

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A PANACEA TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

By

**OBADARA, OLABANJI E., Ph.D**

*Department of Educational Management,*

*Tai Solarin University of Education,*

*Ogun State, Nigeria.*

*doctorobadara@yahoo.co.uk*

### Abstract

*This paper examines the contribution of entrepreneurship education to unemployment eradication in south west Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A sample of 10 universities in the south west Nigeria (5 state owned and 5 federal owned) was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Also, proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 100 final year students from each university, which amounted to 1000 respondents. The study developed and used a questionnaire tagged "Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Opportunity Questionnaire (EEEOQ)" with cronbach-alpha reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.88$  and complimented with structured interview. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was employed to analyse the data. While the null hypotheses developed for the study were tested at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the university students in south west Nigeria; students' acquisition of job creation skills; adequate supply of nation's manpower needs; and employment job related skills. It is therefore recommended among others that entrepreneurship curriculum should be enriched to incorporate more vocational and technical training, and the development of apprenticeship scheme that would give new graduates some work skills and experiences.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Job Creation Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship, Manpower, University.

---

### Introduction

Unemployment is a major economic challenge militating against the economy and well-being of many Nigerians in recent times. The incidence of unemployment in Nigeria is growing fast and it is on the high side. It has even resulted in various social vices including prostitution, stealing, armed robbery, destitution and political thuggery, human and drug trafficking, kidnapping, vandalism of petroleum pipelines/ oil bunkering, fake and illegal drug peddling, etc. This challenge calls for urgent attention in order to protect the future of our great nation.

Nigeria has witnessed several educational reforms from pre-independence era. It was the agitations from the well-meaning Nigerians, particularly the activists that led the British colonial rulers to change the educational system in operation in 1954 from 8-6-2-3 system, that is, 8 years primary, 6 years secondary, 2 years higher school certificate and 3 years university to another system 6-5-2-3; that is, 6 years primary, 5 years secondary, 2 years higher school certificate and 3 years university. The change resulted in reducing the number of years at the primary and secondary school levels (Gusau, 2008). The question is this: does this policy address the problem of unemployment? According to Anho (2014), policy making and implementation involve developmental strategies which are the conscious efforts of individuals and nations

toward achieving specific objectives to bring about desirable changes in the structure of society and economy. The transition into the present 6-3-3-4 system of education, particularly at the Basic level of the first 9 years since 1999 which was aimed at consolidating enterprise development in junior secondary school students has also failed to yield desired results. Consequent upon the persistent trends of youth unemployment in Nigeria, the federal government of Nigeria has recently enacted a policy of entrepreneurship education as a compulsory field of study on every level of education in Nigeria and particularly at the secondary level of education (Obioma, 2012).

There is need to integrate entrepreneurship into the nation's educational system so as to equip the students with requisite skills and capacities needed in the world of work. Also, the graduates of the educational system would be able to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation by being self-employed. The skills to be developed through entrepreneurship education according to Obanya (2002) include: analytical power, problem solving, communication, versatility, creativity, and life-long learning skills. These skills according to Adelabu (2014) are really the attributes, traits and behaviours that endure and which are transversal. Unfortunately, experience has shown that these skills are either no longer in significant quantity in our graduates or completely non-existent in some. The current academic curriculum prepares recipients with little or no job related content, while entrepreneurship education includes a wider range of subjects with work-based content. Unemployment is rampant in Nigeria like other nations because of mismatch between the need of employers and stock of job-specific human capital produced by educational training institutions (Simkovic, 2012). While graduates complain of high levels of unemployment, employers on the other hand, complain that the graduates are poorly prepared and therefore unemployable. Every organization needs to employ quality human capital for the purpose of repositioning their organizations for good (Adelabu, 2014).

The high rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has been blamed on the fact that most graduates from Nigerian universities are unemployable (Agu and Chiah, 2013). It is due to this high unemployment rate among graduates in universities that the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship education in the university curriculum as a compulsory course (Uzoka, 2008). With the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of Nigerian universities by the NUC, it becomes obvious that entrepreneurship education is considered an effective way of equipping graduates with the desired employability skills.

