



ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A VERITABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR EMPLOYMENT CREATION AMONG GRADUATES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR SOCIETAL CO-EXISTENCE

BY

¹USANG ETENG ELOMA (PhD) ²UKET IGRI IKOI

¹Centre for General Studies, ²Department of Educational Foundations and Childhood Education
^{1&2}Cross River University of Technology,
Calabar Cross River State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined entrepreneurship education: A veritable alternative for employment creation among graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto type with a population of 2,908 respondents drawn using stratified random sampling. A sample of 140 respondents was used in the study and the researchers used an adapted instrument titled entrepreneurship education for employment creation (EEFECQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Test and measurement and the instrument produced a reliability coefficient of .78 to .88 the data was analysed with simple percentages and the findings revealed that the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education is capable of generating employment or business ideas for beneficiaries. Most graduates who are exposed to entrepreneurial skills from entrepreneurship education have set up small-scale businesses of their own. Finally, entrepreneurship studies stimulate entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up businesses of their own. It was recommended among others that the teaching of entrepreneurial education should be given more attention to ensure that it achieves other objectives that have not been achieved.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Veritable Alternative and Employment Creation

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has been a monster in Nigeria over the years. It has successfully crippled the lives of many to a point that makes one wonder about the efficacy of the educational system. Education from time immemorial has been known to be a tool for establishing man's knowledge and placing man to live above certain limitations around his environment. Education has been verified to be a key to national development. This is because it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from their national economy; facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation. Education is an essential tool for sustainability. The present global economic crisis suggests that the entire world is in a war between financial/qualitative education and catastrophe (Maina, 2014).

Aluwong, (2010) reported entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system to be the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make it functional. Quality entrepreneurship education could be used as a tool for fighting the war against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria. One is



supposed to believe that with entrepreneurship education, unemployment should have reduced to a minimal point because entrepreneurship education focuses on the development of skills or attributes that enable the realization of opportunity. The advent of entrepreneurship education has created an entrepreneurial mindset across the nation. Entrepreneurship education has been introduced with the core focus of poverty reduction. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2012) clearly stated the goals of technical and vocational education to include; the provision of trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business, particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical skills; provision of the technical knowledge and provisional skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development and; giving training and imparting the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

This is the reason Oviawe (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as that type of education tailored towards producing a self-reliant or self-employed person. It is aimed at instilling in the learner traits such as innovativeness, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and endurance. This implies that the test of possession of entrepreneurial skills is measured or quantified in the quality of decisions made by the recipient of entrepreneurship education when confronted with the challenges arising from the business ventures. It is therefore a true saying that the essence of entrepreneurship education is poverty reduction or job creation. This type of education is expected to serve as an antidote to unemployment as it will equip individuals with entrepreneurial skills of self-employment and also bridge the gap between the industries and products of various institutions of learning.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN NIGERIA

Entrepreneurship education when qualitative in scope and nature plays an important role in the social, political and economic development of any nation. Entrepreneurship education according to (Acs & Strong, 2004) refers to specialized knowledge that inculcates the willingness of risk-taking, innovation, creativity and coordination of factors of production to create new products or services for new and existing users. It is therefore geared towards positioning an individual in a place where needs can be met. The objectives of entrepreneurship education are a cinema to the relevance of its employment and opportunities.

Osuala (2010) in Maina (2013) listed the objectives of entrepreneurship education to include:

- i. to provide meaningful education for youth which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be independent.
- ii. to provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium-sized businesses.
- iii. to provide graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of society.
- iv. to provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
- v. to stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- vi. To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
- vii. to provide small and medium-sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the business centers.

Empowering the Nigerian people towards wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation (NEEDS, 2005), is a foremost cardinal point for the strategic macro-economic framework. This also reflects in the recent increase in the demand for



educational programs in entrepreneurship in the country's tertiary institutions, parastatals and non-governmental paradigms. If fully satisfied, this new vision and values would shine the spotlight on small and medium-scale business activities in Nigeria. Thus, increased education on entrepreneurial skills would create the perfect opportunity to stimulate economic growth. Institutions are therefore to properly train individuals who will have the right tools necessary to commence and grow successful businesses with reduced risk of failure (Maina, 2014).

Adah, Apochi, and Ekeh (2014) classified entrepreneurship in Nigeria into two stages. The early stage and modern stage. They argue that entrepreneurship in the early stage started when people produced more products than they needed; as such they had to exchange those surpluses. For instance, if a blacksmith produced more hoes than he needed, he exchanges the surplus he had with what he needed. In this way, producers came to realize that they can concentrate in their areas of production to produce more and then exchange with what they needed. Nigerian entrepreneur according to them is a self-made man who might be said to have a strong will to succeed. Early entrepreneurship by this assessment is characterized by production or manufacturing in which case the producer most often started with a small capital, most of it from his savings.

