

SKILLS-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERROGATING EBONYI STATE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Relatively human capital development index in Ebonyi State is low with dilapidated school infrastructure facilities. This necessitated intervention of the government through her agencies to address human capital development challenges of the state. The scope of the study cuts across six selected local government areas in the state with a population of 1,488,900 being the 2020 projected population of the selected local government areas. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient through SPSS version 21 was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. Findings revealed that there is significant positive relationship between EB-CSDA's provision of classroom blocks and improvement on the quality of primary and secondary education provided for the pupils and students in the state, between 2010-2020; EB-CSDA's vocational training centres have

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significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas; EB-CSDA's has not significantly assisted indigent students to acquire primary and secondary education in the study area within the period under review; etc. The implication of the above is that the agency has contributed significantly to human capital development in the state, but a lot still needs to be done especially in the area of granting of scholarships to indigent students. The researcher therefore, recommended among others that Ebonyi State government should increase budgetary allocation to the EB-CSDA to further enhance her capacity towards provision of skills-based infrastructure for sustainable human capital development efforts in the state.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, human capital development is argued to be central to all development efforts. This assertion draws from the fact that development is made for man and not man for development. It therefore follows that where human capital development is not accorded due attention, any other development endeavour be it provision of infrastructure facilities such as quality road networks, street lights, bridges, flyovers, hospitals, clinics, pipe- borne water among others will hardly be efficiently utilized. Human capital is the most important asset to every human organization whether state or institutions and it is usually a product of functional education system (Chinwe, 2020). This explains why the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), insists that 26% of the annual budget of every country should be allocated to education as a critical component of any human capital development efforts (Ihejirika, 2020). The basis of the UNESCO's submission is to make sure that a substantial amount of financial resources are set aside for a deliberate effort at human capital development in a state.

Drawing from history, even though scholars such as Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, John Maynard Keynes among others had earlier contributed to the concept of human capital Nnaeto & Ndoh (2020) observed that human capital was popularized by Gary Becker, a renowned economist and noble Laureate from the University of Chicago. Human capital is defined as "the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life time and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances. Human capital measures the skills, education capacity and attributes of labour which influence their productive capacity and earning potential. Ogujuba & Adeniyi (2005) cited in Onah (2018), describes human capital development as an end or objective of development. It is a way to fulfill the potentials of people by enhancing their capacities. And this necessarily implies empowerment of people, and enabling them to participate actively in their own development.

Conventionally, there are indicators for measuring human capital development. These include among other things learning, enrollment in education at all levels; the education quality; the attainment of those already in the labour force; and workplace learning, level of opportunity in a country to acquire new skills both through formal on-the-job as well as through learning by doing, tacit, knowledge and learning from colleagues; employment, economic participation, skills; vulnerability of young population to exploitation as measured by the incidence of child labour; ratio between skilled adults and total adults. This extends to Human Development Index (HDI) which includes adults' literacy ratio; health knowledge and standard of living with many sub-variables such as life expectancy at birth, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capital income (World Economic Forum, 2015). These variables constitute parameters for measuring human capital development.

Viewed from the above, human capital development does not come by chance, rather it requires a deliberate sustained efforts targeted at planning and adequate provision of infrastructure facilities such as schools, modern classroom blocks, health care facilities, civic centres, vocational training centres, well- equipped laboratories, etc, and these form the mandates of the Ebonyi State Community and Social Development Agency (EB-CSDA), and constitute skills-based infrastructure facilities. Skills-based infrastructures are skill related facilities that support the development and enhancement of human skills. These facilities as listed above are expected to play critical role in human capital development where they are adequately provided.

In the words of Odunuga & Soretire (2015) a skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. It can mean simply being able to do a task very well in an acceptable manner, as well as having mastery of that task. It denotes expertise or ability developed in the course of training and experience and by extension the overall efforts at human capital development. Various kinds of skills exist in the body of knowledge. For instance, they include reasoning, cognitive, judgemental, creative, entrepreneurial, managerial, vocational, civic skills among others. Acquisition and utilization of these skills are keys to the accomplishment of the individual and the societal goals of human capital development and the over all goals of political and socio-economic development of a state. The researcher has taken major interest in vocational, managerial, entrepreneurship and civic skills among other issues because of their capacity to improve self- development; and attainment of these skills is dependent on certain infrastructure facilities or what this study referred to as skills-based infrastructure.

