

## INTEGRATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR GRADUATES UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT :** *The purpose of this paper was to examine graduates' unemployment in Nigeria; Technical Education and Entrepreneurial Development; Concept of employability and self-reliance of graduates aspiring to own their enterprises and effectively manage resources rather than waiting for government jobs. The paper also identified major challenges of entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria which include: Lack of credit facilities; Corruption; Inconsistent government policies; Multiple taxation; Poor state of infrastructure. Another objective of this study was to find out new ways to address the issue of unemployment problems in Nigeria. Among the recommendations advanced in the study are: Government needs to create an investor friendly environment for businesses, curtails corruption and revitalize dilapidated infrastructural facilities in the country.*

**KEYWORDS:** Unemployment, Framework for a New Venture, Opportunities for Income Generation

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### INTRODUCTION

Long before the nineteenth century, the people of Nigeria had mined iron, gold, salt, and other minerals. Iron works existed in many areas; Ijebu Ode, Ilorin, Bida and Awka. The workshop of blacksmith was usually developed by a screen, which separated the section which contains the furnaces from the one in which he sat. The blacksmith produced his anvil, hammer, files and other working tools. The local smith forged spears and arrows which were made from locally mined iron ore (Osuola, 1987). It is on record that Hausa and Yoruba ethnic groups were great entrepreneurs in pre and post-independent Nigeria. The Igbo group was also recognized internationally for its culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise development. At that time unemployment was a rare phenomenon in Nigeria because people were highly entrepreneurial and productively engaged (Akanwa & Akpanbia, 2013).

Gland (2009) reported that with the first decade of Nigeria's independence (1960 – 1970) the country was mainly agrarian; it thus depended on agriculture both for local sustenance and foreign exchange generation. The education system was directed at producing graduates for government employment. It thus continued graduating students without taking cognizance of the labour market. The matter of unemployment and poverty were not issues of national concern. The economy though monolithic was flourishing. The economy progressed and further reinforced by the oil boom of the 1970s. However, the trend changed by 1980s when the political instability and inconsistencies in the socio economic policies of governments began to crumble the economy. There was unmanageable escalation in the rate of unemployment and poverty. As a result, the country experienced collapse of several business enterprises, high rate

retrenchment and retirement of workers. To grapple with this, several programmes were introduced which included: National Directorate of Empowerment (NDE); Work for Your Self Programme (WFYSP); Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP); National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and State Economic Empowerment Strategy (SEEDS).

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) aimed at dousing the effect of unemployment by revitalizing technical education policy statement as spelt out below:

- a. Providing trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce, particularly for sub-professional grade.
- b. Providing technical skills and vocational knowledge necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development
- c. Providing people who can apply scientific knowledge for improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- d. Giving an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies
- e. Giving training and impart necessary skills leading to production, enterprising and self-reliance.
- f. Enabling young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Despite these efforts the problem of graduates' unemployment continued to soar high and constituted a major problem for Nigeria as a nation. The unemployment saga is worst now than ever before because Nigeria is officially declared in recession as the country's unemployment rate has risen from 12.1 percent in the first quarter of the year 2016 to 13.3 percent at the end of the second quarter (Sodipo, 2014). The compounding problems of unemployment in Nigeria need to be addressed through Technical and Entrepreneurial Education.

### **Nature of Problem**

In an attempt to ascertain the way forward and in response to the current socio-economic problems of the Nigeria, questions were raised by various individuals and organized bodies as to what is the right kind of education for Nigeria and what kind of education may be suitable in propelling life development in the country? So many suggestions were made in favor of refocusing the current Nigerian education system to reflect economic realities. It could be recalled that in Nigeria, technical education has received a lot of attention at both State and Federal level (Adeniyi, 2012).

The attention given to technical education in the recent time is not unconnected with the fact that technical skills and knowledge are driving forces of economic growth and development of any country. Rosemary (2016) stressed that those countries with individuals who have higher and better skills levels can adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of the world of work. In support of this view Adeniyi (2012) emphasized the need and importance of entrepreneurial skills in vocational and Technical Education as a panacea to some social and economic problems in Nigeria.

Shuaibu (2016) posited that the ultimate goal of technical education and training is for the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and practical skills for sustainable development. He also explained that the training of technical education students is based on the production of goods and services that are not relevant to them alone but to the society in general. The Researchers observed that the goal of technical education and training for sustainable development seems to be defeated probably due to mass unemployment of technical education graduates. Sharing a similar view Shuaibu (2016) also opined that technical education graduates are highly unemployed basically because they lack employability skills. The present study is conducted so as to determine the whether entrepreneurship and technical education could be a Panacea for Graduates Unemployment in Nigeria

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study specifically determined:

- a). The level of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria.
- b). New ways to address the issue of unemployment problems in Nigeria.

