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## ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The progress of a nation is a function of the level of the resourcefulness of the people which to a great extent, relates to the level of quality of the training and purposeful development of education in that nation. Such progress or development could only occur when an individual in the society is gainfully employed and per capital income is enhanced. This could only be possible when government educational policies are geared towards a functional education that can lead to job creation and also self reliance. Entrepreneurship education is a means through which government could attain such development in the society. Therefore, this paper examines how the role of entrepreneurship education could help in job creation in Nigeria. The challenges of quality entrepreneurship education were also discussed. Finally, the paper made some suggestions on how to overcome the challenges so as to reduce unemployment and enhances job creation in Nigeria.*

**KEYWORDS:** Youth Unemployment, Entrepreneurship Education, and job creation.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is the 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. It facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation. Education is the essential tool for sustainability. The present global economic crises suggest that the entire world is struggling for qualitative education (Aluwong,2010).

Entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is 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 for an employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make functional. Quality entrepreneurship education could be used as a tool for fighting the war against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

According to Agi and Yellowe (2013) education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization and a high way to global knowledge economy. Relating to security, Agi and Yellowe (2013) explained further that education is regarded as a means of achieving culture of peace, gender equality and positive African values. It is therefore the understanding of many that education leads to national transformation and development, through reduction in poverty and to ensured peace and security.

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS,2004) document lends credence to the place of education by clearly explaining its role in self-reliance and development, Agi and Yellowe (2013) asserted that the goals of wealth creation or generation,

poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values. In view of the benefits of education enumerated above, Nigeria has provided education for decades with abundant available manpower. However, what keeps agitating the nation endlessly borders on the slow and inefficient economy, near primitive democracy and violent social co-existence in society (NEEDS, 2004).

Evidenced with many primary and secondary schools and tertiary institution's graduates not gainfully employed either by self or government. Supporting this Ochonma (2011) reported that about 2.8 million fresh graduates enter the labour market yearly and only 10% of these are gainfully employed.

Analyzing the problem of education in Nigeria, Agi and Yellowe (2013) argued that the problem is not about curriculum or investment in education neither is it non-availability of manpower for the sector, but that many have tended to look in the direction of management of education which include lack of policy analysis to make students to fit into society, yet not relying on the government of the day but the managerial ingenuity of educational managers and administrators to make education a building block of socio-economic empowerment, prosperity, self-reliance, employment crime reduction and national security, through improved access to quality, functional education at all levels.

### **Concept of Youth**

Youth is defined by Webster's New Oxford Dictionary in Adebayo (2002) as "the time of life when one is young especially the period between childhood and maturity of the early period of existence, growth or development" the word "youth", "adolescent", "teenager" and "young person's" are often used interchangeably. According to Jega (2012), 'Youth can be define as a special group of people with strong stamina and passion for realizing certain set goals and objectives'. The way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist on the ground especially historical and contemporary socio-economic and political issues that need to be addressed. For the purpose of execution of Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy; the youth comprises all young persons of age 18-35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represents the most culture, the most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population, socio-economically, emotionally and in other respect.

### **Causes of Youth Unemployment**

Youth's unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One major factor is that of population growth. Nigeria has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in the youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population.

Lack of employable skills due to inappropriate school curricula is another factor contributing to the rising youth unemployment. Analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers posses do not match the needs and demands of employers (Mcgrath, 1999; Kent and Mushi, 1995). According to them, the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011).

Another factor is the perception of policy makers and the youth themselves about employment. To the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. It is this perception that has continued to influence the institutions in Nigeria that provide skills and training. Based on this, curricula and training programmes are generally tailored towards preparing young people for formal sector jobs. Since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seekers and the available jobs.

Among other factors responsible for youth unemployment are poor governance, ineffective targeting of the poor resulting in resources being thinly spread among competing projects, overlapping of functions, poor coordination and lack of sustainable measures (Musari, 2009).

### **Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship Education means many things to many people. Nwabuama (2004) view entrepreneurship education as the identification of the general characteristics of entrepreneurs and how potential entrepreneurs can be trained in management techniques needed for effective performance of persons for long time survival of an organization after the acquisition of occupational skills. Olawolu and Kaegon (2012) confirms that entrepreneurship education prepares youths to be responsible and entering individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them in real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome. Ememe (2010) observes that entrepreneurship education enables youths to seek for success in ventures through one's effort.

According to Ebele (2008), entrepreneurship education is the teaching of knowledge and a skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their own business. In the view of Swarland (2008), entrepreneurship education aims to stimulate creativity in students, enables them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivate them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context. Amusan (2004) agrees that entrepreneurship education will provide opportunities for students to access their attitude, aptitude and skills relating to those necessary for developing and running business.