In historical perspective, efforts at provision of skills-based infrastructure and human capital development in Ebonyi State predate the establishment of EB-CSDA. Ebonyi State was created in 1996 with its peculiar developmental challenges. These challenges included poverty, poor infrastructure facilities as well as low level of human capital development. Before the establishment of EB-CSDA, there were notable achievements made in response to the demands of human capital development in the state. The first was the free and compulsory education for those in primary and secondary schools introduced by Dr. Sam Egwu, the first executive Governor of Ebonyi State borne out of the recognition that education is central to human capital development and the overall socio-economic and political development of every nation. It was argued that before the advent of free and compulsory education programme in Ebonyi State, the rate of pupils/students enrolment was very low, parents and guardians were not interested in sending their children especially female children to school. Instead, farming and other agricultural activities were given priority. Thus, schools were treated with levity. Those who were fortunate enough to

enter primary and secondary school levels did not have enough money to further their education. The conditions of schools from 1996 to 1999 were very pathetic and there were limited number of schools. In these schools, one could find dilapidated school buildings. There were inadequate educational and instructional materials. The learning environments were not conducive for effective learning and the numbers of teachers were small in comparison to the available number of pupils and students before the enactment of free and compulsory education policy on 16th June, 1999. However, successive administrations in the state made efforts following some milestone initiatives to address the ugly situation in the area of human capital development.

For instance, the elevation of the old campus of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) in Abakaliki to Ebonyi State University (EBSU), Abakaliki, establishment of State College of Education in Ikwo later in 2006, and later the establishment of School of Health Technology in Ngbo, Ohaukwu Local Government Area by the first executive governor of Ebonyi State, Dr. Sam Egwu, were some of the initial commendable actions taken to improve human capital development in Ebonyi State (Udu & Ibeogu, 2019). Within this period also, the state government keyed into Higher Education Pact (HIPACT) Programme, a British educational organization programme, which aimed at inculcating knowledge, self- motivation and leadership training in the beneficiaries. Through this programme, many youths in the state including the civil servants gained scholarships and studied overseas. The HIPACT Programme was followed by the establishment of the Work and Study unit in the Ebonyi State University, which offered government workers and other interested candidates' in Ebonyi State the opportunity to work and on part- time basis pursue their degree programmes. The establishment of Staff Development Centre by the immediate past governor of Ebonyi State, His Excellency Martin Nwanchor Elechi, and granting of scholarships and automatic employment to many best graduating students were also laudable achievements in human capital development in the state. The previous administration in the state led by Engineer David Nwaeze Umahi, extended this effort through the establishment of Ministry of Human Capital Development and Monitoring in 2018. Through the effort of this ministry, and in partnership with Industrial Trust Fund (ITF) and the office of the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Ebonyi youths who hawk in major cities in Nigeria such as Lagos, Onitsha, etc were encouraged to return home and learn skills. Those who paid heed to the call were empowered through training programmes that cut across catering and event management, tiling production and laying of inter- locks, furniture making, and welding fabrication, etc., while others were given free tricycles (Okutu, 2019).

Despite the achievements recorded by successive administration in the area of human capital development in Ebonyi State, human capital development indicators seem to suggest that not much has been realized in this regard. For instance, Onyeike & Ogujawa (2011) revealed that enrolment of the girl-child into primary school in Ebonyi State is unimpressively low and calls for concern. Available statistics show that only 43 percent of Ebonyi State school children are presently attending any form of organized school system while 57 percent are out of school following some existing negative factors impeding learning in the state. On the other hand, Ebonyi State ranked 20th(0.567) in 2018 human capital development index behind Oyo, Kogi and Taraba states with 0.440, 0.451 and 0.461 respectively. This development however, made the United Nations Education Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the Ebonyi State Universal Basic Education (UBEB), to inaugurate an Enrolment Drive Campaign in communities across the 13 Local Government Areas of the state to tackle the ugly trend (Okutu, 2017).

Realizing that a sustained effort in human capital development requires critical skills-based infrastructure such as schools, provision of adequate classroom blocks, healthcare facilities laboratories, libraries, civic centres, vocational training centres among others, it became imperative for the Ebonyi State government to key into the partnership strategy of the World Bank in order to enhance the provision of infrastructure facilities in the State. This resolve partly underscores the centrality of human capital development to all other development endeavours and orientations.

In view of the above, as part of the 2005-2007 country partnership strategy, the Federal government of Nigeria and World Bank agreed to harmonize World Bank funded Community Development projects in Nigeria to ensure that resources are effectively and efficiently targeted at developing human capital and reducing poverty levels in the country. To this end, the Local Empowerment and Environment Management Programme Project (LEEMP) and Community Based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) were merged to form Community Social Development Project (CSDP). Consequently, Ebonyi State was chosen as one of the benefiting states in Nigeria. In an attempt to ensure effective implementation of the mandate of the World Bank assisted community development programmes in Ebonyi State, Ebonyi State Community Development Agency, EBCDA was established to take the full responsibility of implementing the community development projects in the state following the passage of the Ebonyi State law No. 004 of 2009. The law mandates the Agency to empower communities to plan, part-finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially- inclusive multi-sectoral micro-projects such as construction and rehabilitation of roads, schools, culverts, bridges, boreholes, health facilities, portable water, rural electrification, classrooms, laboratories, Ventilated Improved Pit Laterine (VIP) toilets, civic centres and drainages system (Ezeali, Uwadi & Nwaowu, 2018; Udu & Onwe, 2016; Nkwede & Nwovu, 2013). EB-CSDA development intervention is a partnership arrangement whereby the benefiting communities prioritize their needs and contribute ten (10) percent of the cost of such projects in monetary value or other resources while the Agency bears ninety percent of the cost in order to provide micro-projects towards the development of the communities (Ezeali, et al, 2018).