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is that technical education graduates will understand the role of entrepreneurial education in promoting effective workforce in Nigeria. The study will also assist colleges and universities in planning technical training bearing in mind the needs of the society in terms of production.

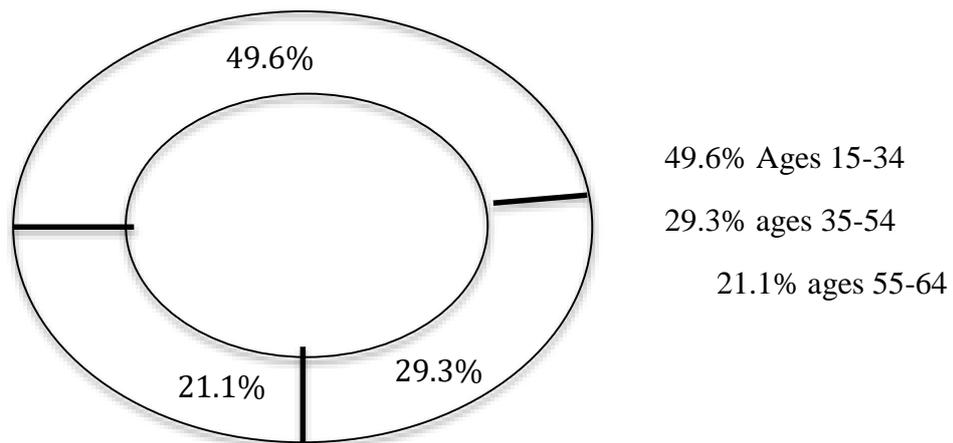
### **Previous Work/Literature Review**

Every economy is characterized by both active and in active populations. The economically active refers to populations willing and able to work. These populations include those who are actively engaged in the production of goods and services and those who are unemployed are regarded as the inactive. By and large unemployment could be used in relation to any of the factors of production, which is idle, and not being utilized for production. However, with reference to labour, there is unemployment if it is not possible to find job for all citizens who are eligible and able and willing to work (Akanwa & Akpanbia, 2013).

Graduate unemployment is referred to a situation where able, strong, and qualified and willing to work graduates of tertiary institutions have no work to do. This situation is gloomier in Nigeria because according to Sodipo (2014) the unemployment rate in 2010 was 21%, which rose to 23.9% in 2011. In 2012 according to her out of total population of 64 million comprising youth aged between 15 and 35 years were unemployed. This alarming situation, which is really, serious social problem if not checked, can be a huge time bomb that could blow up in the face of the nation. The situation is not unconnected to the high incidence of crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, terrorism, prostitution, drug peddling and other social vices, being exhibited in the country. The people in this category are the individuals becoming more and more helpless and desperate. The recruitment exercise by Nigerian Immigration Services in 2014 which left 18 Nigerians including 3 pregnant women dead and one hundred (100) graduates got injured during a stampede is a clear indication of degradation and level of unemployment in the country.

According to Chukwumezie & Osapka (2015) the country's unemployment rate has increased to 9.9 percent in the third quarter of 2015, representing a fourth constructive rise in the unemployment rate since the third quarter of 2014. The bureau revealed that a total of 1,454,620 Nigerians are unemployed in this quarter compared to 529,923 in the second quarter and this has led to an increase from 8.2 percent in the second quarter of 2015 to 9.9 percent in this third quarter 2015.

### Share of Unemployment and unemployment in Q3 2015 in Nigeria



The situation is worse now than ever before because Nigeria is officially in recession as the country's unemployment rate has risen from 12.1 percent in the first quarter of this year 2016 to 13.3 percent at the end of the second quarter. Report by the bureau affirmed that the number of people that were unemployed or underemployed increased from 24.4 million as at the end of the first quarter to 26.06 million persons (Chukwumezie & Osapka, 2015). The report reads in the parts, "The number of underemployed in the labour force (those working but doing mental jobs not commensurate with their qualifications or those not engaged in full time work and working for few hours) increased by 392,390 or 2.61 percent resulting in an increase in the underemployment rate to 19.3 percent in Q2 2016 from 19.1 percent in Q1 2016. One of the major ways of addressing the turbulent graduate unemployment in order to inculcate employment ability skills is through sound technical education and entrepreneurial skills.

