

Innovations

Entrenchment of Entrepreneurship Education as a Panacea for Unemployment/Poverty among Business Education Graduates in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

This research paper examined entrepreneurship education as a panacea for unemployment/poverty in Nigeria. It examined entrepreneurship education as a tool for eradicating unemployment/poverty for creating employment. Two(2) research questions were asked and this led to the formulation of two hypotheses to guide the study. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. It was constructed using a four-point rating scale of strongly agreed (SA) 4 points Agreed (A) 3 points, disagreed (D) 2 points and strongly disagreed (SD) 1 point. A total of 60 copies of the questionnaire were administered for analysis. Mean, standard deviation and chi-square were used to answer the research questions, and to test the two-hypotheses formulated. Decisions were based on results from the analysis. Findings from the analysis showed that Entrepreneurship education is significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment/poverty and for creating employment. Based on the result and findings, conclusions were made that entrepreneurship education if properly inculcated into the educational system both formal and non-formal, will contribute immensely to the growth and development of the economy of the nation. It was recommended that entrepreneurship education should be inculcated at all levels of education both formal and non formal, which will help to equip unemployed graduates with relevant skills.

Keywords:1. Entrepreneurship, 2.Education, 3.Unemployment

Introduction

Unemployment has been a recurrent decimal over the years across the globe. Both developed and developing countries are confronted with this problem. So far, no government of any nation has been able to eradicate unemployment because of limited resources. This situation is left with no better alternative rather than to acquire the requisite entrepreneurship education for a more vibrant living. There is the need for us to groom ourselves to become skillful through entrepreneurship education as this will help us to eradicate poverty, reduce unemployment problems, and make the individuals self employed. This will also empower the individuals to become employers of labour to salvage our present economic situation. Lack of entrepreneurship education for students graduating and youths will in no doubt aggravate the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.

Unemployment seems to be the major cause of poverty. According to Ogungbemi (2001), poverty alleviation is one of the most difficult challenges facing any developing country where majority of the population is considered poor. According to Oyewole (2016), the number of those in poverty increased from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1985 and to 67% in 1996 by 1999 it increased to more than 70%.

Unemployment is the inability to get a payable job despite the fact that the job seeker is qualified and ready to work. However, in order to eradicate the problem of unemployment, the federal government has directed the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Universities Commission (NUC) to establish entrepreneurship studies in tertiary

institutions and most tertiary institutions- federal, state and Private institutions across the nation have already keyed into this innovation in order to foster the development of needed skills, creativity, innovations, for a more profitable living among students, graduates and youths.

Graduates of tertiary institutions seem to be badly hit by unemployment as they made up about 20 percent of unemployed graduates between 2008-2012 and often remaining unemployed for upward of five years after graduation (NISER, 2013). A lot of factors have been blamed for the persistent situation of unemployment in Nigeria. A major factor to this prevalence of unemployment is the observed decay and deficiency in the school curricula which has resulted in the failure of educational institutions to equip students with appropriate skills to make them self reliant.

Unemployment has to do with the condition in which a paid job is not available for those who are willing to work Crowder(2006). It is a situation in which people who seek jobs cannot find any.

Lortye and Udoye (2008) view employment as non-utilization of labour in any productive activity for a reward in terms of salaries, wages, profit or monetary reward. Unemployment situation affects all levels of people in the society – the youths, middle aged, old people, male and female. It cuts across all ages in the society.

From my own point of view as the researcher of this work, unemployment can be effectively and efficiently managed and overcome through entrepreneurship education.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

According to Wikipedia (2009), entrepreneurship education is seeking to equip students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. According to Adeola and Balarinwa (2010), entrepreneurship education refers to the process of equipping individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities as well as the insight, self esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them. Entrepreneurship education is directed at producing potential entrepreneurs who can confidently start and successfully manage their own businesses Eboma,(2006). According to Osulah (2004), entrepreneurship education is required by potential and prospective entrepreneurs to guard against failure in their future ventures. Onojeh (2012) observes that this assertion is important because entrepreneurship is a risky and uncertain venture.