Available studies on the contributions of EB-CSDA to socio-economic development in Ebonyi State before now focused more on poverty reduction and other areas other than skills-based infrastructure and human capital development. For instance, Udu & Onwe (2016) and Ezeali, et al, (2018) among others found that EB-CSDA has made significant positive impact on poverty reduction and in improving the living standard of the rural communities through provision of infrastructure facilities such as hospitals, bridges, feeder roads, etc. These studies paid little attention to human capital development. Therefore there existed a gap on the effect of the Agency's skills-related projects on human capital development in the state. Arising from the foregoing, the expectation of the public is that EB-CSDA's skills- based projects and programmes are supposed to enhance the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools in the state, enhance skills of youths, grant scholarships to indigent students in order to satisfy their quest to further their education and improve civic skills among the people. Consequently, the Agency's intervention in the area of schools, provision of classroom blocks, laboratories, civic centres, vocational training centres and how they relate to improved quality of teaching and learning, enhanced skills acquisition for the teeming unemployed youths, is yet to be determined. No effort has therefore been made before now to ascertain the contributions of EB-CSDA's skills-infrastructure facilities to human capital development in Ebonyi State. It is based on the above backdrop that this study became imperative. The study was carried out in selected local government areas of the state

bearing in mind that the people within these areas are the direct beneficiaries of the Agency's programmes and projects.

1.1 Statement of the problem

There are skills-based infrastructures relevant to the accomplishment of the task of human capital development. These facilities include but not limited to availability of modern schools and conducive classroom blocks, teaching and learning materials, conducive office for teachers, libraries, skills- acquisition centres, vocational training centres and these constitute the central elements of EB-CSDA's mandates. However, the dilapidated and the seeming insufficient nature of available infrastructure facilities, especially in most schools in the study area appears to suggest that not much have been done in the area of human capital development by the agency. School children appear to still study under unhealthy environment owing to inadequate provision of education facilities such as modern classroom blocks among others. Relatively, human capital development index in Ebonyi State is still low. Ebonyi State ranked 20th(0.567) in 2018 human capital development index behind Oyo, Kogi and Taraba states with 0.440, 0.451 and 0.461 respectively (Okutu, 2017). The problem of enrolment, access to quality education and teachers - students' standard ratio appears not to have been addressed. Children of school age migrate from rural to urban centres in the state such as Abakaliki, Afikpo and Onueke and are seen during school hours as from 7 am down to the late hours in the evening hawking different types of items ranging from fruits, vegetables, phone accessories, groundnuts, handkerchiefs, etc. Unfortunately, this extends to the rural communities where the hard working children are erroneously mistaken to be the ones who mostly do not go to school but assist their parents in selling different types of items during the market days. Regrettably, according to World Economic Forum, (2015), child labour stifles the health, education and long term human capital development potentials of the children involved while other forms of exploitative employment- relations often referred to as "modern slavery" undermine efforts at human capital development. It is worrisome, as this portends great dangers for the future of the youths in particular and the state in general owing to the fact that no nation or state develops better than the quality of her human capital in the 21st century contemporary and dynamic world. A child who did not receive adequate education and training (both formal and informal), or acquire the needed skills, lives in ignorance, poverty and disease, suffers from inferiority complex and the world as it appears, means different thing to him or her. Among his peers, he seems to show undue loyalty that does not draw from mutual respect, but unfortunately as a result of lack/inadequate exposure which may have resulted from poor human capital development. The decayed skills-based infrastructure in most schools in the study area seemingly does not support any meaningful deliberate effort at human capital development especially with regards to skills acquisition.

Coupled with the above is the issue of skills acquisition for the teeming unemployed youths in the state. There appears to be dissonance between the cost of providing micro- projects by the agency and the quality of those infrastructures. There appears negative correlation between EB-CSDA and provision of skill acquisition and vocational training centres. It is also worrisome the rate at which unemployed youths roam the streets without jobs and its concomitant increase in crime rate. These crimes include rape, snatching of phones and handbags, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) fraud, theft, burglary that are perpetrated within the localities. Many youths have resorted to gambling, Niger Bets, where they spend the most hours of the day gambling, involvement in internet fraud as means of survival despite the obvious consequences of such acts.

Despite the inevitability of human capital development to the overall development of the individual and the nation at large including Ebonyi state, granting of scholarships to the indigent students seems to be a difficult task for the respective stakeholders. Indigent youths who have the zeal to learn hardly realize their goals of quality education.

