

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR JOB CREATION: A STUDY OF BUSINESS ENGINEERING SKILLS TRAINING CENTRES IN ZONE A, YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) for Job Creation in Yobe State is informed by the increasing recognition of entrepreneurship activity to empower the poor masses and stimulate economic development. It is noted that despite the existence of EDPs there are many issues, including high unemployment, increased social vices, and high poverty rates among others. It is hypothesised that the EDPs might not possessed the technical and personnel capabilities required or that the EDPs impact have not yielded significant positive impact on employment creation. A survey of 240 respondents from four (4) BEST Centres consisting small business owners, EDP trainees and employees was made. However, 200 questionnaires were filled and returned, were analysed for this research. The data was analysed both with inferential and descriptive, and multiple regression was adopted in testing of hypothesis. The % analysis revealed direct correlation between EDP performance, and technical and personnel requirement because the 56% influence for small business prospect represent an average performance; a reflection of only 45% current impact on small business development occasioned by EDP capability. More so, the results of regression analysis indicate significant of EDPs capability and the government support on their performance. Other explanatory variables including commitment and business grow display an insignificant probabilities. It is recommended that community participation need to be given additional encouragement, there is the need for improved capabilities, to strengthen government impacts towards making EDP more of business creation objective to achieve job creation requirement. Hope is not lost, particularly when necessary adjustments and recommendations are applied.*

**Keywords:** EDP, Small business, Job creation, BEST centres.

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship, as an emerging field of study and as an area of human endeavour, has received increasing interest of researchers, academicians and policy makers the world over. It has equally provoked controversies over its concept and definition (Adedeji, Ayodele, & Olalekan, 2018). But, despite that early researches into entrepreneurship focused more on individual traits possessed

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by successful entrepreneurs, the research findings have made the shifted from studying traits and situational factors to a dynamic learning process through which entrepreneurs engage in an evolutionary process possible. Consciously, individuals could develop their personal and functional capabilities in order to face the challenges of the current business world and thereby become entrepreneurs.

Accordingly, EDP is increasingly recognised as important driver of economic growth, generating employment, fostering innovation and poverty reduction through the empowerment of young men and women (UNCTAD, 2010). EDP is the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and funding and, to be successful, the attempt should focus on developing the individuals who wish to start or expand a business; or creating new product or service, or finding new ways of using an existing method (Sule, 2014). Incidentally, a major concern of many developing nations is the adverse effect of poverty on the vast majority of the poor masses among the populace. The concerted efforts to address the problem of the poor living standards and to address the poor economic condition of the less privileged citizens underscored empowerment measure in the form of Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) such as Business and Engineering Skills Training (BEST) Centre as a means to an end. The role of EDP is reflected by their impacts on Small Scale Businesses in the process of socio-economic development of all economies of the world. Of particular importance in the developing nations, is the recognition that Large Scale Enterprises have not played (and cannot) alone be expected to play the expected dynamic roles towards rapid growth and development. Small Businesses are the leading force in the development of African economies.

However, the Small Scale Sector have not delivered to the level expected because entrepreneurial activities such as innovation, risk bearing synergy, employment creation, finding new opportunities and inventions have not been commercially achieved because of inadequate business skills. Again, despite that the Small business occupy a place of pride, the sector faces rigorous challenges with large corporations because of the latter's access to financial resources and enjoys economies of scale. Worse still, 90% of the youth between the ages 15-24 that are absorbed by the informal private sector are without vocational skills. Indeed, Technical and Vocational Development (TVSD) provides transiting avenue from school to employment of young people; develop an important repository to build productive capacity of new entrants to labour markets; and, improve the quality of work and in the long run, serve as a bridge to move from informal work to formal sector employment. However, only about 6% of education budgets across African countries are dedicated to technical education and vocational training (Osikena, Owen, & Ugur, 2014).

