

# Entrepreneurship Education and the Challenges of Graduate Employability in Nigeria

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**Abstract**—Entrepreneurship education has been identified as a major means of assisting youths and even adult to acquire desired skills and capacities to be self-reliant or self-employed, particularly to prepare them to be able to set up their own ventures and manage them profitably. Hence, there is a great need to look at the challenges in Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities and proffer solutions to the identified problems. The study adopted a review methodology approach of extant literatures and publications in the last decade. The study revealed that there are several factors impeding the success of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, which might be affecting the production of employable graduates in our universities. The study provided a panacea that will help improve entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, and create graduates that will not only be job seekers, but will be job makers in Nigeria. Conclusively, the study also, suggested areas for further studies based on the limitation of the study.

**Index Terms**—Entrepreneurship education, graduates employability, challenges, universities, and Nigerian.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Concern of Unemployment in Nigeria has been one of the most discoursed in the nation in recent years. Universities in Nigeria had been churning out graduates that have continued, to clog up the labour-market, thereby, increasing the growth rate of unemployed youths in the nation. Unemployment is defined as an economic condition in which individuals seeking jobs remain un-hired [1]. It can also be seen as the share of the labour force that is without work but available for seeking employment. Rising incidence of unemployment results in loss of income for individuals, reduces revenue for governments, hinders economic growth and increases pressure on government- spending on social benefits in advanced countries. According to [2], the complexity of modern society calls for the services of a multiplicity of diverse occupations, which demands the preparation of large numbers of people for the different occupations. Besides, modern society entrepreneurship educations knowledge-experts in diverse fields for knowledge generation. Systematic pursuit of knowledge about the physical and social world can best be handled by experts. Similarly, efficient and effective application of knowledge and skills to valued social purposes requires specialists. Thus, professionalization, or the reality of ‘expert society’ makes the acquisition of ‘expert knowledge and skills’, obtainable from participation in education, a necessary requirement for entry into occupations or professions. Countries now invest in education because education facilitates personal and social development. The rapid obsolescence of

knowledge and skills literally requires individuals who entrepreneurship education up-to-date knowledge and skills for personal development and occupational purposes to participate continually in education or lifelong learning. Taking into account the multiple social and economic roles of education in modern society, ‘institutionalist [3], observe that contemporary society has institutionalized education as a citizenship right, as a social virtue, as a public good, and as a stratification process.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Employability of Nigerian Graduates

Ref. [4] revealed that [5] during a workshop, organized by Ogun State Bureau of Tertiary Institutions in 2010 stated that statistics has showed that the nation’s job creation capacity is growing at an annual rate of between 5% and 7% over the last seven years. Meanwhile, about 213 Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in the country then produced over 300,000 graduates annually; a number that should ordinary meet the country’s human capital resources entrepreneurship education, but employers willing to pay well to attract skilled workers are increasingly, finding it difficult to fill job vacancies

In the same vein, [6] opined that products of the Nigerian University system have at different forum been challenged to test their suitability or otherwise to secure few available white collar jobs. He went further to say that the situation is not only sympathetic but embarrassing that the vast human material resources available to the country had not been trained and utilized to the advantage of the country. He cited Tunde Lemo, former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) saying that it has become evident that very modern day Nigeria graduates are not employable, Lemo went on to say that the Nigeria Education system is bedeviled by myriads of problems ranging from poor funding, undue interference, poor staffing, overcrowding and management incompetence. [1], explained that the dismal performance of many graduates in the labour market was due to faulty curricular in most Nigerian universities, that most programmes run in the universities are no longer relevant. He also said that classroom teaching mostly focus on concepts and not marketable skills.

However, [5] went on further to say that tertiary institutions are being reproached for declining quality of educational outputs due to deterioration in teaching and physical facilities, inadequate funding, quality of inputs into the institutions, government and private sectors’ lack of support and the curricular for teaching the students. He is of the opinion that there is a sharp decline in required skilled graduates available to the labour market, that is, there is a gap between the demand for and the supply of graduates into the market. Entrepreneurship education is to help create the skills that the graduates need to close the gap between unemployment and the ‘unemployables’. Demands of the industry are high on institutions to produce resourceful and competent graduates.

Also, [6] and [4] also opined that despite an average economic growth rate of about 7% per annum over the last seven years, a good performance by global standards, wage employment is estimated to have declined by about 30%. Nigeria’s strong

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economic performance over the last decade has not translated to jobs and real life opportunities for its many youths. Akanmu said further that three out of ten graduates of tertiary institution cannot find work. Being highly educated does not increase the chance of finding a job. Those who find work are not usually gainfully employed. Some are forced to accept marginal jobs that do not use their qualifications in sales, agriculture and manual labour citing the British Council sponsored Nigeria – Next Generation Report. For those who are lucky to find jobs, employers are concerned about their skills and suitability with their job requirements.