### Technical Education and Entrepreneurial Development

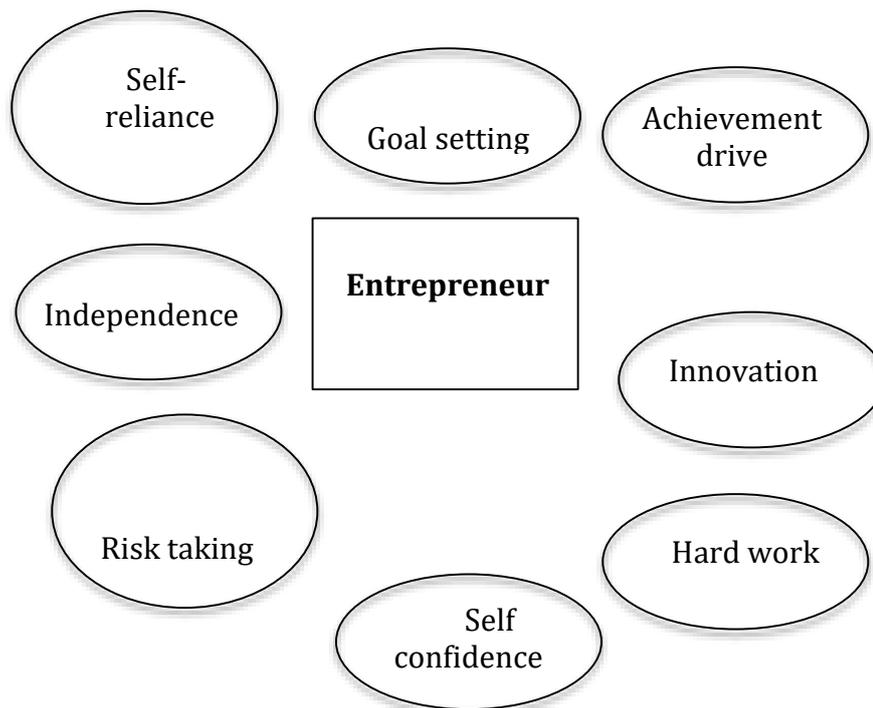
Entrepreneurship is an attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunity, the management of risk taking appropriate to the opportunity and through the communicative and management skills to mobilize human, financial and material resources to function (Sabo & Olanrewaju, 2012). Rosemary (2016) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to perceive and undertake business opportunities, taking advantage of scarce resources utilization. Entrepreneurship is the process of creating businesses that are new with value by devoting the necessary time and effect assuming the accompanying finance psychic and social risk and reserving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

This ability according to Abraham, Adeniyi, & Margret (2016) should be acquired and not be taken for granted. It involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial competences necessary for self-reliance and self-employment. Sabo & Olanrewaju (2012) also posited that

the introduction of entrepreneurship education into our education system will certainly empower our students irrespective of their area of specialization to release the value of knowledge and the skills they have acquired in school and that such value could be exchanged for money so that eventually they become self-reliant through such processes. The ability to sale such values is the bottom line in the entrepreneurial education. Similarly, Rosemary (2016) is of the view that entrepreneurship education is the kind of education that seeks to provide knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation to students for entrepreneurial skills in any setting. It equips people with ability to seek investment opportunities and it should be structured to achieve the following objectives:

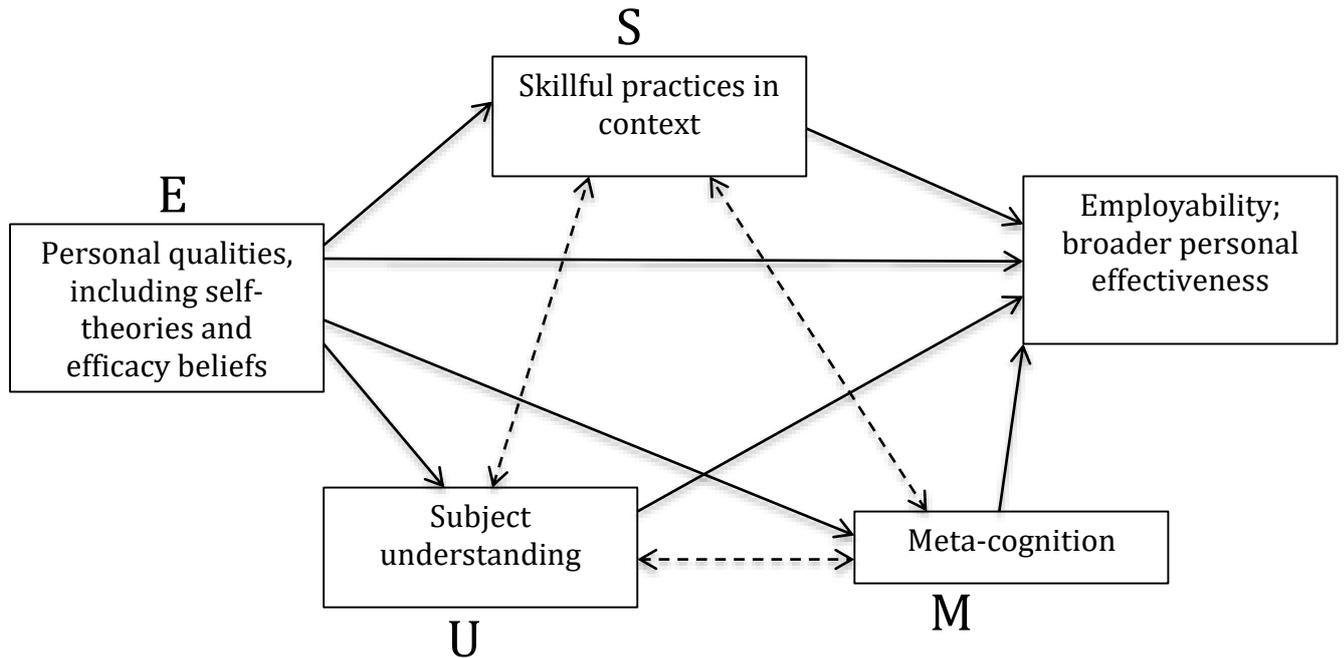
1. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-reliant and self-employed.
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying noble business opportunities
3. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training and risk management to make certain bearing feasible
4. To serve as catalyst for economic growth and development.
5. To reduce high rate of poverty
6. Create employment generation
7. Reduction of rural-urban migration
8. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized business
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults, which will enable them to persist in any business venture, they embarked on.
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy.

An entrepreneur is anybody who coordinates other factors of production and bears the risk of uncertainly by investing his service resources in business ventures accordingly. In doing this, person combines the managerial functions of planning, organizing staffing and directing business enterprise. Some people are the view that entrepreneurs are born, that is it has some link with hereditary traits, which others feel that the traits are acquired over time. In whichever ways entrepreneurs must display the following features in the diagram below.

