



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A SOLUTION TO GRADUATES UNEMPLOYMENT

Ojah John Achi\*

\*Corresponding authors' email: [ojah131@gmail.com](mailto:ojah131@gmail.com)

Accounting Department, School of Administration and Business Studies, Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic  
Lafia, Nasarawa State - Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the exposure of under-graduate students to entrepreneurial education for post-graduation job creation ability. The population consisted all the final year students of Accounting Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Lafia, Nasarawa State Polytechnic 2021/2022 academic Session, totally 100 respondents. The population served as the sample size. The objective of this paper is to focus on entrepreneurship education as tool for gainful employment in Nigeria. The main objective is to refocus on entrepreneurship education as tool for gainful employment in Nigeria. Questionnaires and observation were used to collect information from the respondents. Tables and percentage were used to describe the data obtained. The findings show that entrepreneurial education is relevant to students with regard to equipping them with skills for post-graduation job creation ability rather than job seekers. The study recommended joint efforts of National University Commission and National Commission for Colleges of Education and Nigerian Polytechnics to identify other entrepreneurship programmers' to address graduate unemployment on graduation.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial skills, Nigerian Tertiary Institutions, Unemployment

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## 1.0 Introduction

Entrepreneurship education is about learners developing the skills and mindset to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. It is relevant across the lifelong learning process, in all disciplines of learning and to all forms of education and training (formal, non-formal & informal) which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit or behavior, with or without a commercial objective. Entrepreneurship education benefits students from all socioeconomic backgrounds because it teaches them to think outside the box and nurtures unconventional talents and skills. Furthermore, it creates opportunity, ensures social justice, instills confidence and stimulates the economy. Schools need not teach these skills on their own.

Nigeria is naturally endowed with entrepreneurship opportunities; however, the realization of the full potential of these opportunities has been dampened by the adoption of inappropriate industrialization policies at different times. Several policy interventions that were aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship development via small and medium scale enterprises promotion, based on technology transfer strategy, have failed to achieve the desired goals as it led to the most indigenous entrepreneurs becoming distribution agents of

imported products as opposed to building in-country entrepreneurial capacity for manufacturing, mechanized agriculture and expert services (Thaddeus, 2012).

In the early 2000s, entrepreneurship studies were introduced into the Nigerian educational system especially in higher institutions as a mandatory course. The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), which has the objective of teaching and encouraging students of higher institutions to acquire entrepreneurial, innovative, and management skills, was established. The Centre's goal is to make the graduates self-employed, create job opportunities for others and to generate wealth (Thaddeus, 2012). He continued that entrepreneurship development in Nigeria became significant only after the Nigerian civil war. At the end of the war the 2nd National Development Plan focused on the development of the 3Rs objectives of Reconstruction, Restructuring and Reconciliation. The activities in the plan challenged/tasked the ingenuity and inventive skill of the individuals.

This early period witnessed an economic development ideology of industrialization as the ultimate source of economic growth, and industrialization itself as the product of technical progress and investment. Technical progress or capital growth on the other hand is seen to be a function of, and the result of, entrepreneurial effort. In particular, evidence from the developed world indicates that economic growth is entirely due to the quality and efficiency of the entrepreneur. Thus after independence in 1960 there was the need by the government of Nigeria to promote indigenous entrepreneurs. The Government never loses sight of the tripartite relationship between entrepreneurship, industrialization and economic growth.

In recent years there has been cases of rising unemployment, surging crime rate and incidence of poverty in different administrations. In order to check the rising unemployment, surging crime rate and incidence of poverty, different government administrations introduced diverse poverty reduction policies (PRPs) to redress the problems and challenges highlighted above (Eriki & Okafor, 2005) thereby making Nigerians creative, innovative and resourceful to create more wealth and improve their general wellbeing.

Some of the poverty reduction policies (PRPs) initiated by different regimes in Nigeria include: (a) General Yakubu Gowon's National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) and Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Bank (NACB); (b) General Olusegun Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); (c) Alhaji Shehu Shagari's Green Revolution Programme (GRP); (d) General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida created the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA); (e) General Sani Abacha's Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and his wife's Family Support Programme (FSP); (f) President Olusegun Obasanjo's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); (g) Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua's "Seven-Point Agenda; (h) President Goodluck Jonathan's Economic Transformation Agenda including the Vision 20:2020 (Raimi et al, 2011)(i) Muhammadu Buhari "N-Power" and presently under implementation.

