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# ENTREPRENEURIAL GUIDANCE AND LONG LIFE ERADICATION OF POVERTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO

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## **Abstract**

*The study was conducted to determine the influence of entrepreneurial guidance and long life eradication of poverty among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Ex-post facto design was used for the study. The target population for the study consisted of all the 3,452 undergraduate students studying in Faculty of Education during 2016/2017 academic session. Sample size of 1335 students was selected from all the departments through multi-stage random sampling technique for the study. The instrument used was Entrepreneurial Guidance and Life-long Eradication of Poverty Questionnaire (EGLEPQ). Face validity was adopted and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula to measure the internal consistency and the average coefficients obtained was .68. Mean and Independent t-test were used to test for hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings established a significant influence of personal interest and career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students, while there is no significant influence of students' academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that though this situation might have inference with the current economic state of the nation, it is complicatedly connected with the type of interest, competence and choice for the entrepreneurial skills obtainable in the nation's schools. Eradication of poverty among undergraduate students through entrepreneurial guidance for long life successes is attainable if the students are ready to pick up the*

*challenges. It is recommended, among others, that for students interested in learning more about their fit with entrepreneurship, higher institutions should create Entrepreneurship Centre for students to translate their academic competences development into entrepreneurship skills by providing industrial attachment Centre for the students.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Guidance, Personal Interest, Competence, Career Choice and Poverty Eradication.

Nigeria as a nation in principle endorses entrepreneurship education as a useful framework for sustainable development. However, in spite of the rhetoric, only a few universities have officially taught it. The needed skills, competences, and qualifications that are required change over time and become competitive. To deal with these changes people need to be equipped with a variety of entrepreneurial skills which will help contribute to employability of young people in particular, as well as supporting new business creation. In our present day Nigeria, the jobs are becoming less secured and the urge for entrepreneurship gets more pronounced.

More people are now opting for self-employment, some of the entrepreneurs are so successful that they regret the years spent in paid employment, people are faced with decision making every day which leads to choice of all kinds (Essien, 2006). Many of our young ones graduate from schools are without functional and employable skills. Making the right career and vocational choice has always been a major source of anxiety for the young person. In this era of high technology, occupational choice in Nigeria has become more complex. New job dimensions have emerged requiring new measures of skills and higher level competencies. The world of work is competitive than it has ever been. This is why George (2005) observed that in Nigeria today looking for a job is a job itself in the sense that, it calls for experience, patience and perseverance.

There is a very wide gap between paper qualification products of schools today and lack of functional utility of the certificates in the world of work. The failure of our education sector today is as a result of little or no attention which the school system pays to vocational education and entrepreneurial guidance as an important educational responsibility to students (George and Archibong, 2010). As observed by Nwachukwu (2007), the paucity of economic and developmental breakthrough in Africa has exposed the major lapses in the present educational policy and practice. One of the goals of education is that of helping the individual not only to fit into the society properly but also, help to develop the mind of the individual to understand his environment and bring about national consciousness in the life of the individual.

The choice of career is very important because, whatever choice that is made can affect the rest of the students either positively or negatively. Successful career seldom

happen by chance with very few exceptions, people who really get what they want in a career do so because they define their objectives, and assume personal responsibility for implementing and following their plans (Pumpian, Fisher, Certo and Smalley, 2007). These people monitor their progress regularly, improve their plans where they are not getting the desired result and persevere in the face of frequent set back until objectives are achieved. Unfortunately, the graduates from higher institution are having difficulties in securing a good job due to global economic recession. Unemployment has become a teething trouble among the youths and graduates in Nigeria today.

The value system of the Nigerian society has changed due to the transition from school to work to earn a living. Graduates from our universities acquire knowledge without entrepreneurial skills which would enable them, on graduation to practice what was learnt in school, create jobs for themselves and others and participate in economic development in Nigeria (Uya and Mbang, 2017). Entrepreneurship is the capacity to harness the right quantity, quality and combination of resources that are consistent with profit making under risks and uncertainty. Entrepreneurship can be defined as the totality of self-asserting attributes that enable a person to identify latent business opportunities together with capacity to organize needed resources with which to profitably take advantage of such opportunities in the face of calculated risks and uncertainty (Essien 2006). An entrepreneur therefore is the person who carries out the functions of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is about taking risk, but on the other hand it is cardinal to the economic growth and development of both the individual and the nation. However, the major internal problems of entrepreneurship include lack of personal attributes, leadership acumen, knowledge and experiences in a chosen enterprise, poor entrepreneurial managerial know-how and irrelevant curriculum (Uya and Mbang, 2017). With these, there is need for entrepreneurial guidance services for our university undergraduates. Entrepreneurship guidance therefore is a specialized direction, leadership and supervision given to individuals to acquire skills, ideas, managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay.