Nigeria adopted entrepreneurship education to hasten economic growth and development. Despite the fact that Nigeria's national policy on education embraces entrepreneurship as the most important instrument for propelling change, as no fundamental change can occur in any society except through educational revolution that has impact on the intellects. The Nigerian universities do not have similar aim nor adopt uniform approach to entrepreneurship education. The common practice is having one or two courses as university course that all students should offer before they graduate, the course(s) may domicile in the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development of the university (Inegbenebor, 2005). While some have a general education department as well as a professional entrepreneurship development designed for all categories of students in the institutions irrespective of initial course admission and expect them to start their own businesses after graduation either on vocational or professional level to eradicate unemployment. For instance in University of Benin, a 2-credit course in entrepreneurship is approved to be offered by all non-business and accounting undergraduate students of the University. Tai Solarin University of Education in Ogun state has a Centre for Entrepreneurship and Vocational Studies that award the graduate of the university a certificate in entrepreneurship and vocational training in addition with that of his discipline of study. While Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun state may be the first University in Nigeria to offer Entrepreneurship as a Degree programme. Kwara State University, Malete, has just started B.Sc./B. A. (Ed) Degree programme in Entrepreneurship Education meant to provide the required manpower for the

teaching of Entrepreneurship Education and the Trade Subjects recently introduced by the Federal Government into the curriculum of Nigerian Secondary Schools.

Ogundele, Sofoluwe and Kayode (2012) identified the importance of entrepreneurship education to the socio-economic transformation of any nations as:

- source of employment or job creation for the youths,
- method of economic diversification,
- sources of capital investment,
- it aids diversification of technical and vocational jobs,
- entrepreneurship education aids effective utilization of local resources,
- it aids promotion of entrepreneurial culture technological development, and
- it makes school's curriculum relevant to the societal needs.

Airebanmen (2004) reported that 20,000 graduates were chasing about 300 federal government jobs in 2004. Between 2006 and 2007, 35,000 civil servants were laid off following the federal government reform policy. This actually portrays the unemployment situation in the country. This is why Inyamah (1999) pointed out that the present trend in Nigeria where graduates are seen roaming the streets unemployed after graduation calls for a re-examination of Nigeria's educational system. Unemployment rate in Nigeria according to National Bureau of Statistics (2012) increased to 5.3% in 2007, 5.8% in 2008, 11.8% in 2009, 19.7% in 2010, 21.01% in 2011 and reaching an all-time high of 23.90% in December, 2012. Therefore, unemployment rate in Nigeria has been on steady increase from 7% in 1995 to 28% in 2011. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2016), between 1st to 3rd quarters of 2016, 3.7 million people have entered the labour force with net jobs of 422,135 created within that period, giving a shortfall of 3.2 million for 1st quarter to 3rd quarter 2016. This has resulted in a rise in the combined unemployment and underemployment levels from 29.2% (10.4% for unemployment alone) at the beginning of 2016 to 33.6% (13.9% for unemployment alone) by end of 3rd quarter 2016. Successive Nigerian governments are unable to solve this economic malaise. Unemployment among graduates has remained one of the fundamental challenges threatening the economic development and stability of Nigeria.

The situation in Nigeria is gloomy with seven (7) out of 10 graduates being either unemployed, underemployed or simply unemployable as at 2006, while over 200,000 graduates remain unemployed as at the last five years (Ayoola, 2008). Ochonma (2011) reported that about 2.8 million fresh graduates enter the labour market yearly and only 10% of these are gainfully employed. Considering the fact that these graduates constitute the most active segments of the population, their inability to find good jobs foretell serious danger for the country. Lack of entrepreneurial skills is no doubt a major contributing factor to the problem of unemployment of graduates and youth in Nigeria (Adebisi & Oni, 2012). Babalola (2007) attributed the incidence of graduate/youth unemployment to the educational system operated during pre and post-independence era in the country which placed emphasis on liberal education rather than acquisition of vocational skills which prepares school leavers and graduates with vocational skills for better employment opportunities. He stated further that in spite of federal government efforts to create 2 million jobs every year, most Nigerian university graduates fail to get employed. This is evident as many graduates stay three to four or more years after graduation before getting a job or no job at all.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The unprecedented increase in the number of unemployed graduates from tertiary institutions in Nigeria is disturbing and appeals for attention. Entrepreneurship education and training imparts skills and knowledge that can create new ventures and empower the youths' technological advancement so as to be proactive in improving their general well-being. These skills are needed before embarking on a new business venture. Some Nigerian universities have introduced entrepreneurship education into their array of courses but not all