To investigate the exposure of undergraduate student to entrepreneurial education for post-graduate job creation based on the structural and functional flaws found in the nation's developmental blueprint, it then dawned on government that the proper thing to do is to review the nation's education curriculum by embedding entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course to be taken by all undergraduate students. Onuoha (2011) notes that the Nigerian education especially university system produces graduates that do not meet the need of the labour market, there is obvious disconnect and mismatch between the expectations of the industry and products of the nation's higher institutions. This structural imbalance rendered many graduates of Nigerian higher institutions unemployable and hopeless. Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education be

included as part of the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective from 2007/2008 academic session (ILO, 2010; Gabadeen & Raimi, 2012).

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to refocus on entrepreneurship education as tool for gainful employment in Nigeria.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual of Entrepreneurship Education

The term entrepreneurship education is used interchangeably with entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition. Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized knowledge that inculcates in learners the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for the purpose of creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities (Acs & Storey 2004; Minniti & Lévesque 2008; Naudé 2007, Kanothi, 2009). Mauchi1 et al., (2011) assert that entrepreneurship education can be defined “as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them.”

Entrepreneurship education has also been described as a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in students/trainees the ability to identify, screen and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition (Sexton & Smilor, 1997; Jones & English (2004)). In the words of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) the thrust of entrepreneurship training entails identifying “the sources of opportunities, the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit them.” The deliverables of entrepreneurship education when properly imbibed by students and learners are: ability to identify something happening in the environment (resources); and ability to impart something new to trainees, so that that their creativity, innovative abilities, beliefs and recombination skills would be enhanced (Sofoluwe, 2007; Fuduric, 2008). When the definition of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme is reshaped to fit into the present discourse, then entrepreneurship education can be described as a training that stimulates learners to better their lives by generating value through the creation or expansion of economic activity, identification and exploiting new products, processes or markets (OECD Entrepreneurship Indicator Programme, 2009). Anything that can be taught is education. Since entrepreneurship can be taught, entrepreneurship education refer to pragmatic and meaningful interaction between learner and instructor for the purpose of developing the ability of the learners to identify, evaluate and generate ideas and solving business problems in a unique way (Towobola & Raimi, 2011).

From several definitions provided above, entrepreneurship education can be conceptualised as a specialised and all-round training programme designed by education authorities to change the worldview of students from job seekers to wealth creators by developing their latent talents and potentials.

#### 2.1.2 Causes of Graduates Unemployment in Nigeria

- Lack of Entrepreneurial skills
- Educational system operated during pre and post -independence era in Nigeria
- Lack of soft skills
- Some Graduates prefer to wait for well- paid jobs

### **2.1.3 Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria: Role of Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics**

In a patriotic resolve at making the Nigeria's education creative, innovative and meeting the needs of the industries, the National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) were mandated by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to introduce entrepreneurship education into the curricula of Nigerian tertiary institutions. This became expedient in order to offers a realistic approach to solving the endemic problem of unemployment facing the nation. It has since been made a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in the three levels of tertiary education irrespective of students' areas of specialization (Yahya, 2011). According to Oyelola (2010) the policy thrust of entrepreneurship education in the polytechnic system is the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students, so as to be self-reliant and self-employed after graduation.

Complementing the view above, Yahya (2011) asserts that: The overall objective (of entrepreneurship education in the university system) is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view of not only educating them but to also support graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures, including but not limited to those arising from research.

The role assigned to the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through their respective highest supervisory agencies are essentially the tasks of transmitting and implementing government's policy on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The expected outcomes from the assigned role include:

1. Establishing entrepreneurship study in all higher institutions and curriculum for the course.
2. Establishment of entrepreneurship resource and knowledge centers in the Tertiary institutions
3. Capacity-building for at least ten teachers in all universities and development of Masters and Ph.D programmes in some selected universities (Yahya, 2011).

It is believed within the policy circles that from 2006 to 2010 (the first three years of establishing entrepreneurship programme in Nigeria) that at least 50,000 graduates would have gone through entrepreneurship education with sufficient entrepreneurial skills. Out of the projected 50,000 trainees, it is presumed that at least 10,000 graduates would be self-employed and self-reliant by establishing their own business ventures.

### **2.1.4 The Contribution of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) to the Nigerians**

Entrepreneurship education (EE) will leads to greater opportunities with advancing technologies.