Entrepreneurship education entails teaching students, learners and would-be businessmen, the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees (Ezeani, 2012). According to Abefe-Balogun (2012), Entrepreneurship education involve a dynamic process of creating wealth through the process of creating something new and in the process assumes both attendant risks and rewards. Izedonmi (2006) states categorically that it is a process of preparing trainees for self employment.

Okereke and Okorofor (2011) assert that entrepreneurship education has been acknowledged world wide as a potent and viable tool for self-empowerment, job and wealth creation. To Atakpa (2011) Entrepreneurship education is an aspect of education which equips an individual and create in the person the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. Also to Fashua (2006) entrepreneurship education creates the willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. Hence, the overall purpose of entrepreneurship education is to develop expertise as an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship education entails philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, 2012)

### **Rationale for Entrepreneurship Education**

The rationale for entrepreneurship education, basically, derives from the UNESCO [2000] World Declaration on Education for the Twenty- First Century, Article 7, Section D which states that;

Developing entrepreneurial skills should become a major concern in education system, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will, increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers but also and above all, become job creators. There should be opportunity for students / youths to develop their own abilities with a sense of social responsibility, educating them to become full participants in a democratic society and promoters of changes that will foster equity and justice. (UNESCO, 2000 ; 20 ).

### **Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship education is a form of education which makes humans to be responsive to their personal, families and national needs and aspirations. Entrepreneurship competencies carry with it, the concept of skills and mental awareness which are needed to understand the functioning of an already existing business.

The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), in the latest edition of the National Policy on Education, identified what it calls” Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects”, and listed thirty-four (34) of them under section 38.2.5 of the policy. They include;

- i. Auto body repair and spray painting.
- ii. Auto electrical work.
- iii. Auto mechanical work.
- iv. Auto parts merchandising.
- v. Air conditioning and refrigeration.
- vi. vi. Electrical installation and maintenance work.
- vii. Radio, TV and electronic servicing.
- viii. Welding and fabrication engineering craft practice.
- ix. Block laying, brick laying and concrete work.
- x. Painting and decorating
- xi. Plumbing and pipe lifting.
- xii. Machine wood working.
- xiii. Carpentry and joinery.
- xiv. Furniture making.
- xv. Upholstery.
- xvi. Catering craft practice.
- xvii. Garment making.
- xviii. Clothing and textile.
- xix. Dyeing and bleaching.
- xx. Printing craft practice.
- xxi. Cosmetology.
- xxii. Photography.

- xxiii. Mining.
- xxiv. Tourism.
- xxv. Leather Goods Manufacturing and Repair.
- xxvi. Stenography.
- xxvii. Data Processing.
- xxviii. Store Keeping.
- xxix. Book Keeping.
- xxx. GSM Maintenance and Repairs.
- xxxi. Animal Husbandry.
- xxxii. Fishery.
- xxxiii. Marketing.
- xxxiv. Salesmanship (*FGN, 2013*).

### **Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education**

The objectives of entrepreneurship education clearly show that it is concerned with the development and survival of both the individual and society. In fact, it is a tool through which social, economic and political development could be achieved. If it is properly planned, funded and implemented. The objectives of entrepreneurship education are spelt out by Osuala (2010) as

1. To provide meaningful education for youth which could make them self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self independent
2. To provide graduate with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.
3. To provide graduates with employable skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
4. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
5. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.
6. To provide graduate with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
7. 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 management of the business centre.

From the above objectives, it is evident that this type of education if it is given all it deserves and properly implemented will produce quality graduates that will foster job creation and reduce or eliminate poverty in Nigeria.

### **Trends and Practices in Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurial education and training is becoming a global phenomenon due to world growing unemployment and poverty driven crimes and crises. This has made many countries of the world-developed, developing or underdeveloped to be interested and making progress though slow.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria Government has been making various efforts to enhance skill acquisition of youths and unemployment. However, Education For All (EFA) reported by Babalola (2011) showed that sufficient attention is not given to skill training for youth and adults. This formed the basis of the then President Obasanjo to mandate all university students in Nigeria, regardless of which major, to be exposed to entrepreneurship development study. However, as Babalola (2011) reported, efforts at integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum of Nigeria public university seem to be inadequate. As at 2010, the most coordinated entrepreneurship education in Nigerian public universities is reported to be at the University of Ibadan which commenced in the 2003/2004 academic session. The programme is reported to be integrated into the curriculum and only concentrated on few students who are interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills.