these universities have it as a course of study. The common practice is having one or two courses as university course that all students should offer before they graduate. While some have a general education department as well as a professional entrepreneurship development designed for all categories of students in the institutions irrespective of initial course admission and expect them to start their own businesses after graduation either on vocational or professional level to eradicate unemployment. This paper therefore examined the contribution of entrepreneurship education to employment stimulation in south west Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education on unemployment eradication in south west Nigeria with the aim of using its findings to make useful recommendations on how to fully utilize entrepreneurship education to overcome the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were developed and tested in the study.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the students' in south west Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' acquisition of job creation skills.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and adequate supply of nation's manpower needs

**Ho<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment job related skills.

### **Research Procedure**

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A sample of 10 universities in the south west Nigeria (5 State owned and 5 Federal owned) was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Also, proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 100 final year students from each university, which amounted to 1000 respondents. The study developed and used a questionnaire tagged "Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Opportunity Questionnaire (EEEOQ)" with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.88$  and complimented with structured interview. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was employed to analyze the data. While the null hypotheses developed for the study were tested at .05 level of significance.

### **Presentation of Results**

The results of the study are presented below according to the hypotheses generated for the study.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the university students in south west Nigeria.

**Table 1: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and University Students' Job Creation Ability**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>r-tab.</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Entrepreneurship Education	1000	34.35	2.35	998	0.302	0.068	0.05	Sig.
University Students' Job creation ability	1000	32.44	3.84					

The result in table 1 above shows that the calculated  $r$  - value = 0.302 and the tabulated  $r$  - value = 0.068 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated  $r$  - value is greater than the tabulated  $r$  - value. Therefore, the null

hypothesis, which states that, “there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the university students in south west Nigeria” is rejected. So, there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the universities’ students in south west Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students’ acquisition of job creation skills.

**Table 2: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Students’ Acquisition Job Creation Skills**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>r-tab.</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Entrepreneurship Education	1000	34.60	3.65	998	0.310	0.068	0.05	Sig.
Students’ Acquisition of Job creation Skills	1000	32.55	3.89					

The result in table 2 above shows that the calculated  $r$  - value = 0.310 and the tabulated  $r$  - value = 0.068 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated  $r$  - value is greater than the tabulated  $r$  - value. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that, “there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students’ acquisition of job creation skills” is rejected. So there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students’ acquisition of job creation skills.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and adequate supply of nation’s manpower needs

**Table 3: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Nation’s Adequate Manpower Needs Supply**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>r-tab.</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Entrepreneurship Education	1000	33.29	2.79	998	0.215	0.068	0.05	Sig.
Nation’s Adequate Manpower Needs Supply	1000	32.43	2.92					

The result in table 3 above shows that the calculated  $r$  - value = 0.215 and the tabulated  $r$  - value = 0.068 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated  $r$  - value is greater than the tabulated  $r$  - value. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that, “there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and adequate supply of nation’s manpower needs” is rejected. So there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and adequate supply of nation’s manpower needs.

**Ho<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment job related skills.

**Table 4: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Job Related Skills**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>r-cal.</i>	<i>r-tab.</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Entrepreneurship Education	1000	32.48	2.88	998	0.195	0.068	0.05	Sig.
Employment Job Related Skills	1000	31.42	2.94					

The result in table 4 above shows that the calculated  $r$  - value = 0.195 and the tabulated  $r$  - value = 0.068 at 0.05 level of significance. The calculated  $r$  - value is greater than the tabulated  $r$  - value. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that, “there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment job related skills” is rejected. So there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment job related skills.



