CHALLENGES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS’ EFFORTS IN PRODUCING RELIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE GRADUATE ENTREPRENEURS

Dr. A.N. Umezulike
Department of Vocational Education
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus
toniaumezulike@yahoo.com

Abstract
The expectations of the Federal Government for the compulsory introduction of entrepreneurship education to reduce unemployment, youth’s restiveness and other societal vices in all the programmes in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria seemed not to be yielding any positive result. This was evidently proved with the recent pronouncement by the federal government to recruit 500,000 graduate teachers. Within 36 hours of the launch of the jobs’ website, 403,523 applicants had registered successfully. This has shown that more than 80% of our graduates are unemployed. Could this be that compulsory entrepreneurship education introduced and taught at various disciplines in the tertiary institutions is just a mere statement and not a statement of facts? This paper is out to x-ray the factors hindering the tertiary institutions efforts from producing active and corporate graduate entrepreneurs as presumed by the federal government and suggest possible ways of overcoming the ugly situation

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Tertiary Institutions, Reliable, Sustainable, Unemployment, Graduate Entrepreneurs.

Introduction
The issue of unemployment and poverty eradication had been top priority of many government and institutions especially in developing countries where extreme unemployment and poverty rate are conspicuous and pandemic. Anyadike, Emeh and Ukah (2012) submitted that one can conclude that Nigerian’s youth unemployment problem poses a great threat to its development, security and peaceful co-existence. In Nigeria today, the increasing rate of poverty, unemployment, corruption and so many other societal vices have become worrisome to the government and to every well meaning citizen. Hence, the urgent need for changes in education, because education is the pivot through which effective and sustainable individual and economic development can revolve.

One of the changes the government believes will be to integrate into the curriculum of all the institutions of higher learning that are responsible for producing large number of graduates annually those courses that will equip them (graduates) with desirable skills and competencies required for job creation and self-employment. To
ensure for the actualization of the federal government dream, the ministry for education in collaboration with National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in early 2000 organized several workshops and seminars involving all the Directors of Academic Planning from Nigerian Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Monotechnics to produce a draft curriculum on entrepreneurial studies for all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The outcome of these workshops and seminars consequently led to the compulsory introduction of entrepreneurship education in all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria in an attempt to reduce graduates unemployment trend by providing the needed training in entrepreneurial skills to students to enable the graduates set up business on their own on graduation.

Bassey and Archibong (2015) uphold that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions is intended to empower the graduates irrespective of their area of specialization with skills that will enable them to engage in income yielding ventures, if they are unable to secure jobs in the labour market and public sector. Entrepreneurship according to Uchendu (2014) is the ability of one to transform ideas into action. UNESCO (2008) maintained that entrepreneurship education is made up of all the experiences that will give students the ability and vision to access and transform opportunities into reality. That is to say that knowledge of entrepreneurship makes one to be creative, resourceful and innovative; hence investment opportunities are made clear when one is armed with knowledge of entrepreneurship. Itanwu and Mgbemere (2011) maintained that knowledge of entrepreneurship enables one to learn the facts, acquire the skills, develop abilities, solve problems and be able to have business like attitudes useful for success in business.

Despite the Nigerian government invigorating plans and efforts for the inclusion of compulsory entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian tertiary institutions to address the unemployment and poverty challenges in the country, graduates and youths unemployment still remains a thorn in the flesh for government, individual and society at large because almost 80% of our graduates still roamed about the street in search of white collar jobs that are scarcely unavailable. Hence the chosen of this topic to discover the challenges confronting tertiary institutions’ efforts from producing reliable and sustainable graduate entrepreneurs because an Igbo adage states that it is only when the cause of an illness is discovered, that you can prescribe drugs for the cure.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship according to Uwaoma and Ordu (2015) is defined as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychological and social risks and receiving the
resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. That is to say that purposeful entrepreneurship involves creation process, time, effort, financial, psychological, social risks as well as personal satisfaction and monetary reward for being an entrepreneur. Udu (2014) in his own part defined entrepreneurship as the process of generating sound investment ideas and the applications thereof. To Udu entrepreneurship is all about generating ideas that are used in creating new firms, new jobs, new relationships, new methods of production as well as new methods of doing things or modifying the existing ones so as to enhance their values. Shepherd (2008) maintained that entrepreneurship is a process which is anchored on creating wealth through value creation and innovation. To Shepherd, wealth and value are created through creative and innovative processes which bring into focus abstract knowledge and transform it into reality so as to solve the societal problems. Hence entrepreneurship whether socially, psychologically or economically defined still centred on wealth and value creation for individual and societal wellbeing.