Entrepreneurship education has been described as dealing with learning skills required by entrepreneurs in order to handle the risks and uncertainties associated with establishing and managing a business concern Inegbenebor(2006). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education can be described as the process of inculcating knowledge and teaching skills in potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into businesses that may be relatively small in nature and be able to work skillfully towards the advancement of the businesses Aminu, (2009). Kurato (2003) views entrepreneurship education as education that embraces skills, building programmes, creative product development and marketing negotiation, leadership training and wealth generation. Okoro (2010) sums it all up when he says that entrepreneurship education is all about making individuals to be job creators rather than job seekers. Entrepreneurship education is designed primarily to assist its recipients to acquire the necessary skills that will help to set up their own businesses.

Entrepreneurship education simply put together is the ability an individual has to be fully equipped with the necessary skills needed to be self-reliant. The unemployment situation in the country is alarming. This clearly necessitates the involvement of graduates from different institutions of learning in the country in entrepreneurship education that will enable them to be self employed. There is an urgent need to eradicate this situation of unemployment and to allow sustainable growth and development to take place.

According to Okoro (2010) and Atiki (2010), involving students in school-based enterprises will increase their entrepreneurial intention, hence increasing their ability to become self reliant. Entrepreneurship education according to Osuala (2004) is a specialized training offered to students of vocational and technical education with the aim of building in them the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self employment rather than being employed for pay.

In the same vein, Okonkwo (2015) states that entrepreneurship education is directed at developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different contexts. Entrepreneurship education is a skill acquisition programme which equips its recipients to be self employed, innovative, creative and resourceful. It is pertinent to expose all business education students and graduates to entrepreneurship education which will help them to start their own businesses in

future. Entrepreneurship is aimed at equipping graduates with the relevant knowledge to spot, create, establish and manage business enterprises. It is an important agent of change in the development and growth process of an economy.

According to Akpomi (2010), Osuala (2004) entrepreneurship education creates an avenue for individuals to manage innovation, entrepreneurial process and to develop their potential as managers of fields of endeavours. According to Okoro (2010) entrepreneurship education is all about making individuals to be job creators rather than job seekers.

Entrepreneurship education is designed primarily to assist its recipients (in this case, the business education graduates) to acquire the necessary skills that will help them to set up their own businesses upon graduation. Entrepreneurship education does not only enable you to set up your business but also gives you the ability to sustain the business, Mar (2013) sees Entrepreneurship education as a strategy of business sustainability is a strategy that prioritizes the long term revival of a business and connected ecological, social and cultural systems.

The Purpose of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide the individuals with the knowledge, skills, creativity, new ideas, and motivation that will enhance entrepreneurship success in a variety of settings.

Entrepreneurship education as posited by Paul (2005) and Nwalado (2012) has the following as the main purpose of its programme.

1. To provide the individual, graduates with the functional education that will guide them towards being self employed and self –oriented.
2. To provide the youth and graduates with adequate training that will stir up in them the creativity and innovativeness in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as an accelerator of economic growth.
4. To provide university graduates with adequate training in risk management, thereby reducing business risks and making their bearing certain and feasible.
5. To reduce poverty rate, insecurity and violent crime.
6. To create employment opportunities for citizens.
7. Reduction of rural to urban migration.
8. To provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
9. To instil the spirit of persistent determination in the youths, graduates, adults, individuals which will strengthen them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
10. To create a smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education

1. Entrepreneurship education provides individuals with adequate training that will enhance creativity and innovation, thereby encouraging self employment and self reliance.
2. Entrepreneurship education enables employment opportunities to be more readily available because the operators have a good knowledge and understanding of the small businesses.
3. Entrepreneurship education enables entrepreneurs to be empowered to tap from local resources in their immediate environment.
4. Entrepreneurship education inculcates in learners the mentality of innovations and hard work.
5. Entrepreneurship education inculcates into the graduates creative spirit that will help them to succeed in their businesses.
6. Entrepreneurship education creates avenues for graduates and potential entrepreneurs to utilize new ideas, manage the entrepreneurial process for effective results.
7. Entrepreneurship education provides opportunities to appreciate local technology.
8. Entrepreneurship Education equips the individuals with the traits of being creative, innovative, independent and resourceful for self reliance.
9. Entrepreneurship education helps the learners to be relevant in the society thereby increasing economic growth.
10. Entrepreneurship education provides relevant results at various stages of the learner's life.

The above benefits of entrepreneurship education are in line with Okoro (2010) which states that entrepreneurship education helps individuals to be job providers rather than job seekers.

