

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION, JOB CREATION FOR GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *In recent time, research studies have shown that entrepreneurship education is necessary for gainful self-employment and self-reliance. The researcher has also observed that self-reliance on the part of graduates is still a mirage. In the Nigerian socio-economic context, youth employment ratio is also on the increase. The study investigated how our graduates are getting along about employment, job creation and entrepreneurship development. Two research questions guided the study. The questionnaire titled Entrepreneurship Education and Job Creation Questionnaire (EEJCQ) of 5 likert scale of 1 to 10 was used for data collection. The data was analyzed using population t-test. The results were tested at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom 549. The results revealed that career intervention in four dimensions of entrepreneurs' skills, and level of skills acquired after completing entrepreneurship course are significantly very high. Based on the findings, it was recommended that more emphasis should be placed on technical and vocational education and training. Provision of infrastructures like electricity; qualified professional teachers for quality teaching; equipment of trade laboratories and workshops to support the teaching of entrepreneurship courses in the University.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship Education, Job Creation, Graduate Employment

INTRODUCTION

Education is the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of all processes through which a person develops ability, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour with positive value in the society in which he lives. In the face of difficulties experienced to secure jobs among young university graduates in Nigeria, entrepreneurship education appears to be the answer to this growing problems. This has become necessary because year in year out, most university graduates wander about after graduation thinking of what next to do. This is so because the jobs for which they have spent the better part of their lives acquiring knowledge and skills are virtually non-existent (Fasasi and Etejere, 2009). Though, the Federal and State Governments have been working hard in the area of job creation, but the over 2 million job spaces said to be created yearly have not accommodated the large number of graduates. Some of them stay without jobs even in their mid-thirties and some settle for the informal sector in very poor conditions (Babalola, 2007).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2013), it stated that the Nigerian economy created 1.163 million jobs. That the jobs created were in the formal, informal and public sectors of the economy. According to Dr. Yemi Kale - Statistician-General of the Federation, he said that the jobs created in the second quarter of 2013 was 80,412 in the formal sector, while 112,567 jobs were created in the informal sector and 28,075 in the public sector. That the formal sector contributed 76,385 jobs to the total jobs generated in the third quarter while the informal and public sectors generated 140,673 and 28,931 jobs respectively. This shows that the informal sector continued to lead the way in new employment generated in the economy.

The issue of joblessness has taken a global dimension, although the nature, magnitude and inherent risk mitigation have always been the difference between developed and developing/underdeveloped economies. At the conference of 25 African Ministers of Employment and Vocational Training held in Abidjan in August 2014 titled “providing the African Youth with skills and Training for jobs” it adopted a two plan. Action plan for inter-country cooperation and the Inter-Country Quality Mode on Technical and Vocational Skills Development Plan for the 2014-2017 period. The declaration was signed by the 25 ministers. The action plan focuses on three areas:

- a) Analysis and practical implementation of inter-country cooperation on experiences and mechanisms concerned with facilitating job creation, particularly for youth;
- b) Countries’ investment in the acquisition of trainers and entrepreneurs’ skills’ and
- c) Implementation of the education/training continuum.

Education once acquired should empower the educated person with the right physical and intellectual skills to make him a useful member of that society and contribute to national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004:30). Based on the above goal of education, it then means that job opportunities should follow closely to graduation in order to realize the goals of education in Nigeria. Department of International Development (DFID, 2000) submits that, “privatization, a key aspect of the government’s reform programme, should inject greater efficiency into the protective sectors and release funds for higher priority programme to combat poverty” (p.4). in the diversification of education reforms, whether in politics or economy, what can sustain it is the integration of entrepreneurship training in the school curriculum. The ultimate aim of establishing the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was because of the increasing unemployment situation in Nigeria. Huge sum of money had been budgeted by government to stimulate self-reliance in the form of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. This is to tackle graduate unemployment and reduce the tendencies of graduate opting for collar jobs.

As a result of this increasing unemployment problems, there is an urgent need for the reassessment of the curriculum content in our educational system. A situation where our institutions are churning out graduates that companies are not willing to employ is not the best. “Needs assessment is an information-gathering and analysis process which results in the identification of the needs of the individuals, groups, institutions, communities or societies” (Lewy, 1991:433).

Despite all the programmes of the Federal Government and State Governments, like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE); the agricultural sector, the unemployment rate has been on the increase. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, it said that about 1.8 young Nigerians enter into the labour market each year and that we need to ensure that our economy provides jobs for them (Baiyewu, 2013). Perhaps this necessitated the introduction of some form of entrepreneurship studies in some Nigerian tertiary institutions in 2009 (Fafola, 2009).

Concept of entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education has been defined by Alberti, Sciacia and Poli (2004) as a structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which carries with it the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of an already existing business. Studies of Alberti and Sciascia (2004) have equally laid great emphasis on the benefits of entrepreneurship education to include acquisition of skills, abilities and competencies that yield self-reliance and in turn play a major role in societal development.