Attainment of purposeful entrepreneurship is the handwork of a driven entrepreneur. A driven entrepreneur is hardworking, focused, and purposeful and as well sees every failure as opportunity to success. To Udu (2014) entrepreneurs are persons rather than processes that are willing and are able to identify business opportunities analyze and mobilize resources so as to solve societal needs while satisfying themselves. That is to say that failure does not distract entrepreneurs rather they take it as opportunity to success.

From the forgoing, the word entrepreneur is referred to as business founder, planner, organizer, director, controller, imaginator, creator, innovator, risk taker, mobilize and visioner who through vast professional and practical expertise as well as financial capacity provides the needed resources that will help not only to give birth to a new business but also give it direction, sustainability and growth of the entire society. Hence an entrepreneur is always ready with suitable and sound ideas on how to challenge and change economic, social, psychological and even ecological failures to potential treasures.

**Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education To Nigerian Undergraduate**

The federal government major objectives for introducing compulsory entrepreneurship education in our tertiary institutions as indicated in the general curriculum include:

1. To provide students with training that will make them creative, resourceful and innovative in identifying new businesses before and after graduation.
2. To equip the students against difficulties they may encounter in course of establishing their own businesses.
3. To empower students irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills that will enable them engage in income yielding ventures thereby reducing the high rate of poverty and unemployment.

4. To reduce rural-urban migration: If on graduation, one is able to establish a self-yielding venture in rural area, he/she cannot think of moving to urban as his establishment is paying him well. By so doing there will be gradual development of the rural areas.

5. To offer tertiary institutions graduates with adequate training in risk management thus making certain bearing feasible

6. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.

7. To promote international relationship, as when the graduates become successful entrepreneurs, they will link up with international market for product development and business expansion

8. To promote favourable balance of trade and payments. Increase in exportation of our local products through entrepreneurship ventures will bring about increase in Gross Domestic Products (GDP). When the GDP is at increase, the economy will have more foreign reserves thereby bringing about favourable balance of trade and payments.

Challenges Confronting Tertiary Institutions’ Efforts From Producing Active and Sustainable Graduate Entrepreneurs

Nigeria as a nation is still lagging behind in the area of entrepreneurship development inspite of government desperate efforts and ventures through tertiary institutions to combat the ugly situations. Committee have been formed, seminars/workshops held, curriculum developed and funds injected into the system for the takeoff and implementation of the programme, yet nothing tangible have been felt in the area of combating the youths/graduates unemployment. Below are some of the obstacles that are hindering tertiary institutions efforts from producing active graduate entrepreneurs:

1. Poor Curriculum Teaching and Implementation: Entrepreneurship education curriculum in the tertiary institutions is poorly taught and ineffectively implemented due scarcity of experts thus making it difficult for the attainment of the programme objectives. Tertiary Institutions according to Udu (2014) are established to help the societies and individuals to acquire knowledge and develop their inherent potentials. Such potentials do remain inactive until they are energized through conscious education. That by implication all human beings are created with some inherent degrees of potentials. But the inherent potentials of
Nigerian University graduates are still inactive and under-developed in area of value addition and wealth creation due to poor teaching. That is to say, there is significant lack of workable model that reflects the Nigerian ecosystem in terms of appropriately utilizing academic intellectual potentials and as well inculcating entrepreneurial spirits in the undergraduates at all levels. Thus graduates leave the University environment without visions or ideas on how to create job opportunities.

2. **Incomplete and Inadequate Number of Manpower:** Entrepreneurship education as a new programme in tertiary institution is usually handled by incompetent and inadequate number of manpower. This is true because tertiary institutions rushed into teaching of entrepreneurship education without making adequate provision of training and recruiting qualified instructors due to federal government pressure. This has made the attainment of course objectives difficult because one cannot give out what he/she doesn’t have. Hence, there is lack of professional pride on part of the teachers because no programme can be adequately established in isolation of well trained experts and professionals. This has also resulted in producing inactive and unresourceful graduates because they are not well exposed to active entrepreneurial skills that will make them add values and create wealth in the society.

3. **Differences in Ideologies:** Institutions of higher learning have different ideologies about entrepreneurship education. Many see it as skill acquisition education as against entrepreneurial ideologies of values and wealth creation. This according to McMullan, Christman and Vesper (2001) has led to poor impact of entrepreneurial skills that make graduates creative, resourceful and innovative towards value and wealth creation.