At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 2010 the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research

(CEDR) was set up to promote entrepreneurial culture and mind-set, skill acquisition, self employment economic independence and self actualization. The University of Ilorin was reported to have agreed since 2005 to create a directorate to handle entrepreneurship training however it was only in 2008/2009 the University established the directorate of Technical and Entrepreneurship Centre (TEC).

University of Benin also established an entrepreneurship development centre to; develop and offer courses, seminars, workshops and conferences to advance and propagate entrepreneurship.

- Offer a 2 credit course to penultimate analyzed student.
- Provide clinics in entrepreneurship to students, staff and members of the public.
- Serve as a national centre for the training and development of experts in entrepreneurship.
- Promote research and experimentation in entrepreneurship. and
- Commercialize innovation and inventions.

Considering the importance of entrepreneurship education in the life of Nigeria citizens in general and university graduates in particular, the National Universities Commission (NUC) made it a national policy to encourage Nigerian Universities to provide entrepreneurship education for undergraduates to address the challenges of unemployment. This made NUC design an entrepreneurship course titled Graduate Self Employment (GSE, 301) with the theory and practice components to be taught in Nigerian Universities.

In Delta State University, it is the policy of the University that those reading Business Management or

Accounting courses must register study and pass courses in entrepreneurship. While it forms part of the general courses required to be passed before graduating.

In other state Universities in Nigeria, it is only offered as general courses. However, the case of Covenant University, Sango Ota is an outstanding example of where a serious effort has been made to integrate entrepreneurship development study into the curriculum since the

inception of the University in 2001. All the students from 100 to 400 levels are made to register for, study and pass Entrepreneurship Development Study (EDS).

It is therefore observable that; there is a missing link in the National Universities Commission (NUC) policy on entrepreneurship education with the absence of a standard curriculum and course outline/content to guide and develop entrepreneurship in the Universities, since entrepreneurship education in Nigeria schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities is not given serious attention it deserves. Therefore there should be a systematic coordinated planning and implementation carried at producing well course structured, teaching contents, methods and materials.

### **The Roles of Entrepreneurship Education**

- Entrepreneurship education can positively impact a learner at all levels on a wide number of contexts. This many explain why there are such a wide entrepreneurship education programs, all of which can provide important outcomes at various stages of a learner's life.
- Entrepreneurship education is a key driver to economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small business started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. Thus it would make learners to be relevant in today's economy.
- Entrepreneurship education equipped people with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and foresight or promoting local technology Entrepreneurship activities are a real-life vehicle for developing academic skills. Hence, trained entrepreneurs are always empowered to tap form local resources in their immediate environment. This is a phenomenon that has been demonstrated in China, Japan, India and other emerging economies of the world.
- Entrepreneurship education inculcates in learners the mentality of hard work, one of the keys to unlock poverty doors in developing areas. Entrepreneurs are trained to work hard to be able to run businesses profitably and successfully.
- Entrepreneurship education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their own development in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world and in the new millennium.
- Entrepreneurship education developed good support skills including commenting, decision making, interpersonal abilities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing, managerial, and financial skills.
- Entrepreneurship education also provide individual with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative relevance to skill acquisition which encourages self employment and self-reliant.

### **Techniques of Acquiring Entrepreneurship Education**

- a. Teaching Methods Fayolle (2009) and Lonappan and Devaraj (2011) classify the teaching methods into following categories: case study, group discussion, individual presentation, individual written report, group project, formal lectures, guest speakers, action learning,

seminar, web-based learning and video recorded. Teaching methods are effective in terms of sending the relevant information to a broader population in a relative short time period.

- b. Industrial Training Exercise Skills does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental innate capacities but must be developed through training practice and experience. If the objective of entrepreneurship education is to equip individuals with entrepreneurial skills, which are applicable directly to work, then the best technique is industrial training exercise which would provide education and training that enable individuals to involve directly in the entrepreneurial process.
- c. Experimental/Practical Technique One of the objectives of entrepreneurship educations is to prepare individuals to act as entrepreneurs, one of the most efforts are ways/technique is to facilitate experiments by trying entrepreneurship out in a controlled environment, for instance through business simulation or role playing (Ahmad, Baharun and Rahman, 2004).
- d. Excursion Technique Excursion technique will facilitate first hand information on a particular field of study. This will enable young entrepreneurs' opportunity to acquaint themselves with the various skills needed in accomplishment of their dream and aspirations as future entrepreneurs.
- e. Co-operation or Group Learning Technique This is a process of organizing young entrepreneurs into small groups so that they can work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Team work is a contemporary form of collaboration. This technique will prompts a sense of mutual responsibility among the entrepreneurs boost their self-esteem, improved social skills and offers greater comprehension of the subject matters.