Entrepreneurial guidance require technological development and self-sustenance of the availability of human resources that have passed through series of sound vocational education programmes and are thus interested and prepared to take up the challenges (Atu 2006). The success of the present system of education depends much on the entrepreneurial guidance and functions of the school (Akpan, 2009). Moreover, it is important to highlight and elaborate on the entrepreneurial guidance skills needed that would help the students to acquire creative productive entrepreneurship as well as eradicating poverty in the nation.

### **Personal Interests the Life-long Skill Needed for Poverty Eradication**

Personal interest in making life-long entrepreneurial skill is central in trait and in every endeavour of human life Interest of the doer is very crucial for success. It is



regarded as the condition of wanting to know or learn about some skills. The researchers see personal interest as a useful tool in assessing the areas in which an individual has strengths and limitation. Miller (2005) observed the present unemployment situation will change when the youths are guided effectively at school into choosing subjects and occupations that best suit their individual abilities and interests. Interest is a very strong factor that is fundamental to the dynamics of behaviour, which propel an individual to engage in events or activities and sustaining it for the purpose of achieving a goal.

Personal interest enhances individual effectiveness competences include which the interpersonal skills, high initiative, ambition, high flexibility and adaptability, willingness to take risks and strong willingness to learn (Uya and Mbang, 2017). Personal interest is a strong initiative entrepreneurial skills often needed to drive and achieve task mastery, regardless of the extra effort necessary to do so. They should inculcate confident in their capabilities to perform well, enjoy seeking out novel opportunities and persevere even in the face of difficult challenges. The students need to be patient and persistent, passionately driven to embrace new challenges while striving to exceed set expectations and standards (Wetenhall, 2013). It is interest that gives the zeal and energy to overcome difficulties and in most cases enjoy the situations of the work environment no matter how tedious and arduous the task may be (Onyejiaku, 2011).

### **Academic Competences as the Life-long Skill Needed for Poverty Eradication**

Academic competences are primarily related to 'knowing what'; 'knowing why' and 'knowing how' knowledge. LeDeist and Winterton (2005) defined academic competences as conceptual or theoretical knowledge and understanding the necessary skills, ideas, attitudes needed for the individual

student to overcome poverty, be self-reliance and self-fulfilled. Intellectual skills allow better understanding of different rules and concepts, differentiation between the latter and also as skills enabling action and decision making. Academic competences seem to be learned formally within an organized learning environment, but they can be gained informally by experience as well (Le Deist and Winterton 2005).

Possession of appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes facilitates the acquisition of appropriate competences as well as strengthens the entrepreneurial intentions. Only individuals who have sufficiently strong entrepreneurial intention enter into entrepreneurship or enterprising (Jong de and Wennekers, 2008). The content provided and acquired in schools in terms of knowledge and skills are more of theoretical which cannot be translated into practice by students. Some contents taught are abstracts, irrelevant and cannot be related to real life situation, thereby limiting the students' competence in themselves and create fear of failure due to lack of competence in any entrepreneurial intentions. Appropriate instructional methods and relevant knowledge as well as skills related contents should be taught in our universities.

### **Career Choice and the Life-long Skill Needed for Poverty Eradication**

Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future, so it is important to stay positive otherwise it can become a stressful time for all involved.

Career choice could be seen as an act of choosing or selecting, the opportunity or power of choosing, an alternative action or possibility, and a supply from which to select a profession or occupation as one's life's work. This could also be seen as pathway with commitment based on a choice or decision taken. Career choice therefore has an important role in advocating for broad based career plans that focus on the student's interests and abilities which will give students increase future career options.

Most students are provided with inadequate realistic information about occupations and careers on which to base their interests. Meanwhile, job experiences play an important part in the development of maturity with regard to vocational interests, abilities, and traits (Black and Langone, 2007; and Pumpian, Fisher, Certo, and Smalley, 2007).