Entrepreneurship education will also enhanced the transfer of technology from the University, Polytechnics and colleges of Education to the private sector, and promoted technology based firms and products. On average, entrepreneurship graduates we be more likely to be employed with firms that license new technology or that license technology to others.

Entrepreneurship graduates are significantly more apt to be involved in developing new products than non-entrepreneurship graduates. Entrepreneurship graduates spent more time in research and development (R&D) related activities, worked with products that had shorter life spans and were more often employed full-time in high-tech industries.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

**2.2.1 The Schumpeter Effect (TSE):** Schumpeter effect states that the phenomenon of unemployment is inversely related to new-firm start-ups otherwise called entrepreneurship (Garofoli, 1994; Audretsch & Fritsch, 1994). In other words, when new businesses are established in the economy, employability is stimulated through the power of creative destruction. Put differently, Lucas (1978) and Jovanovic (1982) were of the view that high level of unemployment is often associated with a low degree of entrepreneurial activities, that is, where people are not motivated to set up business enterprises, the rate of unemployment would be very high. The implication of Schumpeter effect is that unemployment tends to be very high because people have lower endowments of human capital and entrepreneurial talents required to start and sustain new firms.

**2.2.2 Risk Taking Theory (RTT):** Another theory that supports entrepreneurship education is the risk taking theory of Richard Cantillon and John Stuart Mill. The theory perceives entrepreneurship as a mental education that stimulates individuals to take calculated risk for which future stream of benefits are guaranteed, and people taking big risk have to contend with a great responsibility (Alam & Hossan, 2003). The summary of the theory is that entrepreneurship education improves the ability, capability and potentials of individuals to undertake risks for which economic benefits are assured.

The anchor theory for this study is the Risk Taking Theory (RTT), this because the theory perceives as a mental education that stimulates individuals for which future stream of benefits are guarantee this is because the higher the risk the higher the returned.

## 3.0 Methodology

Whatever form of research methodology adopted is depending on the type of information required and its value, this requires adequate description of the variables in the problem model, thus the work is purely descriptive with the use of primary data and secondary data.

Since it is quite impracticable to cover the entire population being so large, the sample technique will be used instead; in as much as the sample chosen adequately represents the entire population to permit generalization of the total population. A simple percentage is used to analysis the questionnaire administered.

## 3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This research was carried out on the exposure of under-graduate students to entrepreneurial education for post-graduation job creation ability in Tertiary Institutions in Nasarawa State a case Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic Iafia with a view to making a broader inference as regards tertiary institutions in general. In order to gather data for this study the researcher used 100 copies of questionnaire to test the hypothesis earlier generated each questionnaire contain 20 questions and all the 100 were return.

In this study the descriptive survey design was used. This is because the method helps the researcher to describe, examine, record analyze and interpret the variables that exist in the study. The researcher also considered it necessary to employ oral interview because of its factual implication on the study.

The data used in the research work was obtained from two sources, namely: primary and secondary sources. The primary data used was collected by the researcher through a structured questionnaire.

### 3.2 Tools of Analysis

The Lickert-Summated Rating scale was used in the questionnaire to elicit information from the respondents. The Licker- Summated Rating scale is given below:

1. Strongly Agree (S A)
2. Agree (A)
3. Disagree (D)
4. Strongly Disagree (S D)

The secondary data used in the research work were obtained from books, internet, academic articles and journals. The population size for this study is made up of All the Tertiary Institutions in Nasarawa State and the sample is 100. For this study stratified purposive sampling method was used. Population was stratified into two strata's Academy and Non Academy. The questionnaire was designed to suit the test of the respondents as they said they would prefer a short questionnaire

## 4.0 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Findings and Discussion

The personal information or profiles of the respondents were collected for the researcher to know the various types of respondents dealing with. This enables the researcher to understand and be familiar with the background information of the respondents well.

Table 1 Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (100%)
Below 20 years	10	10
21 - 30 years	50	50
31-40 years	20	20
41-50 years	15	15
51 years and above	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2022

Table 1above shows the terms of age group of the respondents , 10 % of the respondents were below 20years,50% were between 21 to 30years, 20% were between 31 to 40 years,15% were between 41 to 50years and 5 % were 51 years and above.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frenquency	Percentage
Male	65	65
Female	35	35
Total	100	100

Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2022

Table 2 above shows that the respondents were hundred (100) in number. In order for the researcher to understand them better, a personal data of the respondents were collected. The table shows that sixty- five (65) of the respondents were male and thirty- five (35) female.