Entrepreneurship education has become a veritable tool for school graduates to become productive citizens. Since the nation's economy has no sufficient places of work for all, the unemployed cannot demand jobs that are not needed, or for no money is available; they rather resort to self-help business ventures. The state of unemployment has serious effects on the lives and dignity of individuals, dependents, family members and the larger society. When the youths' right to employment is not guaranteed, they channel their energies to anti-social attitudes and destructive practices such as violence, prostitution, armed robbery, human and drug abuse, drinking and smoking delinquencies, since society is not concerned with their plight, future and subsistence. Entrepreneurship education will not only reposition the youths but also prepare them for tomorrow's Nigeria (Oviawe, 2010).

Akiri, Onoja, and Kunanzang (2016) insisted that the reason for the backwardness of developing countries lies in the fact that they are deficient in innovating and imitating entrepreneurs, whereas they are found in abundance in developed countries. Entrepreneurship has been a major factor in the economic growth of the West, the USSR and Japan in Asia and it was undoubtedly of innovating and imitating type which made the process of development smooth and fast there. The role played by entrepreneurship in the development of Western countries has made the people of developing countries very much conscious of its importance in the program of rapid economic development. People have begun to realize that for achieving the goal of development it is necessary to increase both the quantitative and qualitative entrepreneurship in the country. Qualitative entrepreneurship implies the stress of innovating and quantitative implies the stress of imitating entrepreneurship. Both of them contribute stimulus for development. It is also known that even though a country has resources, labour, technology, capital and raw material etc, these remain under-explored in the absence of active and enthusiastic entrepreneurs who can organize the various factors of production.

Theoretical framework

The Need for Achievement Theory of McClelland (1965) and the Innovation Theory of Joseph A. Schumpeter are the two theoretical frameworks that this study will be based upon. The need for achievement theory was propounded by McClelland. His ambition is to inculcate the desire for high achievements, obtaining specific achievements, making the best performance,



touching the heights of excellence, develop entrepreneurial tendencies in individuals. To achieve this the entrepreneur should have adequate capacity of imagination and of thinking and developing new combinations. This theory holds that there will be a relatively greater amount of entrepreneurship activities in societies where the need for achievement is relatively high. It emphasized that when the need for achievement is sufficiently stimulated ie society through education, there would be a greater likelihood of them setting up their businesses after acquiring entrepreneurship education. Schumpeter propounded the innovation theory and the assumptions of this theory are: The entrepreneur is born with the desire to establish a business, also he desires to do something new, takes pleasure in creativity and earning experiences of skills for doing various tasks.

Statement of the problem

The issue of poor skills development among young graduates has been of serious concern to all and sundry in the academic environment. This is because of the influx of graduates struggling in the labour market for white-collar jobs. Entrepreneurial skills development has been one of the basic skills needed by all graduates in the labour market. This is because graduates are expected to be self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-employable. The problem has become so serious that most graduates find it difficult to sustain their certificates even after when they are believed to have acquired the skills needed for self-sufficiency. It has also been observed that most graduates in the labour market do not have the prerequisite skills to survive after graduating from school. Parents have blamed the teachers for not imparting the necessary skills needed, and teachers on their part blamed parents for not spending time to impart the basic skills to their children when they were in school. The government which may have claimed to have introduced entrepreneurial skills in most schools has not provided the needed facilities to stimulate the required skills needed. This has resulted in producing half-baked graduates who find it difficult to cope maximally in the labour market. The problem of this study is to determine how entrepreneurship education can help to improve employment generation among graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to determine the extent to which entrepreneurship education can generate employment opportunities for its beneficiaries. Specifically, the study will determine the extent to which:

- i. The knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education can generate employment ideas.
- ii. The skills acquired from entrepreneurship education can enable beneficiaries to set up industries of their own.
- iii. Entrepreneurship education stimulates entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up businesses of their own.

Research questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent is the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education capable of generating employment or business ideas for beneficiaries?
2. To what extent are the skills acquired from entrepreneurship education capable of enabling beneficiaries to set up industries of their own?



- To what extent do entrepreneurship studies stimulate entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up businesses of their own?

RESEARCH METHODS

The study utilized the descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto type with a population of 2,908 respondents drawn using stratified random sampling. The sample used in the study was 140 respondents were used in the study and the researchers used an adapted instrument for data collection and Entrepreneurship Education for Employment Creation Questionnaire(EEFECQ). Divide into three subheadings sections A, B, and C. Section A measured respondent demographic data section B was structured with 15 items on entrepreneurship education as a veritable alternative for employment creation. To validate the instrument, three (3) experts were deployed. The instrument reliability coefficient of .78 to .88 was obtained and the data was analysed with simple percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the data analysis are presented research question-by research question with simple percentage and bar charts as shown below

Research question one: To what extent is the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education capable of generating employment for beneficiaries?

Table 1: The knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education and capability for generating employment for beneficiaries (n=410)

s/n	Response	Agreed	Disagreed	Remark
1	I own a business through the knowledge of entrepreneurship	310	100	Positive
2	It is the skills I acquired in the entrepreneurship study that I am using to earn a living.	280	130	Positive
3	The motivation derived from entrepreneurship studies helped me to own a business.	320	90	Positive
4	I have more than three businesses through the knowledge of entrepreneurship education.	297	113	Positive
5	I did not acquire any skills in entrepreneurship education.	1071	4329	Negative

Table 1: revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that to a large extent, the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education was capable of helping them to generate employment for beneficiaries

Research question two: To what extent are the skills acquired from entrepreneurship education capable of enabling beneficiaries to set up businesses of their own?