Conclusively, Sodipo [7], [4] affirmed that student are important in the transformation of the Nation. In Nigeria, many of the students are brilliant but lack the zeal to learn. They have side attractions and are negatively charged – they take to intimidation, blackmail, and examination malpractices. Many of them avoid classes and when there, do not pay attention to learning. The students are the catalyst of change and development and once they are not ready to study there can never be genuine transformation. Student’s capacity and zeal to learn are determined by their state of health, nutrition and parental advice/background. The result is the product of our universities are not marketable and cannot compare favourably with counterparts in other parts of the world. This is translated into the many unemployable graduates roaming the streets of Nigeria. Moreover, its time our universities begin to train products on skills they can use rather than waiting for government employment.

### III. CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is a word that originates from the French word, *entreprendre*, it means ‘to undertake’. Therefore, entrepreneurship in education is conceptualized on the premise that, educational ventures are enterprising in nature and must be approached with a view to satisfy all stakeholders. [8] conceptualized an entrepreneur as someone who exhibits a distinctive set of enterprising attributes that embraces number of skills, personality traits, acquire experiences and attitude. The enterprising attributes therefore, include creativity, initiative taking, analytical ability, high autonomy and achievement motivation.

Google in 2006 said “entrepreneurship” was the process of looking at things in such a way that possible solution to problems and perceived entrepreneurship educations may evolve in venturing. This is indicating that “entrepreneurship” is about creating business out of problems. Hence, an entrepreneur is an opportunity-driven person, seeking value-creating solutions to entrepreneurship educations and problems and turns them into money and positive cash flow [9]. The three important components of entrepreneurship are:

- Entrepreneurship consists of basic personality characteristics which mix together values, abilities and motivation. These include: creativity, assertiveness, which are somehow innate to the individual.
- Entrepreneurship is viewed in terms of enterprise attributes like planning systematically, seeking and acting on opportunities et cetera.
- Entrepreneurship goes beyond individual attributes to the performance of an economic or social role like managing a small business, ranging from wayside workshop to a high technology company.

### IV. BASIC ASPECTS OF AN ENTREPRENEURS

Regardless of the field, there are four basic aspects of being an entrepreneur:

- Entrepreneurship involves creation process, creating something new in terms of value; value to the entrepreneur and value to the audience for which it is developed. The audience could be the

market of buyers in the case of business innovations; prospective students in the case of new course, or the constituency for a new service provided by a non-profit agency.

- Entrepreneurship requires the devotion of the necessary time and effort.
- Assuming the necessary risks in entrepreneurship, with particular reference to financial, psychological and social areas.
- Rewards of being an entrepreneur, with regards to independence, personal satisfaction and monetary rewards.

Now, can entrepreneurship be taught and learned? Peter F. Drucker said “what we entrepreneurship education is an entrepreneurial society in which innovation and entrepreneurship are normal, steady and continual” The philosophy of entrepreneurship must be considered as life-long learning positioned by the late 18th century education seminal theorist, John Dewey. Peter F. Drucker, further opined that, “most of what you hear about entrepreneurship is all wrong. It’s not magic; it’s not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It’s a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned [10].

### Entrepreneurship Education

The Consortium of Entrepreneurship Education (CEE, USA) defined entrepreneurship education as a form of education that is out to seek for the preparation of people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who will contribute to economic development and sustainable communities.

Entrepreneurial role has been recognized since the day of industrial revolution. There is a continuous migration of people from rural to urban in search of almost non-existing job opportunities. Entrepreneurship is a form of education, a move towards self-reliance, a reasonable channel that will greatly assist in curbing the employment problems. This is because its emphasis is on the acquisition of skills and capacities to be self-employed. Entrepreneurship activity being a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth, wealth created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and/or career commitment or provide value for some product or service [10]. Entrepreneurship in education is not anything new; it is as old as education itself. Every human endeavour thrives because there are entrepreneurs who are working to ensure that the demand is met with supply. Applying same in education, educational entrepreneurs are not to create anything new, but to apply some innovation in the business of education. This innovation could be in the form of: process innovation, market innovation, product innovation, factor innovation and organizational innovation et cetera. the whole process starts with understanding that there are huge opportunities in the field of education.

Entrepreneurship education is the only solution to the world’s unemployment calamity with its resultant effect of poverty and multiplicity of crimes never noticed in the history of the world before. Also entrepreneurship education is one of the most important fields of development for the fact that entrepreneurs are seen as the people who are driving the economies of countries and entrepreneurship is seen as the engine of the growing economy in the millennium we are in [11].