### **How Entrepreneurship Education Could Help in Job Creation**

Quality Entrepreneurship Education plays a vital role in the social, political and economic development of any Nation. This is possible when jobs are created for the citizenry by establishing a lot of businesses that will accommodate the unemployed youth in Nigeria.

- a. Creation of self-employment. An entrepreneur provides job for himself by establishing small business centre. According to Olorunmolu (2008), it helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in Nigeria. The entrepreneur does not only provide jobs/employment for himself alone, but provides for others too. This in turn helps the individual to increase per capital income hence improve standard living.
- b. The Entrepreneur determines or identifies the specific wants of the people and the type of goods and services that will fulfill those wants most comfortable. Emeruwa (2005) asserted that the entrepreneur does not only identifies but mobilizes and organizes the resources to tap the opportunities by assisting men, materials, money and machines to explore the opportunity.
- c. Entrepreneurship stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. They contribute to the development of rural areas. They do this by establishing their small/medium scale enterprise in such areas by discouraging rural migration.



- d. They provide ample job opportunities to the rural dwellers. They also provide goods and services, which could be found in an urban area and sometimes provide infrastructural facilities.
- e. The entrepreneurs are usually motivated in their activities not only by the need for material contributions to the welfare of the communities but also desire to make profit. This uplifts the dignity of labour.
- f. Through entrepreneurship education, utilization of local resources is made possible. The graduates of this specialized education set up their small/medium scale business, which will enable them to utilize the local resources available in their vicinity.
- g. Through entrepreneurship education, A pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skills and technical know how to manage small/medium scale industries are produced. This will equally help in job creation.

### **Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

The programme is confronted with a lot of challenges which brought a setback in the attainment of its objectives. These challenges have not enable Nigerian to enjoy the benefits of this programme as expected. This limits the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) in Nigeria.

Some of the challenges have been pointed out by eminent scholars such as Gana (2000), Aiyeduso (2004), Osuala (2010) and they include:

- Poor funding by government and Non-governmental organizations.
- Poor or ineffective planning, supervision information and evaluation of the programme across the board.
- Inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities.
- The challenges posed on globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) have effect on curriculum, methodology, facilities, staff and equipment.
- Inadequate qualified teachers and instructors as well as supporting staff at all level.
- Inadequate motivation for available teaching and non teaching staff which affects staff efficiency, retention, creativity and initiative.
- Emphasis on theoretical Knowledge rather than practical knowledge due to lack of entrepreneurship education centre.
- High level of corruption and very poor maintenance culture in the system.
- Poor enabling business environment, access to credit/ loan, infrastructural decay, mass poverty, inflation, technological infraction, political instability and insecurity of lives and properties which hamper economic and business activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Entrepreneurship education is very important that there is urgent need for all higher educational institutions in Nigeria to comply with the presidential directives to the effect that entrepreneurship be made compulsory for all students of higher education institutions in Nigeria, irrespective of their areas of specialization. This policy decision was based on government awareness of the crucial role of entrepreneurship education and training in fostering employment generation among the teeming youths, economic growth, and wealth creation. Thus, entrepreneurial skills development according to Anho (2011), goes beyond training and education, it involves a process of human capacities building through formal and or informal training inculcating in the entrepreneur basic skills such as financial skills, technical skills, creative skills, managerial skills, intellectual skills, marketing skills, communication skills and technological skills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The wheel of development of any country lies on the shoulders of how productive and creative the youths are. The government, parents and guardians have obligations to ensure that youth are empowered to discharge their obligations to the society and to better their life. In the light of the issues discussed above, the following recommendations are proffered.

- Funding of entrepreneurship education should be taken seriously by the federal government. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to educational sector.
- Entrepreneurship education should be inculcated into the school's curriculum to promote human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial skill acquisition. It is a means of reducing unemployment since it is skilled oriented and employment motivated. All school programmes should be geared toward providing entrepreneurial skills.
- The private partners and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) should be encouraged to participate in entrepreneurship education through funding or contributions in kind. This involvement should be seen by firms as a long term investment, and as an aspect of their corporate social responsibility to the nation.
- To empower youth, federal government should provide enabling environment and all the necessary equipment and materials for easy teaching and learning entrepreneurship education needed for economic enhancement and youth empowerment in Nigeria.
- The youth should shun joblessness and criminality through the cultivation of entrepreneurial spirit and acquisition of relevant skills that will launch them into enterprise greatness and economic independence.

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