Entrepreneurship education, therefore, occurs when an individual or group initiate(s) approach in the market place to the provision of a product or service by using resources in a new way under condition of risks, it implies venture. Therefore, entrepreneurship education as used in this study refers to a planned leading/learning process leading to it. The acquisition of skills, ability, competence which equip the recipients with initiative, creativity, risk taking ability, enthusiasm, independence, vision for business venture.

Adedoyin and Akerele (2006) submitted that, the massive unemployment that has designed Nigerian young graduates has made entrepreneurship key to survival in the present economy. Entrepreneurship education in about transforming an idea into reality. entrepreneurship initiative exists in every individual and most people have the ability to start a business, it may be dormant, but needs to be activated. This can be achieved through core knowledge about starting a business. Figure I presents a conceptual model for entrepreneurship education. This model presents a sequence for helping entrepreneurs to become actual entrepreneurs. In following entrepreneurship spirit, the student needs specific and general instruction in business disciplines using appropriate teaching methods such as case studies, internships and study projects. This will enable the student to identify business opportunities and develop entrepreneurial ability. This is followed by implementation plans/activities.

After this, you then evaluate and monitor some aspects as profit, number of employees, and identify aspects that need improvement and restructuring. Then you determine experience needed, such as re-training, further education, strengthening publicity and seeking for sponsorship.

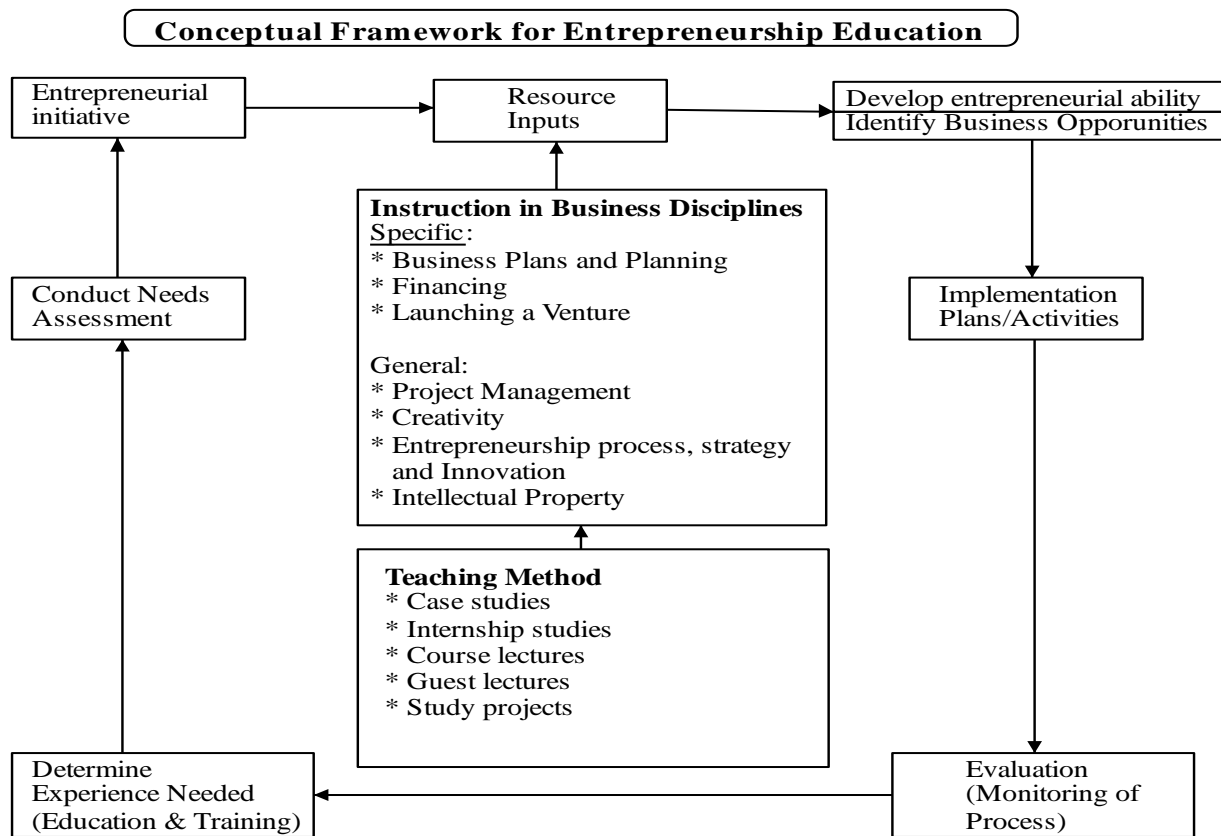


Fig. 1: Hypothetical Model for Entrepreneurship Education and System

Statement of problem

Education and training for entrepreneurship is coming up and it is going to take a larger dimension in Nigeria. People need to be exposed to complete entrepreneurship education courses that will assist to develop entrepreneurial ability of Nigerians, reduce entrepreneurs' ignorance and increase the survival rate of newly established enterprises. Such training is organized by Centre for Management and Development. Individual management consultants also organize seminars and workshops on planning and implementation of entrepreneurship education. In Nigeria, colleges, polytechnics and universities have started fostering entrepreneurship spirit of students by offering entrepreneurship courses and promote cooperation between the industries and universities. In spite of the realization that technical vocational education are indispensable to rapid and sustainable development, various research have shown that there is inadequate basic infrastructure, poor quality manpower, poor students environment in these areas, inadequate opportunities for recipients of technical education and inadequate funding.

