ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A PANACEA FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

Shaibu, Ogwuche Gabriel (Maben)  
Mmeremikwu, Fiac Chinyere  
08065715075  
gabbyacademia123@gmail.com  
Mmeremikwu, Fiac Chinyere  
08062461958  
Department of Business Education

LECTURERS:  
Department Of Business Education,  
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State

Abstract  
Entrepreneurship Education is a strong force that has impact on empowerment and employment generation in the present day Nigeria. In order to reduce unemployment, alleviate poverty and create wealth, entrepreneurship education is considered a panacea as it equips individuals with necessary skills that will enable them function effectively in the society. Due to the vital role entrepreneurship plays towards empowerment and employment generation in the country, it is advocated that adequate funding should be made available by the government for its promotion. Unemployment is a major social problem currently besieging the economic development of Nigeria, hence Entrepreneurship Education should be seen as a panacea for empowerment and employment generation. It was recommended among others that a strong linkage be established with trade and craft centers in every major centre to cater for the youths. It was concluded that the nation should rise up to this challenge by equipping its youths with entrepreneurial skills and competencies through entrepreneurial education. Successful entrepreneurs should always be invited to the entrepreneurship centers to give talk to the youths on how they can become successful entrepreneurs.  
KEY WORDS: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneur, Empowerment, Employment

Introduction  
Nigeria like most developing nations of the world is faced with the myriads of problems and harsh realities which include poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. According to Brown (2012), unemployment situation has posed a great challenge to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations, thereby calling for the training of educated men and women who can function effectively in the society through entrepreneurship. There is the need to transform the youths into confident, aggressive and purposeful individuals to bridge the gap between unemployment and job creation.

The Human Development Report (2007) showed that unemployment and youth literacy rates have contributed in the increasing level of poverty among youths. It is however sad to note that despite all the concerted efforts, reforms and innovation made by all tiers of government, the current global economic crisis has resulted in an unprecedented level of global unemployment in which Nigeria is not left out. A recent
unemployment survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics (2015) also revealed that 20% of the current trend in the world is moving towards encouraging entrepreneurship as opposed to the search for white collar jobs.

The youths must have high level of creativity and innovation and the ability to think about the future and relate these ideas to their businesses. They are also expected to have strong skills in business planning, finance and accounting as well as ability to create new and innovate marketing plans that utilize modern communication technology. Entrepreneurship education therefore, is a type of education that is geared towards developing in students and the youth’s skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal reliance (Nwokolo, 1997). According to Adedayo (2006), it is a type of education given to a set of people to be able to instill in them the principles, skills, and practices required to see and evaluate business opportunities to gather necessary resources and the desire to take advantage of them as well as initiating appropriate actions to ensure success in any chosen profession or occupation. The knowledge of entrepreneurship enables the youths to understand how the economic decisions they make influence their present and future lives. This goes a long way in preparing them to be responsible and enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic growth.

The concern of entrepreneurship education is that every business mind should be redirected from being a job seeker to that of providing jobs/employment. This according to Baba (2013), is that the government should provide an enabling and conducive environment for the private sector to thrive. There is the need to have a functional education which is a process through which individuals are made participatory members of the society (Ocho, 2005). Such an education enables the individuals to become capable of living in the society and being able to contribute towards economic development. Mass unemployment in the country today is the result of students learning what is particularly not relevant by our stage of development (Uddin and Uwaifor, 2005). Given the inadequacies of the current education system, there is the need to incorporate entrepreneurship education as a panacea for youth empowerment and employment generation.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship**

The term Entrepreneurship is defined as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities (Gana, 2001). It is pertinent to note here that entrepreneurship is all about the willingness and the risk taking attitude that is demonstrated in a creative performance. According to Ikeme and Onu (2007), entrepreneurship is the use of human courage to seek investment opportunities and
establish a profit oriented enterprise. It is the effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in a creative performance (Esomono, 1998). Hence, entrepreneurship is all about innovation, creativity and intellectual build-up of innovative ideas.

Entrepreneurship is a clear manifestation of effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in creative performance (Shaibu and Mbaegbu, 2012). Entrepreneurship is the key to personal fulfillment, wealth creation, human capacity development and financial empowerment (Bamidele, 2013).