Table 3 seek out new Ideas about entrepreneurship education as a tool for graduate unemployment

Frenquency	percentage	valid percentage	cumulative	percentage
SA	31	67.4	67.4	67.4
A	5	10.9	10.9	78.6
D	10	21.7	21.7	100
TOTAL	46	100	100	

Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2022

Table 3 above shows that 31 (67.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they seek out new Ideas about entrepreneurship education as a tool for graduate unemployment, 5 (10.9%) agreed, while 10 (21.7%) strongly disagreed.

Table 4 Entrepreneurship education has help to reduce the number of unemployed graduate in Nasarawa State.

Frenquency	percentage	valid percentage	cumulative	percentage
SA	22	47.8	47.8	47.8
A	18	39.1	39.1	87.0
SD	2	4.3	4.3	91.3
D	4	8.7	8.7	100
TOTAL	46	100	100	

Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2022

Table 4 above shows that 22 (47.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that ICT in accounting helps to trace easily the level of malpractices in accounting works, 18 (39.1%) agreed, 2 (4.3%) strongly disagreed, while 4 (8.7%) disagreed.

Decision Rule: Reject H0 if P-value  $\leq$  .05, Otherwise Do Not Reject H0

H1 : There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and gainful employment in Nigeria.

Table 5 Chi-Square Test of Association

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	24.982 <sup>2</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.948	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.133	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	46		

## Decision

H<sub>0</sub> : There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nasarawa State

The P-value on which bases to reject the null hypothesis is [P-value < .001]. since the P-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude alternatively that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nasarawa State

## 4.2 Research Results and Discussions

There is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and gainful employment in Nigeria.

This implies that entrepreneurial education had a significant relationship with post-graduate job creation ability. More importantly, beneficiaries of entrepreneurial education instantly will create jobs as undergraduates while undergoing the course in the Tertiary Institutions. That is to say, the main concentration of this research is the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and job creation while student at school or upon graduation.

The finding in Onuma (2016) corroborated with Falola (2009) who reported that the National University Commission (NUC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) have been lauded over the introduction of entrepreneurial studies in the curriculum of Nigerian universities and polytechnics for job creation. The finding of the study is also in consonance with Illesanmi (2000) who confirmed that the position of entrepreneurial education is capable of creating entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur has the ability to seek and find business opportunities in his environment. Arguably, graduates/youths endowed with entrepreneurial skills through entrepreneurial education, acquires and utilizes strategy skills, planning, market skills, communication skills and more so the negotiation skills for employability, job creators and agents of economic progress.

Moreover, Ogundele and Abiola (2006), revealed that the wide-spread level of unemployment in the country could have been minimized if Nigerians of varying age groups and backgrounds were exposed to entrepreneurial education, training and development across levels. The quest for producing great and dynamic economy, in the 21st century, if Nigeria is not to be left behind the rest of the world in the march towards propensity demands that all hands must be utilized to produce entrepreneurial education, training and development for the general populace. In addition, Tende (2014) asserted that government policies and programs promote entrepreneurship and investment in new ventures. However, he found out that Nigeria's government credit policies and programs have no significant effect on the development of entrepreneurs in the country.

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations



Based on the findings, the study explored the causes of graduate unemployment and exposure of students to entrepreneurial education for the purposes of promoting entrepreneurship culture in the Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. The study concluded that there should be a paradigm shift from general education to integrated entrepreneurship education in the present realities for the need to develop and empower post-graduation opportunities in the society and at same time ameliorate some socio-economic problems, unemployment and other social vices prevalent among unemployed youths.

## 5.1 Recommendations

Based on the documentary evidence of graduate unemployment and the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National University Commission (NUC) programme and Entrepreneurship Education Centre (EEC) should make more deliberate efforts to identify entrepreneurship as strategic attempt to address graduate unemployment. This could be done by cultivating entrepreneurship culture among undergraduates as a remedy to escalating unemployment challenges among graduates of educational administration and there should be a linkage between seasoned lecturers and Industry/Guest lecturers on the application of different pedagogical approach in entrepreneurial educational studies in teaching and learning in the universities. The approach should emphasize simulation and role play experimentation, that is, exposure of students to grasp close to reality experiences.
2. Finally, the era of white collar job is gradually becoming over, these who wants to escape the scourge of unemployment in Nigeria should make all efforts to acquire entrepreneurial skills is necessary for job-creation that will guarantee self-employment.

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