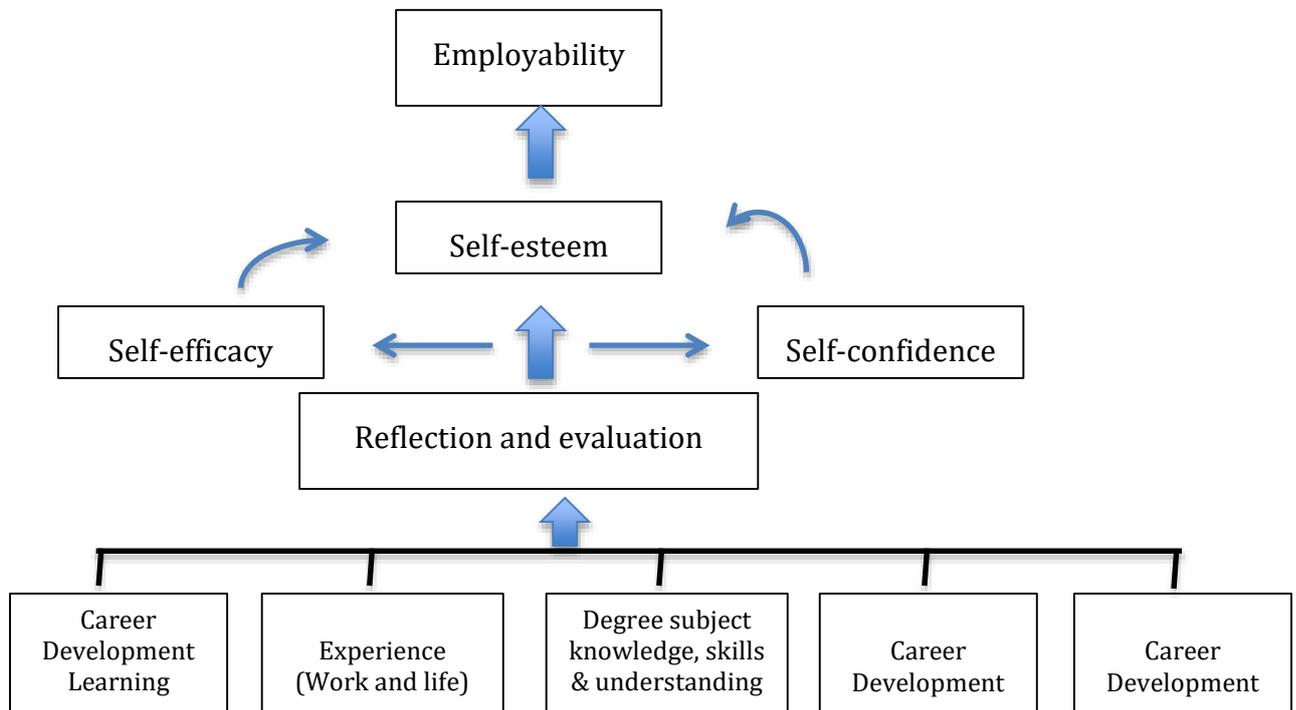


Source: Sabo and Olanrewaju (2012).

Employability is a longstanding yet contested concept that has come to the forefront of policy and theoretical debates at local, regional, national and international levels. Despite its importance in labour market discourses, employability is difficult to measure. The concept of employability continues to be applied within different contexts of both those in work and those seeking work. Accordingly, [13] defined it as the possession by an individual of the capacity to gain employment and make progress, in terms of personal and/or career development, while in employment. The individual's possession of this capacity is related to a number of interconnected individual factors, personal circumstances and external factors. Tibby & Cole (2014) has given a framework of employability for higher education institutions. The framework provides a process for reflecting on and addressing employability provision in a systematic and holistic manner and can be adapted and used as appropriate. Tibby & Cole (2014) further stated that in developing and implementing employability strategies, higher institutions need to consider: what interpretation of employability is, how it can be translated into practice, how students and staffs can be engaged with this, current practice and gaps in provision, and how to monitor progress. Tibby & Cole (2014) recommended the use of employability models by Knight and Yorke, and Swell models are the example of models he provided as can be seen below:



Source: Tibby 2014.



Source: Tibby 2014.

Models can be particularly useful when seeking to not only defined a concept but also to articulate the range to which, audiences from academics to students to parents can have a big picture of a situation. Models can support reflection on current practices and consideration of

potential gaps in provision. It can be rationale or point of reference upon which current provision can be assessed and outcome identified and agreed. Models may be adapted and interpreted to meet the specific subject needs and therefore not intended to be prescriptive and followed without full consideration as to how appropriate they may be within an area of curriculum.

Self-reliance is reliance on one's own power and resources rather than others. It is also called self-sufficiency, self-support, self-sustenance, self-standing and independence ethic, in affirmation, Rosemary (2016) asserted that self-reliance is synonymous with self-sufficiency. It means doing things for ourselves rather than having things done for us. It is personal initiative, ability and effort to identify, harness and manage effectively and efficiently the personal and collective resources; human or natural in the immediate surroundings in order to uplift one's or people's life quality, standard and condition of existence.

### **Entrepreneurial Job Opportunities Available for Technical Education Graduates in Nigeria.**

Nigeria is rich in many other resources that are yet to be exploited. Sectors such as agriculture, mining, semi-precious and precious stones and other resources have to be taken back set to the petroleum industry. It should be noted that one of the best places to invest money and build a business is a developing terrain like Nigeria (Ihugba & Njoku, 2013). However, Graduates of technical education have now realized that government and the organized private sector are not ready to employment them. This situation posed serious threats and challenges to both government and citizens in Nigeria and it calls for different strategies and actions for it to be ameliorated (Adeniyi, 2012). However, Sambo (2016) listed the following job opportunities for income generation for technical education graduates in Nigeria:

- Solar photovoltaic panels and the other needed components like inverters, deep discharge storage batteries, charge controllers, cables, supports are being imported to provide electricity for a variety of end use power needs.
- Biomass use in the form of fuel wood is a problem that aggregates desert encroachment and loss of soil fertility unless it will be supplied from developed plantations of quick growing tree species. Biomass in the form of agricultural industrial sector in their natural forms or when blended with petroleum products.
- It is possible to produce large quantities of solar panels and the balance of system components as well as millions of liters of biofuel internal consumption and for export. Job opportunities which are available for Technical Graduate can venture in as identified by Abraham, Adebayo, & Margret (2016) are as follows:
- Establishment of private schools: Where entrepreneurship principles and skills are imported to the youths, these youths later move to the labour market or establish a private school, coaching centers etc and become proprietor/proprietress.
- Telecommunication Business: Technical Education graduates could engage themselves in to telecommunication services such as GSM unlocking, Handsets production, Handsets repair, Handset sales etc.