Interestingly, civic skills provide the foundation for civic responsibility, and reinforce democratic values. Those who possess and maximize the skills feel a link to their communities and the well-being of other citizens. Every community needs community service minded individuals to survive-soldiers, police and all manner of public service orientations. Every society also needs entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, artisans among others. Civic skills ensure that individuals as well as the society pursue the course of patriotism and also development. Unfortunately, the extent to which to EB-CSDA has guaranteed an enhanced civic skill through her mandate of provision of civic centers is yet to be determined. Therefore a study of this nature which sought to determine the nexus between EB-CSDA's skills-based infrastructure and human capital development in Ebonyi State became imperative.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to ascertain the effect of EB-CSDA's skills-based infrastructure facilities on human capital development in selected local government areas of Ebonyi State: Specific objectives include to:

- i. determine the extent to which the EB-CSDA has improved the quality of teaching in both primary and secondary schools through construction of modern class room blocks in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020.
- ii. investigate the contributions of EB-CSDA's vocational training centres on enhancement of entrepreneurial skills among the youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State between, 2010-2020

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the study:

- i. **Ho:** EB-CSDA has not significantly improved the quality of teaching through construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020.
- ii. **Ho:** EB-CSDA's vocational training centres have not significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills among the youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Skills-Based Infrastructure

The concept of skill according to Kutzhanova, Lyons & Lichteinstein (2009) in Bobou (2015) “comes from the field of psychology, where it is widely used to explain human development across different domains. Skills are integrated routines combining knowledge and ability with a perceived environmental domain of application. Skill denotes expertise or ability developed in the course of training and experience. In the words of Odunuga & Soretire (2015) a skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork, leadership and self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used.

Human capital development is an exercise that requires critical infrastructure.

Skill-based infrastructures are facilities and resources that support the development and utilization of human capital. These infrastructures include but not limited to schools, class room blocks, civic centres, skill acquisition centres, and ICT facilities. The place of infrastructure in national development cannot be overemphasized. Power is needed to run our industries, light up our offices and homes; we also need a robust mobility infrastructure to get goods and people around; and we also need vibrant information and telecommunication backbone to facilitate commerce and for social interactions. Basic economic and social infrastructure is vital for the creation of public goods and services that are essential for sustained improvement in the quality of life of the citizenry. Industrialization itself is unattainable without a complementary infrastructural base. Arguing the case of Africa further, Juma (2011) opined that without adequate infrastructure, the continent will not be able to harness the power of science and innovation to meet sustainable development objectives and be competitive in international markets. According to him, it has been revealed that increasing the stock of infrastructure by 1% in an emerging country context could add 1% to the level of GDP. In some cases, the impact has been far greater, the Mozal aluminium smelter investment in Mozambique not only doubled the country's exports and added 7% to its GDP, but it also created new jobs and skills in local firms (Juma, 2011). This situation can in turn offer a wide variety of new products and services, as well as attract foreign direct investment. Evidence from Uganda suggests that public investment in infrastructure-related projects has contributed significantly to rural development. Indeed, investments in infrastructure further represent untapped potential for the creation of productive employment because it creates the need to manage those infrastructures effectively (Juma, 2008). It implies that African countries will benefit if they expand their inter-regional infrastructure.

In the same vein, Nigeria especially Ebonyi State stands to benefit from huge opportunities that lay ahead if skills-based infrastructure were accorded the desired attention. Infrastructure investments also stimulate technological innovation and technology learning which is very important to a country's capacity to maintain current infrastructure and become competitive.

Ezeali, et al, (2018) document that EB-CSDA through her community and social development project (CSDP) empowers communities to plan, participate, finance, implement, monitor and maintain sustainable and socially inclusive multi-sectoral micro-projects such as construction and rehabilitation of roads, schools, culverts, bridges, boreholes, health facilities, portable water, rural electrification, classrooms, laboratories, VIP toilets, civic centres, water, transportation, vocational training centres and drainages system. Among these facilities, there are some that are significant to effective human capital development especially as it concerns education and skill development and they include schools, constant supply of electricity, pipe borne water, classrooms, laboratories, civic centres, vocational training centres, laboratories, and clinics, etc.

2.2 Human Capital Development

World Bank (2002) sees human capital as the sum total stock of knowledge, skills, competencies, and innovative abilities possessed by the population. To Clark and Ezech (2009) cited in Onah (2018), the actual concern to any human capital development enterprise is that of optimizing personnel use to the extent that inefficiencies can be removed, skills improved and applied judiciously so that the well-being of either the people or the enterprise in question can be guaranteed. Human capital represents the human factor, the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that give the organization its distinctive character. The human elements of the organization are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative thrust which if properly motivated can ensure the long-term survival of the system. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1990) cited in Amadi & Alolote (2019) notes that the concept of human capital refers to knowledge, skills, attitudes, physical and managerial effort required to manipulate capital, technology, and land among other things to produce, goods and services for human consumption.