Table 2: Skills acquired from entrepreneurship education capability enabling beneficiaries to set up businesses of their own (n=410)

s/n	Response	Agree	disagree	Remark
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6	I took the risk of opening a business because of the confidence derived through entrepreneurship studies.	290	120	Positive
7	I have people working for me because of the entrepreneurial knowledge I acquired while in school.	319	91	Positive
8	Entrepreneurship education has given me self-employment skills that help me to own a business.	268	142	Positive
9	Entrepreneurship skills have saved me from idleness.	209	201	Positive
10	I have always been self-reliant through the knowledge of entrepreneurship.	320	90	Positive

Table 2 showed that to a positive extent, the skills acquired from entrepreneurship education were capable of enabling them to set up businesses of their own. This response was found to apply to the respondents used in the study.

Research question three: To what extent do entrepreneurial studies stimulate entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up businesses on their own?

Table 3: Level to which entrepreneurial studies stimulate entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up businesses on their own (n=410)

s/n	Response	YES	No	Remark
11	I offered entrepreneurship in school and it was worth it.	323	178	Positive
12	I have gained business experience in school through entrepreneurship studies.	277	133	Positive
13	I am a business developer with entrepreneurship knowledge.	298	112	Positive
14	I have no confidence in owning a business of my own.	180	230	Negative



15	Confidence from entrepreneurship education has made me an employer of labour.	267	143	Positive
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Table three revealed that entrepreneurial studies has stimulated entrepreneurial confidence in beneficiaries to set up business on their own as the majority of the respondents agreed with the items in the instruments.

Interpretation and discussion of findings

From the analyses of the data as presented above, the following deductions could be made about entrepreneurship education as a veritable alternative for employment generation.

1. The knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship education has significantly helped in generating employment ideas for beneficiaries.
2. Most persons that own a business or more were able to do so through the knowledge of entrepreneurial education.
3. Most graduate workshop owners acquired the skill from entrepreneurial education.
4. A good percentage of graduates are self-reliant as a result of the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurial education.
5. Entrepreneurship education is greatly fulfilling its objectives
6. The knowledge and skills acquired from entrepreneurship education have successfully built confidence among beneficiaries to develop and own their businesses.

Discussion of findings

From the findings and analysis of this research study entrepreneurship education has been and still, is a veritable alternative for employment generation. It has helped many to be self-reliant and self-employed.

The majority of the respondents indicate a positive view of entrepreneurship as a way of easily gaining employment and gaining independence. Little or no wonder Oviawe (2010) asserted that to create employment for the citizenry, her youths are to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills that can build a prosperous nation. There is a need to create awareness about the need for self-reliance through entrepreneurship education. In creating employment through entrepreneurship education, the recipients (youths) are exposed to different businesses through practical experiences, for people learn more by seeing, watching, perceiving and doing (technical know-how) and even by trial and error. Entrepreneurship education has become a veritable tool for school graduates to become productive citizens. Since the nation’s economy has no sufficient places of work for all, the unemployed cannot demand jobs that are not needed, or no money is available; they rather resort to self-help business ventures.

Maina, (2014) also opined that increased education on entrepreneurial skills would create the perfect opportunity to stimulate economic growth. Institutions are therefore to properly train individuals who will have the right tools necessary to commence and grow successful businesses with reduced risk of failure. Likewise, Akiri, Onoja, and Kunanzang (2016) are in the same standing with the result of these findings when they postulated that the reason for the backwardness of the developing countries lies in the fact that they are deficient in innovating and imitating entrepreneurs, whereas they are found in abundance in developed countries. Entrepreneurship has been a major factor in the economic growth of the West, the USSR and Japan in Asia and it was undoubtedly of innovating and imitating type which made the process of development smooth and fast there.

Conclusion



From the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that entrepreneurship education is a veritable alternative for employment generation. The beneficiaries of entrepreneurship education are surviving through the knowledge and confidence gained over time.

IMPLICATION FOR SOCIETAL CO-EXISTENCE

From the sociological point of view, societal coexistence is very necessary for peaceful coexistence because it unites several geographical, ethnic and demographic, historical, cultural, spiritual, religious, economic, political aspects of individuals in the society. Coexistence helps to unite two or more groups living together while respecting their differences and resolving their conflicts nonviolently. Coexistence is the pillar that sustains many aspects of human life. As highly sociable creatures, achieving a peaceful, effective, and harmonious coexistence not only helps to guarantee our survival as a group but also helps to promote well-being and progress

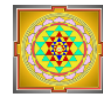
Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research study, it could be recommended as thus;

1. The teaching of entrepreneurial education should be given more attention to ensure that it achieves other objectives that have not been achieved.
2. More vocational facilities should be put in place to ensure a vast skills acquisition.
3. Vocational education programs in tertiary educational institutions should be better equipped for higher productivity.
4. Funding for entrepreneurship studies should be increased to ensure stability in achievement.

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