Popular notions of a career include the idea of a lifetime association with a chosen profession; the potential for graded career progression upwards into management and of safe well rewarded secure employment. The notion of what constitutes a career may be changing. Evidence provided by Young (2014) claimed that talented young people want more out of life than their predecessors and they want more than their career offers. The centrality of a career in life and as a 'label' may be declining (Faustian, 2015). They are looking for personal satisfaction and by the mid-30s they find themselves caught up in a financial trap, they are disappointed with the reality of work and their career does not help them to realize their wider life ambitions. So, the drive towards seeking a better work life balance and life-long skills in entrepreneurship is relatively important.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the influence of entrepreneurial guidance on long life eradication of poverty among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. Specifically, the study was designed;

1. to determine the influence of students' personal interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
2. to ascertain the influence of students' academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
3. to find out the influence of students' career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of confidence.

1. There is no significant influence of students' personal interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
2. There is no significant influence of students' academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
3. There is no significant influence of students' career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study would be of great benefit to the educational/curriculum planners, parents, guidance counsellors, teachers, students and the general public.

The study would be relevant to educational/curriculum planners since it would help them to take cognizance of the manpower requirements necessary to meet the socio-economic aspirations of all sectors of economy. The guidance counselors, teachers and parents would benefit from the insight on how to help students make wise career choice.

To the students, the study would reveal to them the factors that can influence their career choice and the need for them to make a positive life-long entrepreneurial choice irrespective of their academic career in order to help them eradicate poverty. The study would educate the public on the amount of knowledge and skills on entrepreneurship our youths supposed to acquire in their career choice due to unavailability of job in Nigeria as a whole.

### **Research Methods**

The research design used for this study was ex-post facto design. This is considered suitable because the researcher did not have direct control of the independent variable because they were inherently not able to manipulate. The area of the study was University of Uyo. The University of Uyo is situated in Akwalbom State, South-South Geo-political zone of Nigeria. It comprises of twelve (12) Faculties, 77 Departments, 7 Directors of Programmes of Studies, and 2 Coordinators of Programmes. The study is delimited to the Faculty of Education comprising of 7 Departments in t... undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes.

The population of the study... aduate students for 2016/2017 academic session. Out of the total population 1335 students were selected through cluster sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument named



Entrepreneurial Guidance and Life-long Eradication of Poverty Questionnaire (EGLEPQ) was used. The EGLEPQ comprised of 25-item questionnaire developed to elicit entrepreneurial guidance and life-long eradication of poverty. In each independent variable (academic competence, personal interest and career choice), five (5) items were constructed and 10 items were constructed to elicit students' life-long eradication of poverty perception. The instrument was scored as follows for positive items and reversed for negative items: Strongly agree (SA) – 4; Moderately Agree (MA) – 3; moderately disagree (MD) – 2 and strongly disagree (SD) – 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test at 0.05 alpha level of significant were used to answer the research questions and test for the hypotheses respectively.

### Data Analysis and Results

The null hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level of significance. Independent t-test was used in testing hypotheses.

### Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of personal interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students.

**Table 1: Result of Independent t-test Analysis Students' Personal interest on Eradication of Poverty through Entrepreneurship**

	Personal Interest	N	□	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Poverty Eradication	High Interest	854	2.63	.84	1333	2.42	±1.96	Rejected
	Low Interest	481	2.49	.73				

\* Significant at .05 alpha level: N = 1335

Data presented in Table 1 shows that the mean response of students' high interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.63) is higher than the mean response of student's low interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.49). Also, the numbers of students who have high interest in eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship are more than those whose interest is low. This implies that the higher the number of students high interest, the brighter the chance of poverty eradication among undergraduate students through entrepreneurship.

Also, the t-calculated value of 2.42 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level of significance with 1333 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of personal interest on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. The inference is that students' personal interest has significant influence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship.



**Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant influence of academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students.

**Table 2: Result of Independent t-test Analysis Students' Academic Competence on Eradication of Poverty through Entrepreneurship**

	Academic Competence	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Poverty Eradication	High Competence	570	2.51	.66	1333	1.42	±1.96	Accepted
	Low Competence	765	2.66	.84				

\* Significant at .05 alpha level: N = 1335

Data presented in Table 2 shows that the mean response of students' high academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.51) is less than the mean response of students' low academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.66). Also, the numbers of students who have high academic competence in eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship are less than those whose academic competence is high. This implies that the lower the number of students with high academic competence, the slower the chance of poverty eradication among undergraduate students through entrepreneurship.