- **Consulting Services:** This is a situation where useful advices and information in relation to establishing and management of new business is given to the public. Such information should include issues of registration, capital requirement, site location and many more.
- **Distribution and Marketing representatives:** Graduates of Technical Education can represent local, national or forming firms in marketing and distribution of their products. By that they became entrepreneurs.
- **Production marketing and fixing of interlocking tiles and ceramic:** This is another area which has a lot of opportunities which non Nigerians are enjoying because over 500,000 from Chinese, and other neighboring countries are working in Nigeria and this is costing Nigerian government over N900 bn.
- **Baobab tree or so-called “the tree of life”** is native to Africa, but it is massive tree that can grow up to 20 metres tall and about 15 metres wide. Its one of the longest living tree on earth and there is evidence that some baobab trees have lived for over 200 years. Various parts of the tree can be used for entrepreneurial purposes: its bark can be turned in to rope and clothing. Fresh leaves can be eaten to boost the immune system. The seed of baobab contain oil which is high in vitamins A, D, E, F, B and it also contains phosphorous and iron which all help toward improving skins elasticity. The oil can be extracted with cold pressing of the seed.
- **Roselle, also called hibiscus, red tea, botanical name of hibiscus is *sabdariffa*,** is the herb from which the red flower used in preparing zobo drink is gotten. The edible parts used to make “juice” or tea look like reddish dried-up buds. Roselle is neither flowers nor fruits by calyces. It’s the calyx, the red, fleshy covering enclosing the flowers seedpod, which is used for flowering, looking and food coloring. The calyx is loaded with high content of calcium, niacin, riboflavin, iron, and vitamin C which having no coffee content in it. Roselle are having a lot of entrepreneurial benefits because from their seeds, stems, leaves and sepals, were analyzed with respect to their water-soluble antioxidant capacity, lipid-soluble antioxidants capacity and gamma-tocopherol content. The gamma-tocopherol is a very good source of vitamin E if extracted.

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

According to Gland (2009) despite the profound benefits of entrepreneurship education, it is still not fully blown in Nigeria. Baba (2013) is of the view that the major challenges of entrepreneurship development has to do with lack knowledge in the basic science and technology; lack of strong patent law; high cost of doing business in Nigeria and in appropriate incentive structure. Supporting the above view Ihugba & Njoku (2013) lamented that the challenges being faced by entrepreneurs in developing countries are monumental and quite similar as pointed out below:

1. **Lack of Credit Facilities:** Potential Nigerian entrepreneurs go through many hardships when trying to access credit for their businesses. Though there is a wide range of financial institutions that offer business loans, they usually charge high interest rates deterring aspiring entrepreneurs. For instance, major banks have pegged their lending rates to as much 28% deterring potential entrepreneurs who are mostly low-income earners. Other obstacles faced by our entrepreneurs include severe collateral conditions set by banks and other lending institutions.

2. **Corruption: Widespread and all present corruption that makes the procurement of licenses, permits, goods and services from government agencies and even the payment of taxes and levies difficult without playing the game i.e. paying bribes and kickbacks.**
3. **Inconsistent Government Policies: Government inconsistency is really a challenge an entrepreneur will have to tackle if he must succeed in Nigeria. Governance is something entrepreneurs have no control over; all entrepreneurs can do is to influence government's policy with respect to enacting favorable business laws. But he must have political clout and massive resources to be able to influence government laws. Now he may not have the political clout or financial muscle to influence government's policy so the best strategy to combating the ever-changing policy of the government is to keep a keen eye on government laws and swiftly adjust your business to align with the policies.**
4. **Multiple Taxation: This is another sensitive challenge that is encountered by majority of Nigerian entrepreneurs. Although entrepreneurs in a country have a responsibility of funding the government through paying taxes, most of the taxes charged on entrepreneurs are not lawful and have the effect of increasing the cost of doing business. Although Nigeria's Companies Income Tax Act (CITA) has approved only 39 taxes and levies, there are over 500 various levies and taxes that are imposed by state and local government agents. These taxes are questionable and in the case where they are genuine, they are mostly duplicated and this has the effect of increasing the cost of doing business.**
5. **Poor State of the Country's Infrastructure: The state of Nigeria's infrastructure can be deemed to be a nightmare to both entrepreneurs and the rest of the country's population. With the existing infrastructure deteriorating and in some places it is non-existent; the cost of doing business has tremendously gone up. The state of the country's road network makes it hard for entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector to transport harvested produce from farms to processing factories. According to a report released by the World Bank, Nigeria's pace of socioeconomic development and growth is away below what we can achieved. This is mostly because of the erratic supply of electricity, which has negatively affected many businesses. The outcome of power problems has prompted entrepreneurs to generate power through expensive ways that have in turn increased their production costs and made their products uncompetitive due to high prices.**
6. **Failure to Adapt to the Changing Business Environment: Majority of those who venture into Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) do so because of their need to make money and in almost all cases, such entrepreneurs lack relevant and adequate information about the businesses they engage in. In the event where problems arise, most of these business owners lack sufficient problem solving skills and in the end they find it hard to survive.**
7. **Low Standard of Education: There is no gainsaying the fact that education is the key to knowledge and that it plays a strong role in forming the burgeoning entrepreneur. The world today is a global village and since an intending entrepreneur must be conversant and in tune with events around and about him, education becomes a critical factor in preparing and empowering the entrepreneur with the qualities required of him.**
8. **Security Issues - When there is no guarantee of security of lives and properties, it is difficult to run a successful venture. Nigeria has become a den of kidnapping and resulting in incessant hostage taking, kidnapping and unjust harassment.**

