nigeria today, the swelling unemployment, corruption and poverty rate, and other numerous menaces have become bothersome to private and government organizations, technocrats and other benign citizens. Poverty rate in Nigeria has been on the abnormally high (with almost 70% of the total population categorized as poor) The unemployment issue is intensely doleful as the number of job-seeking graduates rolling out from various institutions continue to increase annually. The condition was so disturbing that tonnes of unemployed university graduates staged a protest at the presidential office to air their distress. They passionately demanded for the creation of jobs and more employment opportunities to enable them meet their basic needs of life.

The tremendous growth rate and developmental levels recorded in nations such as Brazil Malaysia, India and Indonesia to mention just a few, have visibly shown that economic advancement is often driven by the people's level of innovation, creativity and inventiveness. Sadly, Nigeria is yet to achieve such feats due to pitiable nexus between knowledge and development, and also between the country's public and private sectors, which are largely due to lack of relevant skills and adequate entrepreneurial culture in the country's educational system.

It is germane to note that education can actually be a means to an end. It can also solely be a means of fastening employment and people's liberation via the provision and gaining of the necessary life-enriching knowledge and skills. One concrete strategy towards plummeting the

disturbing high unemployment rate and exterminating poverty is actually by up-scaling investments in human capital and infrastructural facilities. Human capital aspect can be further accelerated via well structured and entrepreneurially focused academic curriculum. A nation with recorded high level of self-sustained, independent, and self-reliant graduates will document lower unemployment levels and more job-generating graduates. Education at tertiary levels, especially the entrepreneurship-focused institutions, play extremely crucial roles in developing any nation's economy, as greater proportions of graduates become innovative, self-reliant and generate employment. This invariably moves the nation faster towards self-sufficiency.

Umunadi (2014) opined that entrepreneurship development via education has globally been gaining acceptance and attracting various attentions. Various noticeable and laudable efforts have been made by increasing entrepreneurship courses, conducting researches, and mounting innovative programs in various citadels and research centres with the intent of developing student's entrepreneurship culture and spirit. However, further actions must be taken, and efforts intensified, to mobilize and enhance entrepreneurial activities that will continually benefit various citizens, leadership, and ultimately the nation. The subject, poverty eradication, has taken the front row in many institutional and governmental discussions particularly in developing countries where severe poverty is evident and endemic.

Leu et.al. (2017) stated that technology, especially information and communication technology, is construed as a powerful force in transforming economic, social and political life globally. On many occasions, the unceasing improvement and solicitation of technology has generated enormous economic benefits and employment opportunities. Many developing countries are exploiting the adoption of technology to fast-track their developmental processes. Britnell (2019) reported that with the valued 500 million people to be infused into the global workforce in the next decade, accepting the reality of a technological challenge is

imperative. If not “plugged in”, millions of youths, men and women stand the risk of being excluded. And, since women epitomize a substantial majority of those not having access or equal chances, there is definitely an obvious gender dimension to the technological dichotomy. Therefore the technological dichotomy can be described as multi layered. It further indicates an aperture between countries having easy entrée to technological improvements and those that do not. Within countries, the dichotomy is between the socio-economic divisions of societies having access to technology and those that do not (predominantly the rural areas). Furthermore, gender gaps exist across and within most countries: practically almost everywhere women halt behind men either in accessing relevant trainings or in technology application.

In order to attain the envisaged technological height, there is a need to constantly develop strategies that will combine new technological capability with investments in a wide range of traditional and non-traditional economic quarters. These stratagems must be reinforced by enhancements in vocational training, education, research and skills development. Training people to proficiently use technology is vital and a fundamental step towards taking advantage of evolving economic openings. Both are very essential to the achievement of International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s goal of generating grander chances for women, men and youths to get clad and productive jobs.

Baba (2013) further reiterated that in several countries, more men acquire the technological skills and knowledge needed to start and sustain innovative economic activities than women. Many women face diverse barriers debarring them from enjoying the complete advantage arising from the evolving economic opportunities, swelling productivity in their businesses and accessing more value-adding jobs and higher income-generating job opportunities.

To tackle many of these hurdles, the introduction and development of vocational skills and entrepreneurship have been generally considered as the vital solution and way forward. Kalleberg

(2011) stated that “Today women need broad based skills which can be adapted to rapidly changing economic requirements as well as appropriate basic skills which enable them to benefit from information technology, increasing their ability to overcome barriers of distance and budgetary limitations. Sound education policy also provides an important instrument to offset the negative impacts of globalization, such as increasing income inequalities, with effects which may ultimately be stronger than labour market policies”.