Osaseri (2010) maintains that most of our youths and university graduates are waiting endlessly for the government to provide them with white collar jobs which are nowhere to be seen. Ofishe (2010) states that bags of fine certificates are no longer a guarantee for immediate employment for jobs seekers. Entrepreneurship education is a potential and viable tool for jobs and wealth creation.

Statement of problem

The unabated quest for white collar jobs which are not forthcoming has exacerbated unemployment resulting in increased poverty. It is as a result of unemployment that the federal government directed the NUC, NCCE and NBTE to introduce entrepreneurship education into all levels of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The major aim of the government is to enable individual graduates lay their hands on necessary skills that will help them to be engaged on their own after graduation.

The graduates may start small, depending on the financial strength and the ability to manage the business after undergoing adequate acquisition of skills through entrepreneurship education.

Unemployment is the inability to get a job despite being ready to work. Some are employed, but under paid. As a way of contributing towards the process of flushing unemployment and poverty out of the nation, the researcher deems it necessary to embark on this research on Entrenchment of Entrepreneurship Education as a Panacea for Unemployment/Poverty among Business Education Graduates in South-South Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education as a panacea for unemployment/poverty in Nigeria. The purpose is broken down thus:

1. To examine whether entrepreneurship education is relevant as a tool for eradicating unemployment/poverty.
2. To examine if entrepreneurship education is a relevant tool for creating employment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Is entrepreneurship education relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty?
2. How relevant is entrepreneurship education as a tool for creating employment?

Research Hypotheses

1. Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.
2. Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in creating employment.

Research Method

The main purpose of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education as a veritable tool for eradicating unemployment/poverty in Nigeria. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in South-South Nigeria. The population of the study comprises 67 business education lecturers in Delta State University, University of Uyo, University of Calabar, University of Benin, Rivers State University of Science and Technology Port Harcourt, Niger Delta University, Yenagoa and Cross River State University of Technology, Calabar that offer business education programme. The entire population was used for the study because it was small and meaningful in size, hence there was no sampling. The data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was constructed using a four point rating scale of strongly agreed (SA) 4 points, Agreed (A) 3 points, disagreed (D) 2 points and strongly disagreed (SD) 1 point. The instrument was validated by three research expert in business education. A reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability was also established using t-test on business education lecturers in Ebonyi State University who were not part of the study. They were used for the study because they possess the same characteristics as the respondents of this study and also offer similar curriculum in the business education programme. With the help of four research assistants the researcher was able to retrieve 60 copies of the questionnaire administered for analysis. Mean statistic was used to answer the research questions. Decisions were based on real limit of the mean rating.

Research Question One:

What are the ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty?

Table 1: Ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	Entrepreneurship Education can help graduates to become self employed.	38	18	2	2	3.53	0.72
2	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to acquire relevant skills thereby making them employable.	37	17	4	2	3.48	0.77
3	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to develop the ability to prepare feasibility studies for small and medium entrepreneurs' start up	40	15	2	3	3.53	0.79
4	Entrepreneurship education can enable graduates to acquire self development skills	42	14	2	2	3.60	0.72
5	Entrepreneurship education knowledge can help graduates to explore available business opportunities	38	16	4	2	3.50	0.77
Total mean						3.53	0.04

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 1 shows that the data collected and analysed recorded highest mean value 3.60 ± 0.72 and lowest 3.48 ± 0.77 respectively. Furthermore, the table reveals that the respondents agreed with the statement that the knowledge from entrepreneurship education can help graduates to become self employed and to acquire relevant skills that will make them employable, develop the ability to prepare feasibility studies for small and medium entrepreneurs' start up, acquire self development skills and also explore available business opportunities that will help them to eradicate unemployment and poverty. All respondents agreed that there are possible ways in which entrepreneurship education can eradicate unemployment and poverty since the grand mean value of 3.53 ± 0.04 is greater than the standard mean value of 2.50 (i.e $P > 2.50$; $3.53 > 2.50$).

Research Question Two

What are the ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment?