In Nigeria, Aladekomo (2003) opined that entrepreneurship education was not in practice in the tertiary institutions because the education policies have always prepared the citizens for paid employment. He also said that traces of entrepreneurship education came into Nigeria in 1999 through the centre for Industrial Research and Development (CIRD) which collaborated with the

National Directorate of Employment (NDE). This resulted to the introduction of entrepreneurship education as elective/general studies courses in some Nigerian universities. What is not clear is whether it has been given a major status in programmes of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Arising from this, the researcher decided to carry out this study to ascertain if entrepreneurship education can create job for graduates.

Research questions

1. Does entrepreneurship education have a major status in Nigerian universities curriculum?
2. To what extent does entrepreneurship education address graduate employment?

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between curriculum content and entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
2. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employment.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for this study is survey research design. The population of this study is made up of all final year undergraduates in Universities in South-South Nigeria. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the simple random sampling technique. The sample of this study is made up of four hundred (400) respondents randomly selected from four Universities in South-South Nigeria. The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The items in the questionnaire were drawn in reflection of the hypotheses generated by the variables under study. Before using the instrument the items developed were given to experts in research and statistics for screening. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using fifty (50) students. Split half reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument.

Presentation of results

The results of the analysis is presented hypothesis by hypothesis.

Hypotheses one

There is no significant relationship between curriculum content and entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is curriculum content, while the dependent variable is entrepreneurship education. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 2

Pearson product moment correlation analysis of relationship between curriculum content on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions performance (N=400)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r.value
Curriculum content	6804	8755	6171323	0.62*
Entrepreneurship education	6412	8634		

*significant at .05 level, critical $r=.098$, $df=398$

The result of the statistical analysis presented in table 2 indicates that the calculated r.value of 0.62 is greater than the critical r.value of .098 at .05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom. The result is significant, the null hypotheses was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between curriculum content and entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Hypotheses two

There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employment. The independent variable in this hypothesis is entrepreneurship education, while the dependent variable is graduate employment. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employment (N=400)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r.value
Entrepreneurship education	6412	8634	170125	0.75*
Graduate employment	2534	8461		

*significant at .05 level, critical $r=.098$, $df=398$

The result of the statistical analysis presented in Table 2 indicates that the calculated r.value of 0.75 is greater than the critical r.value of .098 at .05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom. The result is significant, the null hypotheses was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that entrepreneurship does not have a major status because it has not been properly accommodated in the curriculum of Nigerian tertiary institutions. This is in line with Aladekomo (2003) who opined that Nigerian tertiary institution curriculum does not encourage creativity and innovation in students. The supervisory body, National Universities Commission (NUC) though has been lauded for the introduction of entrepreneurship studies, a lot still needs to be done. The needful of entrepreneurship education to graduate employment has been emphasized as majority of the respondents positively asserted it. This was affirmed by Alberti and Sciascia (2004) that acquisition of skills, abilities and competencies equip the beneficiary with self-reliance which is necessary for societal development. It would not be out of place to say that Nigeria has embraced the idea of entrepreneurship education as a strategy to address the serious problem of employment of graduates of tertiary institutions.

CONCLUSION

Nigerian tertiary institutions should actively embrace and strategically sustain the good spirit of entrepreneurship that has begun. Entrepreneurship education and development in Nigerian tertiary institutions can take a good root by encouraging the students replicate the products and production processes that have been invented elsewhere in the world while they are told that the ultimate is for them to invent something new that the world can also copy. For entrepreneurship to evolve, from the present stage of imitation into the critical stage of invention, it requires a favourable entrepreneurship climate. Nigeria as a developing nation is facing many challenges ranging from institutional development to management of its enormous resources for industrialization and sustainable development. Entrepreneurship training will help the very many students in tertiary institutions to create new jobs and start new business on their own. Entrepreneurship will help to harness students' potentials and channel them to the development of our natural resources. This will industrialize the nation and sustain rapid development. The possibility of Nigeria actualizing her vision at 20:20:20, the Seven Point Agenda and some international mandates are assured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made for entrepreneurship training in tertiary institutions.

1. Entrepreneurship training should be made compulsory for all students.
2. Adequate funds should be provided. The Federal Government should adhere to UNESCO recommendation of 26% of the national budget to education (UNESCO, 2000).
3. Adequate infrastructural and instructional facilities should be provided
4. More qualified and experienced lecturers should be employed with attractive conditions of service.
5. Frequent workshops and conferences should be organized for retraining.
6. Collaboration with private sector successful industrialists to deliver lectures on entrepreneurship periodically to the students.

7. Funding support in form of grants for small scale enterprises should be provided by Government agencies, like Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture, SNMEDAN with less collaterals.
8. Made in Nigeria products should be our favourite
9. Students should embrace hard work and the yardstick for certification should be competency-based and not experience based.
10. Entrepreneurship education should be properly accommodated in tertiary institutions' curriculum to address the problem of unemployment as this would create opportunities for job creation.

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