Human capital development has become a core element in the development efforts of developing countries, in the knowledge society of the 21st century. This is because comparative advantage among nations derives less and less from natural resources and cheap labour endowment and increasingly from technical innovations and competitive use of knowledge (World Bank, 2002; Amadi & Alolote, 2019). Oyewole & Adegoke (2018) see human capital development as a deliberate and continuous process of acquiring requisite knowledge, skills and experiences that are applied to produce economic value for driving sustainable national development. The relevance of human capital development in the achievement of meaningful and sustainable economic growth has been widely acknowledged in various studies. In the absence of substantial investment in human capital in any country as argued by many scholars, sustained economic growth and development would only be a mere wish, never a reality. For instance, to substantiate the foregoing, Becker (1992) in Oyewole & Adegoke (2018) maintained that investments in education and training are the most relevant types of investments in human capital. He further opined that human capital is linked to economic growth, from individual to national level.

In an attempt to advance the conceptual meaning of human capital development Okojie (2014), states that human capital refers to the abilities and skills of human resources of a country, while human capital development refers to the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons

who have the skills, education and experience that are critical for economic growth and development of a country's economy. Also Harbison (1973) in Oyewole & Adegoke (2018) views human capital development as a deliberate and continuous process of acquiring requisite knowledge, skills and experiences that are applied to produce economic value for driving sustainable development. It therefore follows from the foregoing, that the pursuit of sustainable development will achieve little result without sustainable efforts at human capital development which ensures that skills relevant to performance are acquired.

Human capital development concerns all kinds of labour, coaching, training, internship and human capital management investments. Fundamentally, it is the intangible factor that guarantees enhancement of human intellect, skills, and the provision of goods and services. In this postulation, Ojukwu (2003) in Amadi & Alolote (2019) submitted that human capital development presupposes investments, activities and processes that produce vocational and technical education knowledge, skills, health or values that are embodied in people. It implies building an appropriate balance and large human resource- base and providing an enabling environment for individuals to be fully engaged and contribute to the organizational and national goals. Any effort according to him, to increase human knowledge, enhance skills, productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of individuals is an effort towards human capital development. In contributing to the discourse,

In what seems to be broad in outlook, the OECD in Nnaeto & Ndoh (2020) defined human capital development as the process of increasing the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances. It further observed that human capital measures the skills education capacity and attributes of labour which influence their productive capacity and earning potential. The strengthening of human capital and its effective deployment by an organization or state will definitely yield positive return into the economy of the organization or state.

Drawing from the above, human capital development is therefore seen as a process that geared towards education, increase in skill levels and problem-solving abilities that enable an individual to be a productive worker in the 21st century global economy. It is a process that involves age-long training and commitment to improve an individual or group capacity to substantially adapt favourably in the dynamic contemporary world environment. The inevitability of human capital development in comparison to other development orientations lies in the very fact that it drives other development endeavours. Human capital development is the nucleus of development drives in that it ensures that other development undertakings are achieved for without which the goal of development becomes a wide goose chase. Quality teaching is an effort directed at human capital development. Infrastructure utilization is a process that requires trained and efficient human capital. It can therefore be rightly stated that human capital development is the whole gamut of processes that focused on human capital building in terms of education, skill development, regular training that are necessary for individual development as well as in the growth and development of the society. However, it is apt to argue that the goal of human capital development will hardly be achieved in the absence of skills-based infrastructure.

2.3 Empirical Review

Nnaeto & Ndoh (2020) studied “Human Capital Development and Sustainable Growth in Nigeria”: Lessons from East Asia”. The study sought among other things to identify the problems militating against human capital development in Nigeria and evaluate potentials for sustainable growth through human capital development in Nigeria. Human capital development theory propounded by Gary Becker, Jacob Mincer and Theodore Schultz was used as the theoretical framework of analysis. Tables and percentages were used to analyze the data generated for the study. Findings showed that there is a substantial relationship between well-funded and professionally- managed formal and vocational education and human capital development/sustainable growth in the state. It recommends that Nigeria should invest in human capital, via education and training in view of the fact that quality education ensures sustainable growth of the economy. Okolocha, et al, (2020) adopted survey research design to study the “Effect of skill Acquisition on Youth Employability in Nigeria”. The major instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, drawn on a four point Likert Scale. Mean and Chi-square statistical tools were used for data analysis. The researchers found that emphasis on academic excellence, lack of quality skilled trainers, acute shortage of facilities, inconsistent follow- up by government and poor funding are problems facing skills acquisition development in Nigeria. The paper recommended that teachers require professional skills development abilities, competence, years of experience through understanding of the subject matter and effective involvement of students in the institutional delivery. In a similar study, Gabriela, Alina, Ana, Maria & Daniel (2020) researched on a topic titled “Entrepreneurship Education through successful Entrepreneurial models in Higher Education Institutions”. Qualitative and quantitative methodology was adopted in order to get an in-depth understanding of student perceptions of successful entrepreneur policies. Wilcoxon signed Ranks Test was used for data analysis. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education based on successful entrepreneurial role models may positively influence the entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions of students and could lead to higher orientation of students perception towards social benefits entrepreneurship (new jobs) compared to financial ones (high income). It was therefore recommended that if educators want to improve the efficiency of education focused on developing entrepreneurial skills, graduate programmes should be designed differently for business and non-business students, since studying successful entrepreneurial stories impacts these two groups differently. Amadi & Alolote, (2019) analyzed the effect of human capital investment on the Nigerian economy from 1986 to 2017. Secondary data were used. This was principally generated from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), and Statistical Bulletins 2017. The variables for the work includes: Real Gross Domestic Product, Government Expenditure on Education, Government Expenditure on Health and Gross capital, formation. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) techniques were used to analyze the data. Among other things, it was revealed that the adjusted coefficient of determination (R²) shows that 97.3% of variations in the real gross domestic product are being accounted for by government expenditure on education, government expenditure on health and gross capital formation while the remaining 2.7% is accounted for by variables not included in the model. The study therefore, recommended that policy makers in Nigeria should accord more attention to budgetary allocation to the health sector by increasing its allocation. The disbursement and public expenditure of the allocated funds should be made transparent.