4. **Inadequate Provision of Funds and Facilities:** Establishment of entrepreneurship education is capital incentive and therefore requires adequate provision of funds to secure the necessary appropriate teaching facilities and equipment for successful delivery of the programme. Though the government has laudable interest in the sound development of entrepreneurial skills among the youths and graduates but she has not done much in ensuring for the successful implementation of programme because education annually received the least budget allocation. Umezulike (2011) to this effect maintained that the inability of the graduates to acquire the appropriate skills, abilities and competencies for self-employment, solve individual and societal problems may be attributed to non-availability of modern teaching facilities and equipments as a result of inadequate provision of funds. Umezulike sees entrepreneurship training received by the students as different from reality because emphasis on value and wealth creation
which is the hallmark of entrepreneurship education is an illusion because the programme is tuned into literacy education, where theoretical classroom oriented aspects of entrepreneurship is taught. Okwuanaso (2004) was also of the view that shortage of entrepreneurship specialist and manpower in our tertiary institutions are caused by poor funding because the institutions of higher learning management cannot recruit more than they can pay. Hence few instructors that were recruited resort to shabby delivery of the course contents due excess credit loads thereby making nonsense of achieving the programme objectives.

5. **Tertiary Institutions Poor Link with Outside World:** The inability of majority of the tertiary institutions to establish cordial relationship with already well-established entrepreneurs, NGOs and so on hinder to a great extent tertiary institutions graduates (business and science education inclusive) move to establish their own business ventures on graduation. In developed countries like Canada and China, institutions management do invite NGOs, industrialist, entrepreneurial gladiators to come and listen to their undergraduates who want to sell their ideas. Every student is giving opportunity to demonstrate before the invited guest his/her talents on the business of his/her interest. After presentation, those students who were able to convince any of the personalities on his new idea and investment will be automatically sponsored to set up a business of his/her own while they are still in school. This type of sponsorship called “Angelic Link” in Canada has made lots of undergraduates to develop early entrepreneurial skills, value and wealth creation while they are still in school. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria because according to Amunnadi and Amunnadi (2014) Africa (Nigeria inclusive) is well behind the rest of the world in the share of wealth from private sector entrepreneurship in global market economy.

6. **Bad Leadership and Corruption:** The unscrupulous and corrupt spirits of many in administrative position have resulted to non utilization of meagre funds released by the federal government for the implementation of entrepreneurship education. This made Olaopa (2013) to state that until Nigeria disentangles herself from bad leadership and corrupt practices that promote mediocrity, she would continue to remain entrepreneurially backward. Amunnadi and Amunnadi (2014) on their own maintained that the high rate of corruption in the form of bribery, kickbacks, outright denial of much needed services relevant to the establishment survival and growth of business does not encourage many graduates into venturing and creating new businesses on graduation.

7. **Lack of Patriotism:** The hostile unpatriotic culture in the Nigerian society is grossly affecting graduate entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This is true because many political leaders are looting billions of naira on daily basis and
siphoning them to foreign countries for fear of being disposed of their ill-gotten wealth by future administration. The result according to Amunnadi and Anunnadi (2014) is that the nation and willing to be graduate entrepreneurs continues to be denied of the much needed financial support/capacity to drive entrepreneurship development forward. Again, the agreement of those unpatriotic leaders with foreign businesses and firms because of their investment interests cause them to make laws that tend to protect multinational industries over the local ones. This often put the local industries and enterprises to great disadvantages because of lack of capacity to compete with foreign counterparts.

8. **Fear:** Fear is another creeping and deadly obstacle that is biasing the minds of the graduates from moving into laudable entrepreneurship ventures. Fear such as business failure, insecurity, competitors in the market, lack of competence, too many government demand for registration and establishment of new business as well as other taxes/levies after establishment do scared graduates who have desire to establish their own enterprises from doing so. Maidoki and Ochi (2012) adduced that what keeps many people (graduate inclusive) away from establishing their own enterprises is not family background, level of education, race, sex, age, bad luck or lack of intelligent quotient but fear. To them, human behaviours are driven by their thinking pattern which may be positive or negative. That is to say, that the fear driven attitudes of many Nigerians keep them away from venturing into new businesses. Again, it is not an overstatement to say that many youths prefer to remain on paid job or even unemployed than embracing the uncertainties associated with creating a new business.