Entrepreneurship education has the inherent ability to create a change in the mental orientation from the “take-job-syndrome” to the “make-job-syndrome” mentality because it is a carefully organized process that leads to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences through the teaching of entrepreneurship courses, training and giving certificate for education, economic developers, business counselors and prospective entrepreneurs. The knowledge so gained will enhance the ability to set up a gainfully productive business for self-employment as against being employed. It is about willingness and ability of individual to find out investment opportunities ready to bear attendant risk(s) in order to have successful enterprises. Entrepreneurship education should be fashioned in such a way to encourage everybody generally and

youths in particular by equipping them with entrepreneurial approaches.

## V. OBJECTIVES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship education is oriented towards different ways of realizing opportunities. This is what makes entrepreneurship education distinctive in its focus on realization of opportunity, whereas management education is focused on the best way to operate existing hierarchies.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurship success in a variety of settings. Entrepreneurship education according to [12], is structured to achieve the following objectives:

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

## VI. ASSUMPTIONS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

The following basic foundation assumptions as identified by [10] are important for entrepreneurship education:

- Entrepreneurs are not “born”—they “become” through the experiences of their lives.
- Entrepreneurs have a great diversity of personal characteristics, the common one being willing to take a risk in turn for a profit.
- Anyone can be an entrepreneur at any time of one’s life.
- Although there is no educational degree requirement to become entrepreneur, it is helpful to have developed good support skills including communications, interpersonal activities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing management and mathematics/finance skills.
- Entrepreneurial ventures are the major sources of new jobs in the economy.... For the owner and for new employees.
- Entrepreneurship is NOT learned by reading a textbook and then taking a test to prove that you are one.
- Young people can build confidence in their abilities to become entrepreneurs in their future as a result of a variety of entrepreneurial activities provided through education.
- Entrepreneurship education activities are a real-life vehicle for developing academic skills.
- Entrepreneurship education enables employees to be more successful as a result of understanding the operations of a small business and the problems of their boss.
- Entrepreneurship are found in every occupation or career cluster.
- Entrepreneurship education opportunities are important at all levels of education, from experiences for elementary school children, though skill development for existing entrepreneurs.

The definition of entrepreneurship success varies with reaching the goals of the individual, from part-time income to fast growing corporate structure.

According to [13] argue that it is imperative for higher education institutions to develop entrepreneurship among their graduates such that they will be exhibiting entrepreneurial qualities in whatever settings they find themselves. [8] also, stated that entrepreneurship education has the potentials to educate adult learners about entrepreneurship and how they can apply what they learn in practice to start their own business. Even as efforts are being made to educate the adults population and equip them with relevant skills and knowledge that will help them create sustainable jobs for themselves and many others. University undergraduate’s entrepreneurship educations a critical entrepreneurial skill now more than before, because they will end up becoming heads of families and homes, managing their own businesses efficiently will help in addressing grinding poverty and unemployment confronting Nigerians.

Also, [14] opined that entrepreneurship has evolved over time to embrace creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as the ability to set-up and run a business. In entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship is seen today as a key competence for all, hence it should be promoted at all levels of education, thus from primary school to university as well as through lifelong learning. In this vein, [15] stated that Africa, and Nigeria to be precise has no excuse not to embrace entrepreneurship because the public sector lacks the capacity to offer more employment opportunities for people. And should be conceived as lifelong learning venture. In encouraging entrepreneurship education, [16], opined that we must put into practice entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, which should be translated into creation of sustainable jobs in the nation.

### **Challenges Confronting Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Some of the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities as opined by [17] includes:

#### *A. Low Competence of Entrepreneurship Education Lecturers/Instructors*

The Competence of lecturers and instructors that anchors entrepreneurship education in most universities have been fingered as a reason for the poor quality delivery. There is a dearth of lecturers and instructors with practical training in entrepreneurship education or entrepreneurship. In contrast, in Nigeria, the majority of entrepreneurship instructors are from traditional disciplines such as economics or business administration. Apart from the deficient qualifications of instructors, the lack of entrepreneurial consciousness is also indicted as a challenge to the quality delivery for impact of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Universities.

#### *B. Absence of Curricular Capacity to Support the Training*

The absence of a curricular guide to inform a pedagogical delivery in the methodology of entrepreneurship education is identified by many researchers as a major drawback in the system. It has also been reported that the existing University curriculum structure has a startup challenge for entrepreneurship education [12]. The NUC benchmark for entrepreneurship education is 6 credits hour, but due to the bloated existing credit loading most of the Universities cannot accommodate the 6hours and as such entrepreneurship education is taught as a onetime 2 credits hour with a very shallow content.

#### *C. Poor Infrastructural Support*

Poor availability of infrastructure for entrepreneurship education to deliver quality and practical oriented entrepreneurship education requires huge investment in capital. Inadequate funding is indicted in the poor infrastructural support entrepreneurship education to drive quality delivery of entrepreneurship education. Both hard and soft infrastructure is entrepreneurship education as prop for the

system. This limitation subsequently frustrates the integration of entrepreneurship in academic programs in Nigerian universities.