9. Getting venture capital to finance entrepreneurial endeavor in Nigeria is very difficult because of the political and economic instability.
10. The policies of the Nigerian government are a barrier to the success of large-scale entrepreneurial success for many Nigerians. The government is plagued by corruption and greed. The government systematically ignores laws that are already in place to promote free enterprise.
11. The lack of enforcement of Nigerian patent laws discourages entrepreneurs from commercializing their ideas and inventions.
12. The constant political turmoil in the country greatly limits foreign investors who would be willing to provide resources for entrepreneurship in the country, which is very rich in natural resources.
13. Political and social movements strongly affect the level of entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria. Religious intolerance and ethnic warfare limit country's progress in some areas of the country.
14. Entrepreneurship activity in Nigeria is primarily based on necessity: The aim with which you start a business also tells how much the business will go. Are you starting a business solely because you want to make fast money? Is it because you want to spend more time with friends and family members? Is it because you want to be your own boss? If these are the major reasons for starting your business, then you may be getting it wrong, experts say. Make sure your business is started because of the passion you have for the venture, experts say.
15. Poor planning: Experts say individuals who have successfully managed major events are aware of the fact that success mostly come as a result of careful, systematic, strategic planning and hard work.
16. Poor product or service: The entrepreneur must understand the needs of his customers and seek ways to meet these needs via the product or service, which he offers, to the market.