## **Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and job creation ability of the university students in south west Nigeria; students' acquisition of job creation skills; adequate supply of nation's manpower needs; and employment job related skills. These results might not be unconnected with the fact that entrepreneurship education inculcates various skills like financial skills, technical skills, creative skills, managerial skills, intellectual skills, marketing skills, communication skills and technological skills in students. Entrepreneurship is equally said to be the process of planning, operating and assuming the risk of a business. Furthermore, universities effective entrepreneurship education policies and programmes focus on developing the entrepreneurial competencies and skills, which are transferable and beneficial in many work contexts. The aim is not only to strengthen the capacity and desire of more individuals to start their own enterprises, but also to develop an entrepreneurial culture in society. (UNCTAD, 2013).

The result of the present study corroborate the findings of Brown (2000), who observed that entrepreneurship education is designed to communicate and inculcate in students competencies, skills and values needed to recognize business opportunity, organize and start new business venture. Also, UNESCO (2008), which stated that that entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing student's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. Most successful entrepreneurship education programmes according to Upton (2003) make the choice after carefully assessing the needs of students, the community, the strengths and interests of faculty as well as the strategic focus of the University. Entrepreneurship education therefore instills into the students the experience that will enable them develop the vision needed to realise and create entrepreneurial opportunities; and the expertise to successfully start and manage their own businesses to take advantage of these opportunities.

It is equally observed by Okiti (2009) that entrepreneurship education is the gateway to job opportunities and job creation which would constantly enhance self-reliance and self-employment among university graduates. It plays a vital role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period (Onyemah, 2011). No wonder Matanmi and Awodun (2005) claimed that if Nigeria desire to move out of the disturbing high level of unemployment and ravaging level of poverty, adequate attention must be given to the growth of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education is thus seen by Lee & Wong (2008) as a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society.

## **Conclusion**

Since the magnitude of employment in the Nigerian economy has not been adequate to meet the ever-growing labour market, there is continuous rise in the level of unemployment in the country. This reflects the current economic realities with only a few businesses still growing and employing, while many others are shedding jobs. With the Nigerian labour force population rising by over 2.6 million annually, the economy needs to generate the same level of jobs annually just to hold the unemployment rate at the current level of 13.9 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). There is no doubt that quality and functional entrepreneurship education will enhance job creation which will subsequently reduce unemployment since it encourages one to become jobs creator rather than job seekers. Various skills required in the world of work and needed to be self-employed are acquired in entrepreneurship education. These will therefore help the graduate of Nigerian universities meet the manpower needs of the society, and establish a career in small and medium size businesses.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, it is therefore recommended that entrepreneurship should be offered in all Nigerian universities as a degree programme so as to provide the required manpower for the teaching of

Entrepreneurship Education and the Trade Subjects recently introduced by the Federal Government into the curriculum of Nigerian Secondary Schools. Due to inability of Nigerian educational system to meet the needs and aspiration of all the groups of Nigerian citizens, an integrated national policy that would emphasize quality and functional entrepreneurship education is required.

Entrepreneurship education can be promoted by stimulating the interest of students in the programme. Therefore, Nigerian youths' orientation should be changed from wage-earner culture to self-paid culture or from job seekers to jobs creators. The university administrators should be acquainted with the value and potential of entrepreneurship education in national competitiveness and development. This would enable them support the programme in all ramifications to gain acceptance among staff and students.

Teaching entrepreneurship requires special training and experience, experts in the field should be employed to teach entrepreneurship education in our various universities. The entrepreneurship curriculum should be enriched to incorporate more vocational and technical training, and the development of apprenticeship scheme that would give new graduates some work skills and experiences. It must aim at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship. It must also incorporate internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs and clearly established education programmes so as to reduce or eradicate unemployment in Nigeria.