The establishments of the various EDPs are informed by the need to provide business-relevant skills to foster growth of small-scale businesses as a means towards poverty alleviation. But, the existence of many of these centres notwithstanding, we are still challenged with high level of unemployment and high social vices, low rate of small business creation and sustenance; and inadequacy of modern equipment and machines for small business operations, and high level of poverty of citizenry within the society among others. The main objective of this study is to assess the EDP performance in terms skill acquisition and small business growth giving their technical capabilities and personnel requirements available. This impliedly gives indication on whether or not the performance of EDP yields positive impacts on job creation.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition, Education and Development***

According to Idoko (2014), Skill acquisition is the training of individuals or group to acquire knowledge for self- sustenance. It involves the training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for certain duration and under certain conditions. Thus, entrepreneurial skill acquisition is a process whereby a person acquires or learns a particular skill or type of behaviour needed for business through training or education in order to identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunity for self-employment (Amadi, 2012; Chukwunye & Igboke, 2011). It also helps entrepreneurs to acquire self-confidence, self-esteem and participate in decision-making at household and community levels. Skill training and tertiary education could lead to business opportunities and influence positively on entrepreneurship development. Exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity also depends on the entrepreneur's level of education, skills or knowledge acquired through training, work experience and social network (Emaikwu, 2011). Training and/or education produce prior experience, which leads to preparedness for entrepreneurial activity (Shane, 2003).

It thus, observe that Entrepreneurship Development (ED) is the ability (can be informed via skills acquisition, education or training) to envision and chart a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional disciplines and from the external environment in the context of the extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture (Kamau, 2016). Development is a process of change from one state to another more desirable position; to progress or an improvement upon a particular context to bring about growth, and become more advanced or stronger. Entrepreneurship development therefore is a process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills, knowledge though structured training, and institution building programmes (UNDP 2010). The goal is the enlargement of entrepreneurial base to have good pace for new ventures formation, and ensure their growth and their sustenance.

### ***Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)***

In Nigeria, apart from provision of generous credit facilities for small-scale business aimed at providing entrepreneurs with seed capital and which was formally launched at the beginning of the third National plan period (1975-1980), a major approach toward EP is the provision of training. This approach led into the establishment of different training centres. Although the roles of EDP on economic development remain a subject of continuing debate and discussion, economic growth and development is a significant feature of every country be it in the developed or less developed economies (Adedeji, Ayodele, & Olalekan, 2018). In Nigeria therefore, EDPs have been perceived to encourage and promote the development of a broad private sector within manufacturing and service industries through a method that is geared at improving the competitiveness of existing small and medium enterprises and by supporting the growth of new enterprises. Hence, government of every state have embarks on policies and programs aimed at influencing the direction of economic progress towards a rapid and sustainable economic growth (Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabim, 2012; Sule, 2014). Example of such EDPs is the BEST Centre, the focus of this study.

According to Adedeji, Ayodele and Olalekan (2018), advocates for entrepreneurship-based policies suggest that entrepreneurial development generates greater returns to the public than other alternative strategies such as industrial recruitment, or retention and expansion. Thus, developing entrepreneurial skills has been seen to be a vocal strategy to reduce poverty, create income and employment opportunities to better business environment, building institutional and human capacities to encourage and support the development of rural dwellers (Oghojafor, Olayemi, Okonji & Olayiwola, 2011; Adelekan, 2017). The purpose is simple, to increase practice of entrepreneur, creation of new enterprises, improved commercial activities and enhancement of the general economic sectors for mobilisation of domestic and local resources (Osolor, 2016). It is also a base for development and application technology to provide a veritable ground for skills, semi-skilled and educated young graduates. The capabilities of entrepreneurship to economic development made (Naude, 2013) observed entrepreneurship as human functioning that could be valued as an end and not just as a means to an end.

Sinha (2015) posit EDPs are meant to inculcate entrepreneurial skills in individuals in order to equip them to establish and successfully run their own businesses. In line with 'McClelland's need achievement' theory, needs for achievement motivates people toward diligence. The objectives of EDPs include developing and strengthening motivation or need for achievement, ability to analyse environmental set-up relating to small businesses, ability to select appropriate product, ability to formulate proposal for the product, and ability to understand the process and procedure involved in setting market target. Others are ability to know the sources of help and support available for starting a small-

scale industry, ability to acquire necessary business skills required to run a small-scale industry, potential to understand the pros and cons in becoming an entrepreneur, and the wisdom to appreciate the needed entrepreneurial discipline (Sinha, 2015).