In a related study, Ezeali, et al, (2018) among other things found that EB-CSDA’S Programmes and projects are participatory in that the Agency utilizes community driven development approach

in projects identification, implementation and monitoring. However, the study also found that budgetary allocations still constitute constraints to the development strives of the Agency. Based on the outcome of the study, provision of adequate funds, accountability and transparency in the management of community projects, etc, were recommended.

The empirical works reviewed helped in establishing gap in knowledge as none of the existing works addressed the concern of the current study.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Human Capital theory propounded by Gary Becker (1980). Becker emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their stock of human capital. Human capital development increases the knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services or ideas in market circumstances. Schultz (1961) cited in Amadi & Alolote (2019), posits that people who invest in education increase their stock of human capital. Examples of such investments include expenditure on education, on the job training, investment skills acquisition, productive investment in human being, an investment which the proponents of human capital theory consider to be equally or even more worthwhile than that of physical capital. In fact, contemporary knowledge in the United States of America acknowledges that investment in human capital is three times greater than that in physical capital. Human capital theorists have established that basic literacy enhances the productivity of workers in skill occupations (Amadi & Alolote, 2019). Human capital development focuses on skill acquisition and assumes that learning a wide variety of skills shows an exceptionally similarity in development from introductory representation of knowledge through starting changes in conduct to eventual fluent, unconstrained, to a great extent, and profoundly- gifted behaviour and that this phenomena can be accounted for by a lot of essential principles regular to acquisition of skills. Lending credence to the theory, Okolocha, et al, (2020) note that skill acquisition is a type of learning; it guarantees that adult starts building capacity through largely unequivocal procedures, and with subsequent adequate practice and exposure, move into verifiable procedures/adaptations. The theory is relevant to the study in view of the fact that it substantially relates to skills development. The importance of human capital cannot be over-emphasized. Human capital development recognizes that human capacity building is key to overall development of the individual in particular and the nation at large. Igboaja (2010) cited in Ndukwe & Nwakamma (2015) document that education is spiritual and material investment". It is spiritual because it drives the mystical forces of ethics, morality and patriotism needed for the material investment for the national development. Human capital development, specifically, training enriches people's understanding of life and leads to social benefits to individuals and society. This buttresses the notion that the key to development lies in people, in the institution in which their thinking finds expression, and in the play of opportunity on ideas and institutions. Therefore, human capital development has the capacity to address mountainous challenges arising from youth unemployment ranging from cultism, to rape, armed robbery, hostage taking, child trafficking, internet fraud, theft, snatching of phones and other items, terrorism, banditry, etc. The foregoing aligns with the position of Onah (2015) who observed that an untrained member of staff is a liability to the organization. This means that formal and informal education is crucial in human development both at home and the nation at large. The importance of equipping the people especially youth with requisite skills for continuous improvement in line with changing dynamics of the world system cannot be over emphasized. It corresponds with the submission of one of the renowned scholars in the field of development studies. For instance, Rodney (1980) in Onwe, et

al, (2021) maintains that development implies increasing skill and capacity to do things, greater freedom, self- confidence, creativity, self -discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. Human Capital Development focuses on the individual as a unit of development to improve relevant skills. It is a way of providing sustainable human development and is capable of driving other development indicators in Ebonyi State. This has made provision of skill-based infrastructure facilities such as schools, modern class room blocks, skill acquisition centres among others imperative as the core instruments of effective human capital development. It is based on the foregoing that the theory is considered relevant for the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Six Local governments were selected across the three senatorial zones of the state with a total population of 1,482,900. Taro Yamani formula was used to derive a sample size of 400. The major instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire while test re-test technique was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient through SPSS version 21 was adopted to test the hypotheses formulated for the study.

4. TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis one

HO1: EB-CSDA has not significantly improved the quality of teaching through construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020.

HA1: EB-CSDA has significantly improved the quality of teaching through construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020.