Training programmes and policies targeted towards improving productivity and employability thus should ensure equality of employment opportunities, be bias-free and consider household duties and family obligations. A life-cycle approach must be adopted to overawe the challenges that debar women from gaining access to quality education and specialised trainings, and in utilizing these trainings to get better employments. This includes: giving girls more access to basic education; surmounting logistical, cultural and economic barriers to apprenticeships as well as promoting superior vocational trainings for women and youths – expressly in non-traditional professions; taking into consideration their family and domestic responsibilities when arranging workplace-based erudition and entrepreneurship coaching; and also meeting the training needs of other women re-entering the work force and older women who have not been privileged to have equal access to similar opportunities of lifelong erudition.

Technology also has a crucial role in generating decent jobs opportunities for people with disabilities and their blend in the workplace. According to Baikady et.al. (2019), most disabled people live in developing countries - of the estimated 650 million individuals living with frailties reside in developing economies, with the largest chunk below poverty line. The involvement rate of incapacitated women in the labour market is ominously lower than that of incapacitated men (16.6 per cent and 52.6 per cent, respectively). Young women are excessively disadvantaged in the employment; they are sometimes marginalized for being young, female and impaired. Environmental

features such as physical access may become history with technological improvements. Gadgets and tools such as Braille devices, hearing aids and motorized wheelchairs do abet disabled people ditch their individual disabilities and gain access to better jobs. Access to telecommunication gadgets such as the Internet and computers provide vibrant opportunities for tele-working and inclusion into many aspects of social, cultural, political and economic life. Therefore, efforts must be made at both policy making and implementation echelons to make these gadgets accessible and affordable.

Disability and Entrepreneurship Education

Disability results from barriers facing persons with special needs- attitudinal and physical barriers that leads to their exclusion from the society. From a life-cycle perspective, disability can happen to anyone at any stage of their life span. Currently it is estimated that 1 in every 10 people worldwide live with disability (Mantey, 2017). This universal aspect of disability and its relevance to all population cuts across national boundaries, generation, socio economic status and different life stages considering the rate at which these set of people are discriminated against.

According to Lamichhane (2015), disability and poverty are intertwined in developing countries like ours, infact, the qualitative evidence suggest that disabled female are significantly at a disadvantage and poor in developing countries than their counterpart in developed countries.

Disabled women have higher likelihoods of being sexually abused. Most women with disability also experience gender-based discrimination. They usually experience denied access to quality education and employment opportunities, and are at amplified risk of domestic violence and abuse. Thus, there is the need for entrepreneurship education for these women with disabilities for equal opportunities and empowerment by:

1. Promoting equivalent access and involvement for women with disabilities in every community development initiative
2. Supporting women and girls with frailties to access entrepreneurship education

3. Encouraging the establishment of self-help sets for women with disabilities

Entrepreneurship has further been acknowledged as a crucial aspect of business organizations and holistic economies. It fosters new jobs creation, income generation, wealth development, and poverty reduction for various governments and individuals in many commendable and immeasurable ways. It was further posited that entrepreneurship is incredibly instrumental to the economic growth and overall development of many economies. Having comprehended the vibrant role of entrepreneurship in economic development, it become ostensible that a clarion call and meticulous attention is required to invest in and promote entrepreneurship. Moreover, education has been observed as one of the requirements for effective entrepreneurship development particularly in places with very minimal spirit and culture, which is also known to be an essential basis of selection for entrepreneurship, new venture formation and entrepreneurial success (Nguyen et.al., 2015).

Furthermore, Singh & Onahring (2019) opined that there is a positive relationship between a person's level of education and his or her choice to become an entrepreneur, together with the outcomes and growth rates of the person's entrepreneurial activities. Hence, the aspiration towards poverty reduction should not be contemplated and executed in isolation; constructive approaches and strategies must be employed. Because ideally, an economy's educational system must be considered as basis and essential ingredient before it can foster authentic economic growth and development. Education, on several grounds and in many discourses, has been undisputedly cogitated as the foundation of any substantial development, be it political, social, or economic.