## Reference

- Adebisi, T.A. & Oni, C.S. (2012). Assessment of relevance of national directorate of employment training programme to the needs of the trainees in South-West in Nigeria. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 4(3) 29-37.
- Adelabu, M.A. (2014). Globalization, transformation and imperative for change through entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Paper delivered at the 3rd Distinguished Lecture of Joseph Ayo Babalola University, held on Tuesday, 21st January, 2014 at Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State.
- Agu, R. A. and Chiah, G. T. U. (2013). Entrepreneurship education and graduate employability in Nigeria. A research proposal presented at Association of African Universities (AAU).
- Airebanmen, M. A. (2004). *Challenges and opportunities through secretarial profession*. Akure; TGC Publications, p 41.
- Anho, J. E. (2014). *Recreating the management and administration of adult and non-formal education vis-à-vis entrepreneurship education for unemployment and poverty eradication*. A paper presented at the Conference of Association of Nigeria Teachers (ASCONT), Enugu.
- Ayoola, O K. (2008). *Employability*. Unpublished paper of AGDC in partnership with This Day News Papers at a workshop on entrepreneurship and employability held at Princess Alexandra Auditorium UNN on 30/04/2008.
- Babalola, J. B. (2007). Reinventing Nigerian higher education for youth employment in a competitive global economy. A lecture delivered at University of Calabar, Department of Educational Administration and Planning, University of Calabar.
- Brown, C. (2000). *CELCEE digest 00-8. Curriculum for entrepreneurship education: A review*. Kansas City: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
- Gusau, B. U. (2008). Educational reforms in Nigeria: Successive years of inconsistencies and confusions. A paper presented at the Gusau Educational Development Association Interactive Session, Zamfara State, Nigeria.
- Inegbenebor, A. U. (2005). Education for entrepreneurship: Experience at the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. A paper presented at the Inaugural Conference of the Academy of Management Nigeria. Held at Abuja on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005.
- Inyama, P. N. (1999). Business education: Concepts and strategies for the 21st century. Paper presented at the 11th NABE Conference held at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State; 20-23rd October, pp. 1-15.

- Lee, L. & Wong, P. (2008). Entrepreneurship education: A compendium of related issues. NUS *Entrepreneurship Centre Working paper*, July, 2005.
- Matanmi, S., and Awodun, M. (2005). An assessment of competitive strategies and growth patterns of new enterprises in Nigeria using the developing economy model. *Lagos Organization Review*, 1(1), 26-32.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2016). Job creation survey, 2nd and 3rd quarters 2016 summary findings and selected tables.
- National Bureau of Statistics, (2012). Labour force statistics. [www.nigerianstat.gov.ng](http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng)
- Obanya, P. (2002). *Re-vitalizing education in Africa*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Obioma, G. (2012). Review of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum. *Nigerian Tribune*, Thursday, 2012.
- Ochonma, V. (2011). Innovation in education. <http://www.tidenewsonline.com>
- Ogundele, M. O., Sofoluwe, A. O. & Kayode D. J. (2012). Integrating entrepreneurship education into the national youth service programmes in Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management* 9(2), 24 - 64.
- Okiti, A. F. (2009). University lecturers' perception of entrepreneurship education at the tertiary levels of education. *African Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 3(2), 79-85.
- Onyemah, L.N. (2011). Prospects of entrepreneurship development in national development; An overview. *ABEN Book of Readings*. 1(11), 7-10.
- Simkovic, M. (2012). Risk-based student loans. Available at Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Retrieved on July 4, 2012 from <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1941070>.
- UNESCO (2008). Promoting entrepreneurship education in secondary schools. Final report of UNESCO Inter-regional seminar on promoting entrepreneurship education in secondary schools, Bangkok Thailand, February 11th – 15<sup>th</sup>.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2013). *The UNCTAD entrepreneurship policy framework and its implementation*. Geneva: UNCTAD Secretariat
- Upton, M. B. (2003). *Securities and exchange commission litigation complaint*. Michigan: Diane Publishing Co.
- Uzoka (2008) Uzoka, F.A. (2006). Challenges in entrepreneurship in home economics education. *Nigeria Journal of Education* 4(2), 98-106.