The result of the test was shown in the table below:

Correlations

		Provision_of _Classroom_ Blocks	Quality_of_tea ching
Provision_of_Class room_Blocks	Pearson Correlation	1	.889**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	382	382
Quality_of_teachin g	Pearson Correlation	.889**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	382	382

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows the result of the correlations test to determine the relationship between EBCSDA’s Classroom Blocks and Quality of Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. The result revealed that the P-value 0.01 was less than 0.05 which implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between EBCSDA’s Classroom Blocks and Quality of Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State within the period under study. Consequently, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected and the study upheld that EB-CSDA has significantly improved the quality of teaching through

construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020. Moreover, the statistical test showed a correlation coefficient of 0.889 which implies that EB-CSDA has significantly improved the quality of teaching through construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State, between 2010-2020.

Hypothesis two

HO2: EB-CSDA’s vocational training centres have not significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study.

HA2: EB-CSDA’s vocational training centres have significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study.

The result of the test was shown in the table below:

Correlations

		Provision_of_Vocational_Training_Centres	Entrepreneurial_Skills
Provision_of_Vocational_Training_Centres	Pearson Correlation	1	.721
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	382	382
Entrepreneurial_Skills	Pearson Correlation	.721**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	382	382

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows the result of the correlations test to determine the relationship between EBCSDA’s Vocational Training Centres and enhancement of Youth entrepreneurial Skills in Ebonyi State. The result revealed that the P-value 0.01 was less than 0.05 which implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between EB-CSDA’s vocational training centres have significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study within the period under study. Consequently, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected and the study upheld that EB-CSDA’s vocational training centres have significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study. Moreover, the statistical test showed a correlation coefficient of 0.721 which implies that EB-CSDA’s vocational training centres have significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills of youths in the selected local government areas of Ebonyi State within the period under study.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The results of the study showed that: (i) there is significant relationship between EB-CSDA’s provision of classroom blocks and improvement on the quality of primary and secondary education for the pupils and students in the state between 2010-2020. The result revealed a p-value of 0.01

less than 0.05. The result of the correlation coefficient was 0.889 which implies that EB-CSDA has significantly improved the quality of teaching in the study area through construction of modern classroom blocks in both primary and secondary schools; (ii) EB-CSDA's vocational training centres have enhanced entrepreneurial skills among the youths in the selected local government areas. The statistical test showed a correlation coefficient of 0.721 which implies that EB-CSDA's vocational training centres have significantly enhanced entrepreneurial skills among youths in the study area. The result of this study is consistent with that of Ezeali, et al, (2018) who discovered that the EB-CSDA has promoted community and socio-economic development in Ebonyi State through the provision of over 288 micro-projects in 135 communities covering the entire 13 local government areas. The infrastructural facilities provided include portable water, rural electrification, classrooms, schools, laboratories, VIP toilets, hospitals and health centres, markets, construction and rehabilitation of feeder roads, culverts and bridges. These according to the researchers have increased the number of children in schools, provided access to drinking water, reduced diseases, infections, maternal and infant mortality rate and contributed positively to the socio-economic development of Ebonyi State. It has improved the learning environment in the study area and made study environment more conducive. It is also in agreement with Udu & Onwe (2016), who revealed that the Ebonyi State Community and Social Development Agency has made significant positive impact on poverty reduction and in improving the living standard of the rural communities despite the challenges of pervasive poverty in the area. The utility of skills-based infrastructure to effective teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized. Hence, classroom blocks and schools are among the infrastructure equipments for all learners that add to favourable learning setting and quality education. The outcome of this study also aligns with the study by Ayeni & Adelabu (2016) who found that the quality of furnishings accessible in an academic institution has a beneficial connection to the quality of teaching and learning operations which in turn contributes to the achievements of objectives. Accordingly, furniture quality describes how long this will last while comfortable classrooms and appropriate provision of educational resources will assist educators perform their educational job and improve learning outcomes. Apagu, Ibrahim & Adamu (2016) discovered that accessibility of infrastructure equipment is one of the key requirements for effective curriculum execution. Only where workshop facilities instruments and machinery are accessible and applicable can this element of the curriculum be applied. They argued that availability of suitable workshop equipment enhances acquisition of abilities by enabling all learners to take part in demonstrations and exercise that will assist them to continue building their abilities.

The findings of this study is also in agreement with the outcome of the work of Lyimo, Too & Kipng'etich (2017) who discovered that availability of infrastructure services enhance learning and sharing of knowledge. Alluding to the outcome of this study, a host of scientists including Similarly, Mokaya (2013) found that enhanced performance is linked to appropriate classroom space, extensive library spacing, well-equipped laboratories/workshops, appropriate water and hygiene equipments, and active involvement in co-curricular operations (Nasire & Efendi, 2017). Payate (2014) pointed out that the level of availability of infrastructural facilities enhance the initial process of the skills to be acquired. Skills acquisition can be achieved by the students in a situation where the infrastructural facilities are made available and well staffed with competent and experienced teachers that adopt effective and efficient teaching method (Anindo, Mugambi & Matula, 2016). In support of the foregoing discussion, Umar (2019) concluded that learning is a complicated activity that requires the motivation of learners and educators, the accessibility of

classroom facilities such as conventional houses and classrooms with their facilities, educational materials and growth equipment for children.