To Amusan (2001), entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Thus entrepreneurship is seen as the ability to create new ideas, products or services for personal self-reliance and to meet the needs of the society. This involves the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. The ability should be acquired and not be taken for granted through the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial competencies necessary for self employment. Entrepreneurship is the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. Here, the vision may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way of doing things.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

The aim of entrepreneurship education is to teach the youths how to see business opportunities, ideas and act on them promptly in order to take advantage over others. Entrepreneurship education therefore, is the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into business that is relatively small in nature for future advancement by the business (Aminu, 2009). Entrepreneurship education is essential not only to shape the mindset of young people but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are central to the development of an entrepreneurial culture. Entrepreneurship education provides students and youths with motivation, knowledge and skill essential to launch successful ventures (Nwabuana, 2004). Entrepreneurship education prepares youths to, be responsible and make individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think (Olawale and Kaegon, 2012). According to Ezeani (2012), entrepreneurship education is 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. 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 (Fashiola, 2006).

Therefore, entrepreneurship education is the education that embraces skill building programme, creative thinking, product development and marketing negotiation;
leadership training, and wealth generation (Kurato, 2003). Entrepreneurship education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and setting up the mind to create jobs by converting and starting up a new business (Anerua and Obiazi, 2009).

The Concept Entrepreneur

The word entrepreneur was first used in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century by Richard Cantillion, an Irish who lived in France. He described an entrepreneur as a person who perceives business opportunities and takes advantage of the scarce resources available. According to Imianvan (2003), an entrepreneur is one who has the ability to find and evaluate opportunities, gather the necessary resources and implement action to take advantage of the opportunity. It simply means that an entrepreneur is not just a person who starts a business, but one who goes beyond that to apply an endless variety of special talents and ideas to the total assortment of circumstances associated with small and medium enterprises.

An entrepreneur is also seen as one with the willingness, skill, ability, capability and drive to identify and harness an investment opportunity (Madu, Uzoeshi, Agu, and Kanu, 2000).

Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

The success or failure of any business depends largely on the ability of the entrepreneur to effectively and efficiently use this/her positive qualities and restrain his/her negative characteristics. Below are some characteristics of an entrepreneur:

\textbf{Risk Taking:} An entrepreneur is one who should calculate the risk involved in the task that is being undertaken and should assess situations and focus attention on the risks involved. He assesses personal talent, skills, abilities, technical know-how, experience, attributes and values that can take care of risks.

\textbf{Self Confidence:} An entrepreneur is one who believes in himself and not fate. He/she sees obstacles or difficulties to achieving his/her goals as challenges which must be faced squarely and conquered. He/she also maintains a high level of emotional stability in the face of difficulties and not afraid of making decisions (Hisrich, 2008). He/she abides by his/her decisions and accepts responsibilities for them.

\textbf{Drive and Energy:} He/she exhibits a high level of drive and energy. He/she puts a lot of physical and mental energy into the venture. This involves planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the various activities of the organization.

\textbf{Leadership:} He/she motivates, directs and guides people to accomplish goals/objectives. (Hasty and Readon, 2007).

\textbf{Task Orientation:} He/she is result-oriented. He/she sets difficult but achievable goals. He/she is persistent, persevering and determined.
Taking Initiative: An entrepreneur is one who actively seeks and takes initiatives. He/she does not wait for people to make decisions for him. He/she fills leadership positions where vacuum exists.

Delegates Authority: He/she must encourage team work which is a great tool for the success of any enterprise. He/she should be able to delegate some worthwhile responsibilities to other people within the enterprise.

Creativity and Innovation: An entrepreneur should be one who is creative and innovative. He/she does things differently from other people.

Resourceful, Versatile, Knowledgeable and Imaginative: He/she is flexible and this keeps him/her in business.

Aggressiveness: He/she must be aggressive, especially in a challenging global environment.

Empathy: He/she must be sensitive to the needs of others. By this, he/she must be socially and environmentally friendly.

Trusting, Fair and Honest: He/she must be open and honest in dealing with others.

Loyal and Supportive: He/she must back up employees on controversial issues especially if employees encounter problems in the course of performing their duties.

Good Planner and Organizer: He/she must possess the ability to manage and organize people, operations, information, products and resources effectively.

Give Feedback: He/she must give feedback on performance of men and materials; and successes recorded on the business thus far.

Endurance: He/she must take heart on whatsoever is done to him/her wrongly.