9. **Stringent Access to Credit Facilities:** Many willing and vibrant graduates usually are handicapped from venturing into successful business due to their inability to secure financial assistance from banks, individuals or government. This is true because accessing bank loans or credit facilities involve lots of stringent measures which many young graduates cannot cope with. Where they succeeded in obtaining the loans, the interest rate charged is very high for a new business owner to cope with or manage. The inability of many willing young graduates to access bank credit facilities will therefore make them to queue up with lines of unemployed youths which may in long run bring about high crime rate.

10. **Inadequate Teaching Periods:** Some institutions of higher learning may have adequate number of qualified entrepreneurship instructors but the instructors could not achieve the programme objectives due to inadequate teaching periods. Their teaching methods are more of classroom oriented. They rush to cover the
scheme of work thereby by-passing teaching of relevant and core entrepreneurial skills.

Possible Ways by Which Tertiary Institutions Could Improve the Teaching and Learning of Entrepreneurship Education

Every problem has solution except death. No matter how serious a problem is, there must be a solution. So challenges confronting teaching of entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions must be tackled. Some of the identified solutions include:

1. **Developing Appropriate Academic Curriculum:**
   Active entrepreneurship potentials can only be energized through conscious education. Tertiary institutions are established to help the societies and individuals acquire knowledge and develop their inherent potentials. Every individual is created with some degree of potentials either to create wealth or add value to the existing wealth. Udu (2014) stressed that individuals with great passion to add value or create wealth do drive economic activities and create job opportunities. These groups of people according to Udu learn and develop new technologies, new market, new values, new services and new relationships. Infact they are in state of flux with newness. This concurs with Drucker (1993) assertion that entrepreneurship is discipline that can be learned. Udu (2014) therefore concludes that it is crucial to encourage entrepreneurship education through entrepreneurship culture and as well through economic policy instruments. Such culture according to Udu will aim at identifying the present and future needs of the students and develop appropriate academic curriculum that will suite it. The approach as proposed, calls for restructuring of the academic programme and embedding in it experiential approaches so as to queue into the present and potential needs of the students and society.

2. **Early Identification of What to Teach:**
   Globalization influence on the economies calls for equipping potentials graduates with diverse skills and attitudes that are not environmentally bound. This means that what are to be teach to undergraduates should cover and focus on such skills as should expose them (students) to critical thinking, idea generation, self-discipline, self-concept, financial discipline, environmental scanning competencies, technical, human relations, leadership as well as team spirit skills.

3. **Determining How To Teach:**
   Identifying the appropriate entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to be taught requires sound teaching methods capable of yielding positive results. Udu (2014) maintain
that traditional and didactic teaching methods has failed to produce required results and therefore upholds the comparison of traditional and entrepreneurial application of Marques and Albuquerque (2012) as adopted from Dolabeka (1999).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N/S</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Emphasis on the content as a purpose</td>
<td>Emphasis on the process (learning to learn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Led and dominate by the teacher</td>
<td>Appropriation of the learned subject by the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>The knowledge is conveyed by the teacher</td>
<td>The teacher facilitates the discovery and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>The knowledge is acquired and unaffected</td>
<td>The knowledge can change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>Curriculum and the session is highly planned</td>
<td>Flexible sessions and targeted to the needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>Education objectives are imposed</td>
<td>Learning objectives are negotiated and evolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td>Priority for the performance</td>
<td>Priority to self development which generate performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td>Convergent thinking rejects performance</td>
<td>Divergent thinking and assumptions as part of the creative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix.</td>
<td>Emphasis on analytical and linear thinking</td>
<td>Holistic thinking strategies emphases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x.</td>
<td>Theoretical and abstract knowledge</td>
<td>Theoretical knowledge together with practical application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi.</td>
<td>Resistance to influence of the community</td>
<td>Encouraging the communities influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xii.</td>
<td>Emphasis in the outside world</td>
<td>The inner experience is a source of learning, feelings are embedded in the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiii.</td>
<td>Education as a social necessity for performance of a particular role</td>
<td>Only barely related to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiv</td>
<td>Errors are not accepted</td>
<td>Errors are sources of knowledge (good mistakes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>Knowledge is the bound between teacher and student</td>
<td>Relationship is the key link between teacher and student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above comparisons show that entrepreneurial teaching involve exploration, knowledge applications, building self-confidence risk taking, creative/innovative/imaginative abilities as against traditional teaching that inculcate specific skills, directing and limiting students on acquiring specific knowledge thereby making learning classroom centred.
4. **Employing Team Teaching Approach**
Teachers play vital roles towards ensuring successful, meaningful and effective academic programme. For the development of sound graduate entrepreneurial minds, there is need for the combination of experiential knowledgeable pedagogy and business mentoring. That is employing team teaching approach where different specialist and entrepreneurs with requisite knowledge in classroom theory and entrepreneurial minds set within and outside the institution will join hands in developing sound and active graduate entrepreneurs.