Table 2 also revealed that the t-calculated value of 1.42 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level of significance with 1333 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of academic competence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students is retained. The inference is that students' academic competence does not have significant influence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship.

**Hypothesis Three**

There is no significant influence of career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students.

**Table 3: Result of Independent t-test Analysis Students' Career Choice on Eradication of Poverty through Entrepreneurship**

	Career Choice	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Poverty Eradication	Positive Choice	747	2.67	1.02	1333	3.18	±1.96	Rejected
	Negative Choice	588	2.59	.93				

\* Significant at .05 alpha level: N = 1335

Data presented in Table 3 shows that the mean response of positive choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.67) is higher than the mean response of negative choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship (2.59). Also, the numbers of students who have positive choice in eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship are more than those with negative choice. This implies that the higher the number of students with positive choice, the higher the chance of poverty eradication among undergraduate students through entrepreneurship.

The analysis further indicates that the t-calculated value of 3.18 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level of significance with 1333 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship among undergraduate students is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. The inference is that students' career choice has significant influence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The findings of this study on Hypothesis One showed that students' personal interest has significant influence on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship. It is therefore observed that interest is a very strong factor that is fundamental to the dynamics of behaviour, which propel an individual to engage in events or activities and sustaining it for the purpose of achieving a goal. The willingness to take risks and strong willingness to learn and grow in entrepreneurial skills is a determining factor. This could also be ascribed to student's preparedness to take responsibilities, increased in entrepreneurial skills, ability and exposure in understanding of diverse perspectives. This agrees with the earlier study conducted by Uya and Mbang (2017), that personal interest enhances individual effective competences which include the interpersonal skills, high initiative, ambition, high flexibility and adaptability, willingness to take risks and strong willingness to learn.

The result of the data analysis on Hypothesis Two indicated that there is no significant influence of students' academic competences on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship. The outcome of this finding could be based on the fact that students do not acquire enough cognitive skills, and thus knowledge on one hand and understanding on the other could not be translated to real life practical experiences to enable them succeed in entrepreneurship. A knowledge of students' abilities and skills (for example problem solving, communicating); interests (for example the environment, course) and values (for example wanting to be successful, wanting to help others) are important in eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship. The findings agrees with the earlier study carried out by Le Deist and Winterton (2005) that academic competences could be gained informally by experience within an organized environment. This implies that individual student is required to acquire knowledge and



understanding with necessary skills, ideas and attitudes needed to be self-reliance in other overcome poverty.

The result of the data analysis in Hypothesis Three revealed that there is a significant influence of students' career choice on eradication of poverty through entrepreneurship. The outcome of this finding could be based on the fact that students' choice is paramount in individual life. To a great extent, their success depends on successful engagement of creative thinking abilities which engage them in reframing problems and generating innovative solutions have imagination, empathy and use relevant information to translate the skills in practice. Career choice therefore has an important role in advocating for broad based career plans that focus on the student's interests and abilities which will give students increase future career options. Evidence earlier provided by Young (2014) claimed that talented young people want more out of life than their predecessors and they want more than their career offers.

### **Conclusion**

Eradication of poverty among undergraduate students through entrepreneurial guidance for long life successes is attainable if the students are ready to pick up the challenges. Though this situation might have inference with the current economic state of the nation, it is complicatedly connected with the type of interest, competence and choice for the entrepreneurial skills obtainable in the nation's schools. This study appears to encourage students at this times of financial challenge to generate entrepreneurial interest and getting into the business of their choice. However, if the entrepreneurship education curricula of our tertiary institutions are properly reformed and reviewed as enshrined, then dependency trend and struggle for paid employment would most likely give way for poverty eradication among undergraduate students in Nigeria as a whole.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of the study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Guidance and counselling should be given official space in the school timetable as a recognized educational activity. This would enable them guide the students to pursue courses which are relevant to them and the world of work in which they live.
2. Vocational guidance unit should be introduced in the educational institutions right from occupational fantasy level of the nursery school through tertiary level.
3. Higher institutions should create Entrepreneurship Centre for students to translate their academic competences development into entrepreneurship skills by providing industrial attachment Centre for the students.
4. Regular seminars and lectures/workshops on entrepreneurial opportunities /strategies should be organized by the higher institutions to trigger entrepreneurial spirit and to prepare students ahead upon graduation.

5. The government should make it compulsory for private schools to employ a guidance counsellor before authority to operate is given.

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