### ***Small Scale Business***

According to (Olorunshola (2004) and Ogunleye (2004), the concept of small-scale business is dynamic and relative. Therefore, several institutions and agencies defined small-scale business in different perspectives and with different parameters; number of employees, asset base, turnover rate, financial strength, working capital and size of the business among others (Olutunla, 2001; Ogechukwu, 2009). According to Nzewi, Onwuka and Onyenu (2017), majority of business enterprises in Nigeria are small and constitutes a vital element in the business life of the country. Usually, small business is an independently owned and operated company that is limited in size and in revenue depending on the industry. A local bakery that employs 10 people or a manufacturing facility whose employees less than 500 people is an example of a small business. More so, Small businesses are either services or retail operations like grocery stores, medical stores, bakeries and small manufacturing units (Sarokin, 2019). The Nigerian Bank of Industry categorises small enterprises as those with number of employees range between 11 and 15, and total asset between 5- 100 million naira. The review can be uncountable but for the Purpose of this study, not all businesses whose management is by their owners and employees are more than 15 are regarded as small business.

### ***Small Business and the Economy***

Firstly, the continuing growth in the economy of any nation depends largely on the start-ups and development of small businesses. Even for the developed economy, small-scale enterprises are a legitimate and viable component in any strategy for reconstructing the economy (Umoren, Akpanuko & Akpan 2015). Other main arguments and justifications for emphasis on the small-scale enterprises include the possibility of the equitable distribution of national income, more realistic employment generation, and mobilisation of capital and human resources that would otherwise be left idle. More so, small business have the potentials to meet untapped demand capable to fill a niche in the market and thereby provide specific services that cannot be met by large organisations.

Small firms are less import dependent and most often, they depend on locally fabricated equipment and make use of local raw materials as inputs. Thus, they provide solution to balance of payment problems and excess production could meet foreign demand, which consequently boost export trade of a country. Their heavy reliance on local content is a means towards innovation, an essential attribute of small business owners; entrepreneurs' ability to perceive profitable

business opportunity and courage to act profitably. These encourage, new products, competition, self-employment and economic stability and development.

### ***Importance of Entrepreneurship and Small Business***

Lovely Professional University (LPU, 2013), Umoren, Akpanuko and Akpan (2015) maintains that small business and entrepreneurship combine play considerable roles in the development of a nation. That is, both contribute positively to economic growth in the form of products or services or boosting the GDP rates or tax contributions. Their ideas, thoughts, and inventions are of great help to the nation in the following regards among others:

#### ***Employment generation***

Though people often believe that all those who do not get employed anywhere, jump into entrepreneurship, but to the contrast more than 70% of newly established businesses are due to aspirations to chase new openings. Hence, this emphasises the fact that entrepreneurship is not at all an encumbrance to an economy but a clear indication that entrepreneurship heads nation towards better opportunities, which is a significant input to an economy. In addition, it is challenging and rewarding opportunity because in most of the cases, the rewards it gives are much greater than what one anticipates, and does not only reward an entrepreneur at financial levels but also on inspirational level.

Impliedly, entrepreneurship provides self-sufficiency and sky-scraping heights of apparent prospect because the entrepreneur does not only offer comfort and self-sufficiency but also provides high standards of living to its employees. In addition, a motivational factor is that the individual gets maximum scope for growth and opportunity as he or she does not only earns the right term and learns as he earns.

#### ***Research and Development system***

The knowledge and skills that entrepreneur develops while owning an enterprise are assets for life and serves as basics for critical agitation. Almost 2-3% of all innovations are due to the entrepreneurs. Without the boom of inventions, the world would have been a much dry place to live (LPU, 2013). Inventions are the entrepreneurial field works, which provide easier way of getting things done through better and standardised technology. According to Umoren, Akpanuko and Akpan (2015), entrepreneurs play many of the following roles; create new businesses, create jobs and increases level of disposable income; brings about competition, creates value and significantly contributes to national development in both short and the long runs. These collectively will undoubtedly translate directly into high levels of economic growth and improves national development.