5. **Giving Loans or Grants to Potential Graduate Entrepreneurs.**
Many potential graduate entrepreneurs will be able to join clues of economic magnet if they are provided with adequate financial support on graduation. This is in consonance with Umezulike (2011) assertion that Nigerian economy will be over flooded with too many lucrative business enterprises if potential graduate entrepreneurs are supported with financial grants on graduation

6. **Develop Passion in What One Intends To Do**
Undergraduates should be encouraged to develop passion on what investment they intend to embark upon on graduation. This is true because passion is the drive to success. They should be made to understood that great entrepreneurs have passion in what they are doing not minding the thrills, challenges and the pay back they are going home with.

7. **Inculcating in the students the spirit of Risks Taking:**
Entrepreneurship education instructors should always inculcate in their students the spirit of taking calculated risks. Uwaoma and Ordu (2015) maintained that organizations that thrive, prosper and grow do so by taking risk. Hence great entrepreneurs innovative, they think out of box, they try new things and re-invest themselves for better future reward.

8. **Persistence:**
Undergraduates should be encouraged to persist in their ventureship even when results are not forthcoming as expected. They should be made to realize that their persistence is tied on their passion for what they are doing and belief that their enterprise(s) have the best chances of making it inspite of many competitors in the market. Students should also be encouraged to work hard by continuously taking risks with honour and integrity until they achieve possible goals and results.
9. **Development of Incubation Centre Inform of Apprenticeship Scheme:**
The development of apprenticeship scheme will give new graduates some work skills and experience to successful business ventures. This apprenticeship work scheme according to Amunnadi and Amunnadi (2014) is a form of genuine work based learning incorporated as part of the national and economic development strategies.

10. **Encouraging Multidisciplinary Entrepreneurship Formation among Undergraduates**
Encouraging students to form entrepreneurship clubs, and networking with fellow students with likely interest and needs from other tertiary institutions will provide a good ground for students and staff to test the viability and feasibility of any ideas generated either in the clubs or through network. Here, well established entrepreneurs should serve as role models and mentors for students to learn and imitate their exceptional business potentials and acumen.

**Conclusion**
Nigeria is well behind the rest of the world in the share of wealth from private sector entrepreneurship because Nigeria education system in the past did not pay much attention in developing entrepreneurship skills. Few institutions that have the interest see it as skill acquisition programme instead of idea generation for wealth and value creation. The recent federal government compulsory introduction of entrepreneurship education in every programme in the tertiary institutions is a welcome development but should be energized through adequate viable curriculum, competent/experiential entrepreneurship instructors both within and outside the institutions to serve as role models and mentors so as to reduce high rate of unemployment and youths restiveness. Starting up a new business venture also requires active effort and skills; it entails vision, commitment, motivation, risk tolerance, independence, persistence etc.

**Recommendations**
In line with the conclusion reached in this paper, it is recommended that:

1. Government should as a matter of urgency increase the budget allocation on tertiary education to enable the tertiary institutions procure necessary and relevant facilities and equipment for sound development of undergraduates’ entrepreneurship potentials that will bring about wealth and value creation.
2. Tertiary institutions management in collaboration with seasoned entrepreneurs in the society should always organize seminars and workshop for both instructors and students to enlightened them on the prerequisite of sound and viable entrepreneurship development.
3. Adequate teaching periods should be provided for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education for in-depth coverage of the scheme and goals attainment. This to a great extent will make entrepreneurship teaching field and practical oriented instead of classroom oriented.

4. Government should encourage fresh graduate entrepreneurs’ grants or loans at a subsidized rate so that those who have genuine business ideas can be assisted to take off without many constraints.

5. Entrepreneurship instructors should inculcate in their students good entrepreneurship ethic, virtues, honesty, integrity, truthfulness, fairness, respect to others, justice, moderation, wisdom, and prudence so as to equate profits with values for long survival of the business and business reputation. By developing a reputation for honesty, Uwaoma and Ordu (2015) maintained that entrepreneurs can obtain financing from commercial banks and micro credit facilities more easily and more quickly and probably on more favourable terms.

References