Table 2: Ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	The knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education will create in the graduates the awareness of new business ventures, innovation and creativity.	40	15	3	2	3.55	0.75
2	The knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education can help graduates to manage and sustain established businesses.	41	15	2	2	3.58	0.72
3	The knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education can help graduates to introduce new ideas into their businesses for expansion.	41	15	2	2	3.58	0.72
4	Entrepreneurship education can help graduates to be conversant with obtaining bank loans for setting up their own businesses	36	17	4	3	3.43	0.83
5	Knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship education can help graduates to set up their own businesses and improved on them.	40	15	3	2	3.55	0.75
Total mean						3.54	0.06

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 2 shows that the data collected and analysed recorded highest mean value 3.58 ± 0.72 and lowest 3.43 ± 0.83 respectively. The table further reveals that the respondents agreed with the statement that the

knowledge gain from entrepreneurship education will help to create in the graduates the awareness of new business ventures, innovation and creativity, help graduates to manage and sustain established businesses, introduce new ideas into their business for expansion, to be conversant with obtaining bank loans for standing up on their own and also they agreed that entrepreneurship education can help graduates to set up their businesses and improve on them by way of maximizing profits and minimizing losses. All respondents agreed that there are possible ways in which entrepreneurship education can sustain employment since the grand mean value of 3.54 ± 0.06 is greater than the standard mean value of 2.50 (i.e $P > 2.50$; $3.54 > 2.50$).

Hypotheses testing

Ho₁: Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.

Table 3: Chi – Square (X^2) Analysis Summary table for hypothesis 1

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	N	df	X^2 Cal	X^2 Crit.	P-Value	Decision
38	18	2	2	38	60	12	81.87	21.03	0.05	Reject
37	17	4	2	37						
40	15	2	3	40						
42	14	2	2	42						
38	16	4	2	38						

Hypothesis 1, table 3, shows the summary of chi-square analysis tested for the relevance of entrepreneurship education in eradicating unemployment and poverty. From the above chi-square summary table of hypothesis 1, X^2 calculated is 81.87 and the X^2 critical is 21.03 with 12 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The computed chi- square is greater than the X^2 critical value of the chi-square. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis of no significance as stated. It therefore, means that Entrepreneurship education is significantly relevant in eradicating unemployment and poverty.

Hypothesis Two (2)

Ho₂: Entrepreneurship education is not significantly relevant in creating employment.

Table 4: Chi – Square (X^2) Analysis Summary table for hypothesis 2

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	N	df	X^2 Cal	X^2 Crit.	P-Value	Decision
40	15	3	2	40	60	12	81.20	21.03	0.05	Reject
41	15	2	2	41						
41	15	2	2	41						
36	17	4	3	36						
40	15	3	2	40						

Hypothesis 2, table 4, shows the summary of chi-square analysis tested for the relevance of entrepreneurship education in creating employment. X^2 calculated is 81.20 and the X^2 critical is 21.03 with 12 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The computed chi- square is greater than the X^2 critical value of the chi-square. The decision is to reject the null hypothesis of no significance as stated. It therefore, means that Entrepreneurship education is significantly relevant for creating employment.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that entrepreneurship education is a remedy for equipping graduates with the relevant skills, new ideas, innovations, creativity to set up their own businesses, improve and expand on them rather than wasting time to wait for white collar jobs which are not forthcoming as expected. The findings

are in line with Okoro(2010) stated that entrepreneurship education is all about making individuals to be self reliant rather jobs seekers. The findings also indicate that entrepreneurship education can help graduates to sustain and expand their businesses. According to Mar (2013), business sustainability is a strategy that prioritizes the long term survival of a business and connected ecological, social and cultural systems. This is also in line with the United Nations General assembly 48 (2005), which maintained that Entrepreneurship education enhances the process of living within the limits of available physical, natural and social resources in ways that allow the living system in which humans are embedded to thrive in perpetuity.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is a veritable tool for the eradication of unemployment and poverty. It is pertinent to inculcate it all levels of education in order for graduates to be self-employed and marketable.

This will go a long way to help them to avoid waste of time in seeking for white collar jobs. Entrepreneurship education if properly inculcated into the educational system both formal and non-formal will contribute immensely to the growth and development of the economy of the nation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be inculcated at all levels of education both formal and non formal, which will help to equip unemployed graduates with relevant skills.
2. Entrepreneurship education content should be well utilized in the building of unemployed graduates so that they can start up their own businesses and also improve on them.
3. Entrepreneurship education should be utilized to build the capacity of unemployed graduates on how to manage and sustain their businesses.
4. Entrepreneurship education should be utilized to make unemployed graduates to acquire self development skills.
5. Entrepreneurship education should be well utilized to build in the unemployed graduates the awareness of new business ventures, innovations and creativity.

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