### ***Entrepreneurship development programme and small businesses; issues and challenges***

The challenge of innovation in EDP is sensitive because according to Najib, Kiminami and Yagi (2011), innovation affects the performance of small businesses. Hence, innovation is a key driver for companies to pursue competitiveness and improve the performance of small firms. Aliu (2014) views Entrepreneurship Education as learning directed towards developing young people in areas of skills, competencies, understandings, and attributes which equip them to be innovative, and training them to identify, create, initiate, and successfully manage personal and/or community business, and work opportunities, including working for themselves.

Andreassi (2003) argued that small companies need to raise awareness of the importance of innovation investment. Uhlaner Stel, Meijaard, and Folkeringa, (2007), examine the relationship of knowledge management and innovation to company performance. Hafeez, Shariff, and Lazim, (2012), state that innovation is considered an important element in business growth and for achieving corporate excellence. Hitt, Duane and Robert (1997), states that effective innovation leads to sustainable competitive advantage. Furthermore, there are other problems with regard to EDP and Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria including cultural problems, government and regulatory issues, difficulties towards start-ups, lack of a standard framework and incomplete entrepreneurship education, and high dependence on government (Inegbenebor, 2012). Also, among possible solutions could be student orientation and participative learning because it is important that the knowledge gathered in theory backed with real life practical experiences in laboratories, workshops and business incubation sites (Okhakhu & Adekunle, 2012). Notwithstanding, friendly learning environment, tolerance regulatory framework, improved infrastructures, improved government commitment and integrated educational systems would help in no small measure.

### **Methodology**

To meet these objectives, it is required to develop good questionnaires, well administered to gather data for necessary analysis to make appropriate conclusions and recommendations. A survey of 60 respondents (current trainees, personnel and alumni-small business owners) from each BEST centre in Zone A comprising Damaturu, Goniri, Ngezarma and Daptchi totalling 240 was made. However, analyses were on the 200 filled and returned questionnaires. The data collected is analysed both descriptively (% analysis) and statically (SPSS, regression analysis).

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the performance of EDP, and technical and personnel capability requirement

**Table: Descriptive analysis**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	44	22
Male	156	78
<b>EDP Objectives</b>		
Skills acquisition	106	53
Employment generation	43	21.5
Small business development	51	25.5
<b>EDP Commitment</b>		
High	126	63
Moderate	52	26
Low	22	11
<b>EDP Capability</b>		
High	105	52.5
Moderate	58	29
Low	37	18.5
<b>Rate of awareness &amp; participation by the citizens</b>		
High	126	63
Moderate	58	29
Low	16	8
<b>Limiting factors</b>		
Inadequacy of personnel	75	37.5
Inadequacy of learning equipment	108	54
Limited building and classrooms	17	8.5
<b>Reasons for society poor business practices</b>		
Lack of awareness	62	31
Lack of encouragement	92	46
Traditional and cultural effects	46	23
<b>Special assistance available after completion</b>		
Yes	12	6
No	188	94
<b>Ways to achieve better Business Practices</b>		
Financial support	56	28
Improved EDP conditions	42	21
Encouragement/others	102	51
<b>Assessment of Govt. Support</b>		
High	74	37
Moderate	83	41.5
Low	43	21.5
<b>Areas of EDP Needs</b>		
Improved facilities (buildings & classrooms)	45	22.5
Additional learning equipment	78	39
Personnel welfare	77	38.5
<b>Influence on SMEs Employment generation</b>		
High	90	45
Moderate	65	32.5
Low	45	22.5
<b>Influence on Small Business &amp; prospects</b>		
Highly positive	112	56
Moderately positive	64	32
Weakly positive	24	12

Field Survey, 2019

### Discussions and Findings

Majority of respondents are men, here 78%, where only 22% female indicating the dominance of male participants with regard to the EDP objective, skill acquisition is 106 (53%); employment generation is 43 (21.5%), and 51 (25.5%) small business development as main objective. Impliedly, participants opined main objective of EDP as skills acquisitions. EDP commitment to objective is assessed to be as high as 63% and capability to deliver as high as 52.5%. Similarly, awareness and participation by the community members were 92%; high, 63% & moderate, 29%



Major limitations of EDP are inadequacy of equipment (54%), lack of motivation and encouragement at 46%, almost absence of assistance for EDP trainees after completion of programme because 94% respondents could not identify any forms of assistance for participants. Government supportive role is rated at 78% (high, 37% & moderate 41.5%). Areas of EDP needs are additional equipment (39%) and personnel welfare, (38.5%), and ways to achieve better business practices is provisions of appropriate equipment, 51%

From above, beside 25.5% small business objective, areas of EDP needs have been identified to include equipment and personnel requirement; this could be a reason for only 45% EDP impact on enterprise development. In addition, assessment of influence on small business and entrepreneurship future prospect at 56% is an average score indicating correlation between EDP performance and technical/personnel capabilities. Hence, Ho1 which state; there is no significant relationship between the performance of EDP, and technical and personnel capability requirement is rejected.