Nwambam et.al. (2018) stated that the Nigerian educational policy elucidated the need for well-designed education, practical, relevant, and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate skills and competencies as tools for individuals to live in and contribute to the advancement of their societies. At the same time, he further stated that only little has been done in trying to ensure

collaboration between entrepreneurs and other relevant institutions. The polytechnics, universities, research centers, and other academic institutions stand to benefit immensely from entrepreneurs in the business world. Relatedly, entrepreneurs could employ and use the proficiencies of faculties in the various institutions. This type of symbiotic relationship and collaboration will ultimately help in bridging the aperture between entrepreneurs and the various institutions. The obvious lack of this kind of promising synergy unearth the inadequacies, fallacies and weaknesses of Nigeria's educational policies in the realization of its educational goals.

Entrepreneurship Education and National Development

The importance of education in a nation's developmental effort cannot be undervalued. The development of a nation's educational sector is instrumental to the development of all other sectors. Mogren & Gericke (2019) affirmed, "development in any society is anchored primarily on education process". Mertens (2019) opined that education is an indubitable pathway to intellectual emancipation and the improvement of people's socio economic status. He also buttresses the fact that trainings help to empower individuals and escape poverty when provided with the relevant skills and knowledge to raise their outputs, disposable incomes and wealth. In view of these stated facts, various governments, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies are tenaciously making efforts to optimally advance their education sector. Although, quite a number of noticeable feats have been documented in this regard, yet more is to be desired to catch up with the ever-increasing present demands and upcoming future challenges.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) combined with the anxiety of globalization also creates new challenges for countries, especially, the less developed ones to re-channel their attention towards dealing with these innumerable socio-economic problems. It is highly demoralising when considering Nigeria's deteriorating situation, despite her enormous natural treasure, the country is generally poor and collective development is reduced. And, if this

trend continues, Nigeria is very unlikely to achieve the MDGs (National Planning Commission, 2004). The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) acknowledged that poverty has many elements and must therefore be urgently collared from different angles. Sustainable development must be hounded to handle the existing socio-economic and ecological challenges hampering development. Concurring with Burgess (2014). "sustainable development has to do with meeting the needs of the present generation without denying future generation access to the same natural resources for their own needs". Development, in this context, is reviewed in terms of meeting the masses' basic needs and wealth redistribution at every justifiable level.

Supporting female entrepreneurs to initiate novel technologies in their business ventures heightens the potential to upsurge productivity, reduce poverty, promote indigenous development and create more employment. Women embark on business activities in diverse forms, SMEs, cooperatives, social entrepreneurship and lots more. For women to identify and appreciate their entrepreneurial potentials, it is imperative to encourage role models that concur with their aspirations and realities.

Women also must overcome other impediments such as traditional patterns and limited access to credits when deciding whether and how to start a business. These are some of the popular examples of impediments inhibiting women from becoming financially empowered or participating in income-generating activities. Skills development enables women to earn incomes, generate and maintain industrious occupations. In order to further increase productivity, and diversify into other value-adding activities, female entrepreneurs must be empowered to acquire and espouse new technologies and apply them in every sector of the economy. Promoting women entrepreneurship to help to close this technology gap and increase the frequency of more decent jobs and productive activities. Nonetheless, training and education will still not suffice. To be copiously effective, these trainings must be embedded in the national economic and employment development programmes,

strategies and policies.

Other germane factors include the creation of enabling environments for viable enterprise development, societal dialogues and fundamental investments in physical infrastructure, health and basic education.

Kabeer (2021) opined that employers' associations and workers unions also have important roles to play in closing the gender gap in entrepreneurship and skills development. He stated that the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) has designed employers' toolkits to upsurge women's representation in employers' associations and other business platforms in their individual nations.

Additionally, cooperatives do empower women and elevate not only their standard of living, but also that of the societies where they reside. According to Otobe (2017), the ILO Cooperatives branch mainstreams gender in every of its activities and spotlights exclusively on employment creation, income generation, access to productive resources, credits and low cost quality services. ILO also provides exclusive training programmes for women. In collaboration with the International Cooperative Alliance, the ILO published a high quality Leadership Training Manual for Women Leaders of Cooperatives.