Furthermore, Bobou (2015) revealed that as a consequence, infrastructure development and a complementary skills development strategy form the bedrock for any economic policy in Nigeria, for without investments geared towards developing a robust and sustainable infrastructure, any government policy towards national development will not work. The same applies in the study area. Improvement made in the quality of teaching and enrolment of more pupils and students into primary and secondary schools respectively is attributable to significant contribution of the Ebonyi State Community and Social Development Agency through construction of classroom blocks and other related projects. Availability of the projects jointly provided by the agency and the respective communities has given a face-lift to some of the schools towards human capital development. The implication of the above is that the activities of the agency need to be improved and sustained as catalysts to ensure sustainable improvement in the quality of education at all levels in the state. This became imperative in line with the findings of Udu &Ibeogu (2019) who revealed that insufficient attention has been paid to education in Ebonyi State and this has negatively impacted on the sustainable socio-economic development of the state resulting to continued backwardness and pervasive poverty amongst the people. A deliberate sustained effort towards skills-based infrastructure is capable of addressing the problem of enrolment and access to quality education for pupils and students in Ebonyi State.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most development oriented studies especially in Ebonyi State focused on infrastructure as little attention was paid to human aspect of development. There was a shift from this orientation as the present study sought to establish the nexus between skills-based infrastructure and human capital development in the study area. Fundamentally, a place is said to be developed if it has some basic infrastructure facilities such as tarred roads, hospitals and clinics, pipe- borne water, electricity, etc. These were the major yardsticks for comparison. However, there is now a shift to human oriented development owing to the very fact that development experts have realized that development lies in the peoples minds. Development should be tailored towards addressing the mindsets and thinking realms of human beings in view of the fact that notwithstanding the amount of physical infrastructure possessed by a state or a community for instance, it takes civilized human beings to make effective and efficient use of such resources. Human capital development occupies a central place in the fields of development and need to be accorded the desired attention. Therefore, attempts ought to be made to develop the minds and brains of people; to promote acquisition and utilization of skills. This is why human capital development has become imperative in the contemporary world. We cannot separate an individual from his knowledge, skills, health or values, just as it is possible to relocate financial and real assets apart from their owner. Acquisition of civic and entrepreneurial skills increasingly dominates government development agenda in recent times in view of the fact that it has become obvious that most governments at all level in Nigeria lacks the capacity to fully create jobs for the unemployed youths. Ebonyi State is not an exception. Thus investment in education is similar to investments in capital goods and raising of productivity and profit from education is connected with incurring of significant start-up costs. An increase in human capital therefore provides both personal and additional public benefits.

There is no regret in investments that are targeted at improving the skills of youths as this will significantly yield positive results in all sectors of the economy. Human capital development has the capacity to address the skyrocketed youth unemployment level with its socio-economic implications in Ngeria and Ebonyi State in particular. This study has therefore indicated that EB-CSDA's skills-based micro projects have impacted positively on human capital development efforts of the state government. The agency has made significant impact in the lives of the people through the provision of skills-related facilities such as vocational training centres, civil centres, classroom blocks among other numerous facilities. However, these achievements were made not without challenges. Some of the challenges that confront the agency include inadequate funding, political interference, lack of extensive demographic data of the potential beneficiaries of the agency's programmes etc. The implication of the foregoing is that there is need for government to channel more resources to the agency to enhance the attainment of its human capital development goals.

5.1 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the researchers recommended as follows:

- i. Ebonyi State government should increase budgetary allocation to the EB-CSDA to further enhance her capacity towards provision of classroom blocks for sustainable human capital development efforts in the state. Skills-based infrastructure facilities are capital intensive and limiting the agency's financial involvement to N10,000,000 for projects such as classroom blocks, civic centres among others, affects the quantity and quality of the projects, hence only 58 Skills-related projects were completed for the education sector within the period under review showing that human capital development has not been prioritized partly as a result of inadequate funding.
- ii. Government and the EB-CSDA should put measures in place to provide a follow-up action for those benefited from agency's vocational training programmes. Support them with financial and other assistance to enable them start up a business as this will go a long way to reducing the rate of youth unemployment in the state with its security implications.
- iii. In view of the fact that the agency has not significantly assisted indigent students to realize their education goals, there is urgent need to extend the agency's programmes to assisting indigent students through scholarships as this will give them the ample opportunity to acquire formal education for personal as well as the overall development of the society. It was also observed that the target beneficiaries were sometimes skipped due to political influence in the activities of the agency. Disagreement and squabbles, between Community Project Monitoring Committee (CPMC) and community members resulted in non-cooperation. Such internal conflicts and power play sometimes affects projects and who gets what, when and how of the agency's assistance. Hence, government should ensure proper monitoring of the initiation, design and implementation of the agency's programmes and projects in order to ensure that the target beneficiaries are reached.

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