Ingenuity: He/she has to think fast and take effective decisions.

Pacesetter: He/she is always the first to start off something.

Aims and Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students and the youths with adequate knowledge, skills, motivation and encouragement for entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. According to Ossai and Nwalado (2012), entrepreneurship education is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To offer functional education to the youths that will enable them to be well employed and self reliant.
- To provide the young graduates 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.
- To offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain learning feasible.
- To reduce high rate of poverty.
- To create employment opportunities.
- To reduce rural urban migration.
- To 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 persist in any business venture they embark on.
- To create smooth transition from traditional to modern industrial economy.

The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Empowerment and Employment Generation

The role of entrepreneurship education on empowerment and employment generation cannot be over emphasized. Hence, Entrepreneurship education tries to inculcate skills, knowledge, enterprise, attitude and motivation for self reliance which helps to promote graduates to become employers of labour. Therefore, entrepreneurship Education plays a key role as it drives the economy through wealth creation as majority of jobs are created by small business enterprises which are started by entrepreneurially minded individuals, many of whom go on to create bigger businesses.

The major role of entrepreneurship education however, is to fight unemployment and poverty, to train individuals to become self-reliant, self employed and employers of labour. Evey, Aklang, Asride, Ofemi, and Donald, (2010) saw the following as the role of entrepreneurship education:

1. Preparation of individuals to meet the manpower needs of relevant occupations through acquisition of useful knowledge, skills and attitude required in the field work.
2. Elimination of poor attitude to work, low performance on the job and lack of job satisfaction as individuals will help to acquire the right attitude to work and respect for dignity of labour.
3. Enhancing employment through self-reliance and self employment as Nigerian youths would equip themselves with adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes which make them more productive.
4. Reduction in professional and vocational prostitution as skilled and unskilled are prevented from using other vocations as discovery grounds. It will go away in promoting a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial development of the country.
5. Entrepreneurship creates a formal and non-formal capacity and redirection of educational provision towards the world of business producing skilled citizens.
Agencies that Render Financial Assistance for Entrepreneurship
1. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)
3. The Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB).
4. The Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB).
5. Fund for Small Scale Industries (FUSSI).
6. Small Scale Industry Credit Scheme
7. Industries Development Centers (IDCs)
8. National Directorate for Employment (NDE)
10. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Loan Scheme
11. Federal Mortgage Bank Limited (FMB)
12. Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN)
13. Family Support Programme/Family Advancement Programme
14. Microfinance Bank

Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition Areas Open to the Youths
1. **Info-tech Business:** Examples are ICT consulting, computer accessories, sale of laptop, sale of personal computers (PCs) and software engineering.
2. **Internet Based Business:** Examples are automobile net marketing, award site, banner designer, business software site, cyber copywriting, discussion board, download site, fee for air linkages, game site, internet press releases, etc.
3. **Printing and Publishing:** Examples are book binding, publishing diary/calendars production, exercise books, envelop production, jotter production, sticker, greeting cards, etc.
4. **Telecommunication Business:** Examples are GSM unlocking, handset production, handset repairs, handset sales, recharge card sales, telephone booth operation, recharge card printing, etc.
5. **Transportation:** Examples are taxi services, motor cycle hiring transport, car wash, etc.
6. **Soap and Detergent Business:** Examples are Aloe vera soap production, antiseptic soap production, black soap production, detergent production, toilet bowl cleaner, liquid detergent production, etc.
7. **Educational Services:** Examples are nursery/primary schools operation, secondary schools operation, day care centers, extra mural lessons, etc.
8. **Fashion and Style:** Examples are barbing salon, beauty salon, boutique shop, undies making, fashion school, fashion designing, tailoring, travel bag making, etc.
9. **Baby Items**: Examples are baby powder production, baby cream production, baby shoes, baby oil production, baby jelly production, etc.

10. **Bath**: Examples are towel production, bed sheet production, belt production, handkerchief, pillowcases production, underwears, etc.

11. **Livestock Farming**: Examples are goat rearing, poultry farming, fish farming, sheep farming, cattle farming, piggery farming, grasscutter farming, snail farming, egg production, poultry production, hatchery, etc.

12. **Agro-products Exportation**: Examples are chili pepper, kolanuts, cassava flakes (garri), cocoa, groundnuts, yam flour, cashew nuts, etc.