Objectives

- Explore the place of entrepreneurship education in the education of female students with special needs
- Review the role of technological device in their integration into their workplace.
- Examine the impact since the provision of some technological device for some female students in the schools for persons with special needs

Methodology

The study employs a purposive random sampling technique. The research design used in this study is experimental survey design. The research was designed in such a way that it captures the true situation on ground and also permits a clear interpretation of result and findings. The research employed the use of two types of questionnaire-

one for the students and another for the teachers. Four schools were evaluated by the research with the administration of questionnaire on the students and their teachers to explore and review the place of entrepreneurship education in the education of female students with special needs and the role of technological device in their integration into their workplace. The respondents of this study are students with disabilities found at

the schools for persons that are physically challenged where Entrepreneurship training is being taught. The total population of the study is 50 respondents. The Data collected was analyzed using SPSS statistical techniques such as frequencies.

Results

Research Question One

Does entrepreneurship education have any place in the life of female students with special needs?

Table 1: Place of Entrepreneurship Education in the life of female student with special needs

SA	A	UD	SD	D	Total
36	14	-	-	-	100%
	SA + A			SD+D	
	36+14=50	-		0+0=0	100%

Table 1 above epitomises the responses to research question one, which was captured by questions 1-10 of the administered questionnaire. It was observed that 100% of the respondents

agreed and believe that female students with special needs need entrepreneurship education. No respondent showed any contrary view to the research question

Research Question Two

Has the introduction of technological device play any role in their work place?

Table II: Introduction of Technological Device play in workplace

SAD	AD	UD	SIA	ID	Total
26	24	-	-	-	100%
	SA + A			SD+D	
	26+24=50	-		0+0=0	100%

Data collected with respect to research question three, which is derived from the second questionnaire which comprise of questions 1-10 were descriptively analyzed and the findings showed that 100% of the respondents agreed that the technological devices were adequate and helped achieve a noticeable improvement in their academic work.

Discussion of Findings

From the study conducted, 100% of the respondents opine that entrepreneurship education is pertinent and should be dispensed to people with special needs, which will enable them to contribute their quota towards the development of the society as well as empower them to be self-actualized. Further, from the data analysis

presented in table two, 92% of the respondents attested that technological devices are useful and help people have better outputs than when without the device. 4% were indifferent and 4% not favourably disposed to the idea of using the devices as they believe it has its side effects. The instructors also agreed on the improved output of their students and disclosed that the passing rate has improved with about 50% in all the schools.

How To Promote Entrepreneurship Education Among Women With Special Needs

- To promote education, skills training and entrepreneurship development among women with special needs, quite a number of steps can be taken. Diverse approaches can also be employed to overcome the

technology gap and benefit from emerging opportunities. Education, training and skills development can be invigorated by:

- Growing the training and employment opportunities for underprivileged persons, including youths, women, and people with disabilities.
- Encouraging women to study technology-related subjects and be taught new and superior skills, provide career guidance to widen girls' and women's interests in existing and emerging opportunities relating to technological developments.
- Creating continuous awareness on the ways and need to overcome social and cultural barriers preventing girls from studying technology-related subjects. This also includes upgrading the informal apprenticeship systems in developing economies by enhancing the relevance and quality of trainings, ensuring formal recognition of skills and provide women with access to apprenticeship training.
- Addressing low productivity and assiduous poverty in the informal economy through men and women's improved access to quality skills development outside high-growth urban regions, combining remedial education and employment services with technical training, implementing systems for the recognition of prior learning so as to open up jobs for them in the formal economy and providing entrepreneurship training that encourages and enables the formalization of small enterprises.
- Developing effective means for women in both urban and rural communities to learn about new production techniques, new technologies, markets and products to improve their agricultural and non-farming outputs.
- Mainstreaming gender in ICT issues, strategies and policies to help increase women's access, participation and leadership in IT.
- Supporting trade fairs, workshops, media campaigns, exhibitions and other promotional events—involving and local communities, employers', workers' and

government organizations—to provide women entrepreneurs platforms to disseminate information for change and inspire other women.

- Increasing women's access micro-credits, allowing them to buy and take maximum advantage of new technologies, thus boosting their productivity and access to new markets.
- Promoting well implemented programmes and policies that assist women in establishing small- and micro-businesses, including providing additional trainings for business skills, access to communication technology and credits to enhance their productivity.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education can be achieved for women with special needs through the use of modern technological approach with full and effective inclusion of these women and their active participation in all stages of the entrepreneurship education. The current framework, tools and mechanism of the entrepreneurship education provide several opportunities to mainstream persons with special needs.

Recommendation

Specific efforts should be made by agencies that are connected with the education of persons with special needs for mainstreaming entrepreneurship education for women at global, regional and national levels for short, medium and long-term result.

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