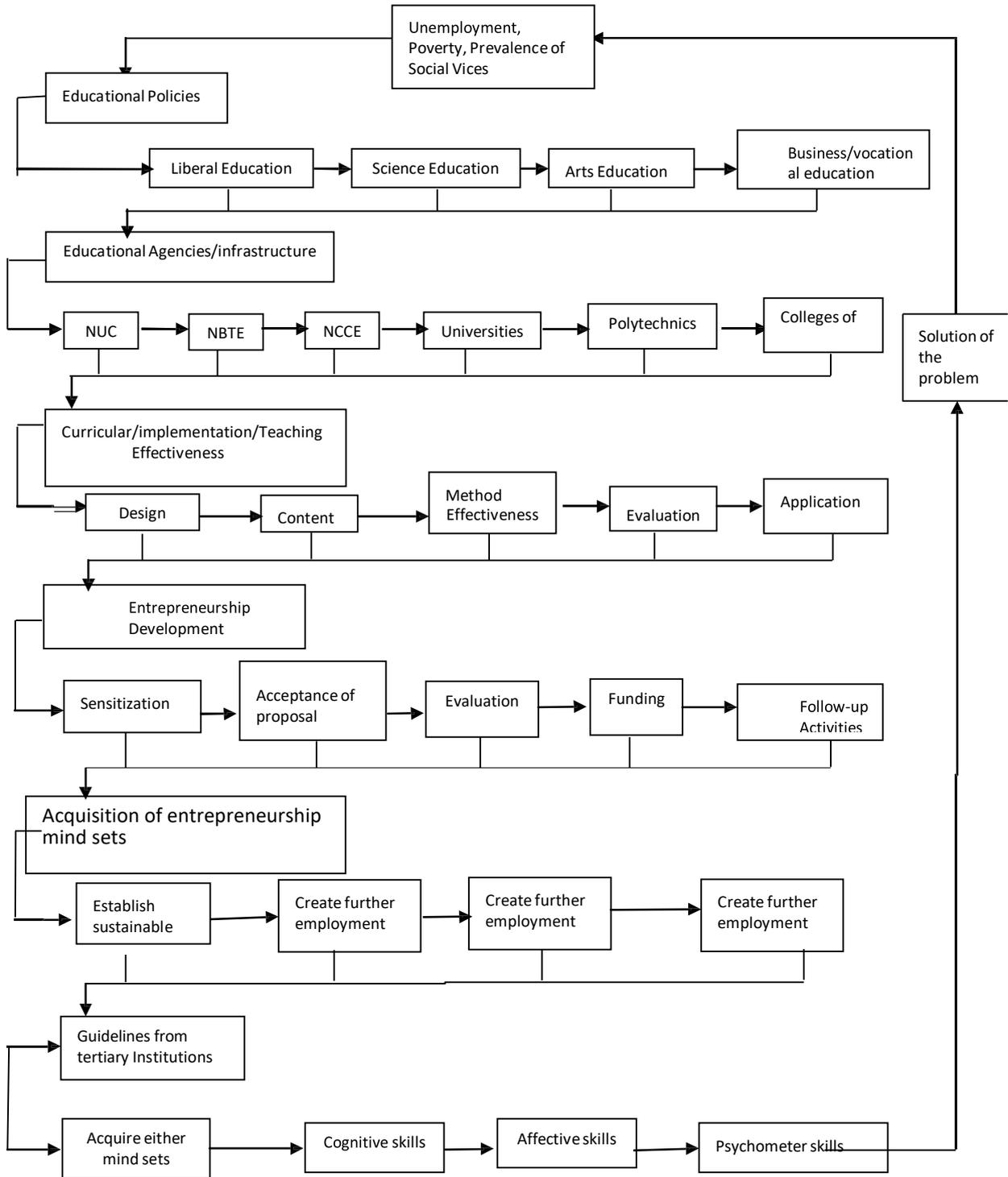
## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that entrepreneurship education and technical education are of paramount importance to economic development of any nation especially the developing ones like Nigeria. The paradigm shifts by the Nigerian government from graduating job seekers to producing potential job creators and the global trend towards private sector employment could only be achieved if technical education is properly blended with entrepreneurial education. This will provide the requisite mindsets for self-employment from our tertiary institutions. That is why entrepreneurial courses are introduced into our schools, colleges and universities' curricula. However, the approach is not fulfilling its desired result due to challenges such as corruption, curricula problems, lack of infrastructural facilities, poor government policies to mention but a few. To address the issue of unemployment problems in Nigeria, government need to create an investor friendly environment, curtail corruption and pursue dilapidated infrastructural facilities in the country. The researchers are of the view that the best way to do this is to create

curriculum that is all encompassing in developing the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship in educational programmes in universities and other tertiary institutions of higher learning.

### **Ways Forward/Recommendations**

1. Government should recognize the essence of entrepreneurship to economic development by increasing the funding of financial institutions that provide the lending to entrepreneurs.
2. Lecturers should be exposing their students to training in discoveries of new technologies from time-time. This will help the students in keeping them with trends of new technologies.
3. There should be efforts in reinforcing the students in fully understanding the concept of risk taking and patience in wealth creation. This instills positive change of entrepreneurial attitude. They would thus develop habit of success out of failure, which is the only way to making money in the long run. Knowing that life is full of risks and success comes from failure.
4. The government should put adequate measures in place to help the teeming graduates produced year in year out by improving the social services like electricity generation and distribution, good road network, transportation, easy access to credits among others. Also, the central bank of Nigeria may facilitate access to credit by decreasing lending rates to make it easy for businesses to start.
5. Partnership of tertiary institutions with the private sector to develop employability content in their curriculum and provide life skills training for their students. Lecturers should use more life cases analysis that brings real work problems to life in teaching.
6. Government should discourage corruption, religious bias, and favoritism and ensure that every individual is treated with justice in terms of giving loans, issuance of Certificates among others.
7. Students' Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES) should be reinforced for students to gain more practical experience, which cannot be gotten in the classroom. It should be extended for students to practical classroom theories.
8. There should be well-planned and coordinated staff training and development programme for technical education teachers to constantly update their entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes. This could be achieved through some forms of allowances.
9. To move entrepreneurship education forward, the society should change its wrong perception on technical education. Even though there is change in attitude towards technical education but much is still desired by the society.
10. Entrepreneurial education should be included in all tertiary institutions' curricula and made compulsory for them. This will lead to economic self-reliance tertiary institutions' graduates. It could be achieved using step-by-step model developed by Chukwumezie and Osapka in 2015:



**Figure 1.** Entrepreneurship implementation model.

Source: Chukwumezie and Osapka (2015).

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