13. Setting up Security Company

14. Construction Company

15. **Real Estate Development**: Examples are hotels, schools, shopping malls, event and conference halls, etc.

16. **E-services**: Examples are web designing, App development, digital marketing services, online registration of exams, such as JAMB, WAEC, Professional courses, etc.

**Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship Education despite its aims and roles to youth empowerment and employment generation has been said to be inhibited by a number of challenging factors. According to Ovaiwe and Ekhovbiye, (2008) below are some of the challenging factors:

1. Poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition.
2. Poor enterprising culture
3. Lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment
4. Unavailability of fund
5. Non-inclusion of entrepreneurship programme in the primary and secondary school system.
6. Poor social attitude to technical and vocational development.
7. Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning.
8. Insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy.
9. Isolated or pockets of ineffective programmes and management incompetencies.

**Prospects of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship Education has attracted a lot of attention especially now that there is scarcity of paid employment. Entrepreneurship therefore, involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal self-reliance. This is why entrepreneurship enhances economic development, creates jobs, transforms traditional industries, and stimulates investments; and increases per capita income and output.
According to Ikeme (2012), Entrepreneurship Education holds the following prospects:

1. It makes learners acquire increased sense of locus of control.
2. It helps in greater awareness of personal talents and skills.
3. It enhances awareness of career and entrepreneurial option.
4. It creates enhanced business opportunity and recognition of skills.
5. It makes them understand steps essential in business start up.
6. It helps the youths in using problem solving skills effectively and efficiently.
7. It equips the youths with the ability to handle business situation ethically.
8. It equips them for the application of relevant creativity.
9. It helps the youths in the use of strategies for idea generation and assessment of feasibility of ideas.
10. It helps in understanding basic financial concepts.

However, to Onwuzo and Okpala (2011), the following are some entrepreneurship prospects:

1. It rises productivity through technical and other forms of innovation.
2. It is a powerful tool for job creation.
3. It facilities the transfer of technology.
4. It plays a strategic role in commercializing new inventions and products.
5. It plays a critical role in restructuring and transform motion of economies.
6. It makes market more competitive and thereby reduces both static and dynamic market ineffectiveness.
7. It also improves the social welfare of a nation by harnessing dormant previously over looked talents.

**Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship Education is a key driver of any economy. Hence no nation can survive without having as its bedrock an entrepreneurship education that is patterned towards the development of its youths for empowerment and employment creation. Therefore, a nation without skilled and trained entrepreneurs does not exist to develop and sustain her economy. Consequently, Entrepreneurship Education should be seen as a major instrument which the government should employ in empowering its youths for the achievement of economic stability and for sustaining its economic development. This is due to the fact that the survival of any nation largely depends on its youth empowerment programme in entrepreneurship. Finally, empowering the youths in entrepreneurship makes them to confidently employ and control other factors of production for optimum self growth and for sustainable economic development which is a panacea for wealth creation.
Recommendations

The following have been recommended for entrepreneurship to achieve its desired goals in Nigeria:

1. The introduction of entrepreneurship activities at the early stage of our youths to enable them imbibe the culture and grow along side with it.
2. Advocating for a proper framework strategy for goal attainment.
3. A review of the curriculum to take cognizance of practical field training at all levels of education.
4. Provision of funds by government, financial institutions and NGOs.
5. Teachers should update their knowledge through researches, attending seminars, workshops, and conferences to improve skills and competencies.
6. Provision of relevant teaching materials and adequate infrastructural facilities like textbooks, good roads network, pipe borne water, electricity, and other technology to boost teaching and production.
7. Provision of subsidies and loans to fresh entrepreneurs at a reduced rate for increased production.
8. Intensive mass mobilization and enlightenment programmes, like seminars, workshops, conferences, among others on small scale enterprises management.
10. Dividing and spelling out general policies for the incorporation of entrepreneurship development at all levels of education.
11. Creation of market for exhibitions and sale of locally made goods/products.
12. Government should encourage students of entrepreneurship and individuals with entrepreneurial skills scholarship award and financial assistance.
13. Provision of credit facilities by banks or take off grants from government.
14. Successful entrepreneurs should be invited to give talk to the youths on how they can become successful entrepreneurs.
15. Strong link should be established with successful entrepreneurs as it will help to sustain entrepreneurship development in the country.
References