**Result of Regression Analysis**

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between performance of EDP and Small Scale Business employment creation.

**Model Specifications**

SBEG=F (EDP)..... (1)

SBEG = Small Business Employment Generation

Given that SBEG are functions of factors determining EDP performance;

SBEG= a0+cm1+cp2+pt3+gs4+ge5+ u1..... (2)

**Where:**

- cm = commitment                      cp = capability
- pt = community participation      gs = government support
- ge = small business growth and expansion

**Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis**

Predicators	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-values	Probability
Constant	----	.050	.803	.423
COMMITMENT	-.169	.121	-1.619	.107
CAPABILITY	.415	.073	5.853	.000***
PARTICIPATION	.220	.137	1.992	.048
SUPPORT	.595	.066	9.862	.000***
BUS GROW & EXP	-.094	.085	-1.399	.163
R-SQUARE	.895(89.5%)			
F-VALUE	332.352 (33%)			
DW STATISTICS	.258			

\*\*\* = *Significant Predicators*

Source: Field Survey 2019

### **Discussion and Findings**

The coefficient of multiple determinations ( $R^2$ ) with value 895(89.5%) implies that the regressors in the equation explain approximated 90% of the systematic total influences of the EDP effect on small business job creation capacity. The significance of the F-value 332.352 indicate only (33%) joint influence of all the explanatory variables ; an explanation that only two independent variables; EDP Capability and Government support have significant probabilities.

Impliedly, capability of EDP in terms of equipment, personnel and other facilities for entrepreneurship need be given desirable attention. This is further attested to by significance value for government support; pointing to the fact that as the government meets more requirement of EDP, better performance could be achieved in term of employment creation. This established that there exists heavy reliance by the EDP on the government for survival. The probability of 0.048 for community participation is okay giving positive correlation between the coefficient (.220) and 0.048 significant level, community is expected to participate fully for the expected benefits to be achieved. The EDP commitment and ability to grow and expand small business have been challenged by insignificant probabilities and negative coefficients in both cases: (-.169 & .107) and (-.094 & .163) respectively. Thus, hypothesis II, which state there is no significant relationship between EDP performance and employment generation could not be rejected, and this partly explains reasons for high level of unemployment in the study area.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

EDP still has some role to play because the small business has important role to play in employment generation and economic development in the study area. Re-strategizing of government efforts in the areas of improved capability for EDP in order to achieve positive impacts on small business grow and expansions would yield desirable effects. With many or more of under listed recommendations and future prospects under descriptive analysis, EDP would deliver with the course of time.

Based on the findings from inferential statistics and the regression analysis, the following recommendations are made in order to achieve improved performance of EDPs.

- i. Women participation should be encouraged because of the gender sensitivity of economic disparity and the low (22%) participation in the programme.
- ii. EDP objective is advised to be more of small business agenda and not dominated with classroom teaching without translating into business formation, growth and development
- iii. Hence, good assistance both in cash (to kick start business) and equipment to support prospecting entrepreneurs after acquisition of EDP skills.

- iv. The EDP syllabus should also extend to cover expatriate reports or follow up after graduates might have completed skill trainings so as not to degenerate into saturated labour markets as opposed to expected healthy entrepreneurship activities.
- v. Encouragement and motivation is essentials both for personnel and trainees in order to enforce desired entrepreneurial mind-sets
- vi. Similarly, improved welfare packages could change the white-collar jobs complexities and make people appreciate the good sides of self-employment
- vii. Good learning facilities and entrepreneurship equipment could be good palliatives to cushion off negative side effects of self-employment and other socio-cultural and economic challenges of our time.

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