- There should be enough incentives for students of vocational and technical schools. This will motivate them to establish their businesses after school.

## VII. NON-FAVOURABLE POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND LACK OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

There have being lapses in the policy framework to serve as lunch-pad for the entrepreneurial skills acquired in school, which may be the reason for the lack of entrepreneurial drive among school leavers. Lack of access to credit/ loan, absence of tax rebates, mass poverty, high level of inflation, technological infraction, political instability and insecurity of lives and properties are some of the manifestations of the absence of this entrepreneurship education support.

### *A. Teaching Methodology Adopted during Entrepreneurship Education*

The current teaching methodology of adopted in entrepreneurship education has been described as a mechanistic delivery, which leaves no room for the students to engage individually with the hard realities of the business environment. The high student's/lecturer ratio in Universities occasioned by expanded admission quotas; usually beyond the carrying capacities of the facilities available has been suggested as the reason for de-emphasizing the practical components. The absence of co-curricular activities such as entrepreneurship clubs, lectures and speakers, workshops and seminars, business plan competitions, internships, and venture incubators are key drawbacks of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

### *B. Absence of Research Support and Linkages*

At commencement, it was envisaged that entrepreneurship education will leverage on products of students researches in the Universities. There is a pronounced absence of research support and most of the research endeavors of the students are not targeted and are not applied to real life adoption. Absence of adequate funding, research capacities and linkage opportunities are obvious reasons for this limitation.

## VIII. THE PANACEA TO AN EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship that will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria, the following strategies according to [12] will help to solve the problem of entrepreneurship education in the country.

- There should be some form of genuine school- work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. This implies enriching the curriculum to incorporate more vocational and technical training. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experiences.
- There should be School-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini-incubators.
- Government should establish small business schools where interested students and community members can participate. This will make students to be self-reliant.
- Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
- The Government should establish an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship. This will serve as skill-acquisition centre for the youths.
- Government should create an economic friendly environment. This centers on reduction of taxes on small scale businesses.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, it should be noted that Education is the clearest path to individual opportunity and societal growth, and entrepreneurship education is especially vital to fueling a more robust global economy. Entrepreneurs bring new ideas to life through innovation, creativity and the desire to build something of lasting value. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize more on Entrepreneurship education by teaching undergraduates Entrepreneurship skills entrepreneurship education for them to not just be job seekers, but rather to be job creators. Poor standard of the state of the university in Nigeria is also a contributing factor of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education could help to reduce the high rate of unemployment in both urban and rural areas of Nigeria, by equipping students with the knowledge and skills for setting up and running small businesses effectively. Entrepreneurship education, however, is not only about pursuing economic ends; it also helps learners to develop entrepreneurial or problem-solving skills they could use in addressing personal and social challenges. Entrepreneurship education that proactively prepares learners for an unpredictable world can not only help to overcome dependence and hopelessness but also stimulate the emergence of an enterprising culture that values creativity, flexibility, self-efficacy, self-employment and self-sufficiency.

## X. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the issues raised in the proposed model of graduate employability, the following are recommended for all the stakeholders in university education in Nigeria.

- Repositioning of the teaching methods used during entrepreneurship education by lecturers, which could be achieved by consciously laying more emphasis on practical work and real life situations than on theory.
- Students should do their Students Industrial Work – Experience Scheme (SIWES) in places
- relevant to their discipline so as to have hands-on experience and be familiar with the latest and modern equipment before they get employed.
- Entrepreneurship study centres should be established across universities in Nigeria to equip the students with lifelong learning processes and entrepreneurial spirit. On vocational skills acquisition, artisans or master craftsmen should be brought in to mentor the students properly while in school.
- Promotion of exhibitions and marketing of commercialized researches in Nigerian universities.
- Adequate provision of an enabling teaching and learning environment, especially in the areas of well-equipped and modern laboratories, libraries, lecture rooms and lecture theatres, hostel facilities, staff offices and other basic infrastructure, is germane to the enhancement of graduate employability. But, for this to be a reality, the Nigerian government has to commit more financial resources (which should be in the form of capital expenditure, rather than recurrent expenses) to university education.
- Upgrading of teacher's quality through employment of professional and qualified teachers and provision of in-service training and re-training.

## XI. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study adopted a review methodology approach, which is not empirical in nature. Hence, there is a need to conduct an empirical research in the area of graduate competence and school variables as colorant of graduate employability in Nigeria. Which will lead to the generalization of result that will enable the government, policy makers and educational stakeholders to help create employable entrepreneurial graduates in Nigeria.

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