

## ASSESSMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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### Abstract

*The concept of entrepreneurship has become a watchword among scholars and of general interest globally, because of that's potentials in ameliorating the increasing rate of graduate unemployment and its multiplier effect on a nation's economy. This paper is aimed at assessing the entrepreneurship education curriculum for graduate employability for national development. It posits an agenda of developing the entrepreneur from cradle to the grave which involves active participation of virtually all forms of institutions in the society. Review of some related literature pertaining to the subject matter was identified in the study; concept of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education curriculum, entrepreneurship and national development and entrepreneurship as a catalyst for employment and challenges in the area of curriculum development and implementation were also pointed out. In conclusion entrepreneurship education has been generally acknowledged as a panacea for graduate unemployment and recommendations were made that Entrepreneurs should form association that will enable them to help or assist each other when the need arises*

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship education, curriculum, graduate employment, and national development.

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### Introduction

Entrepreneurship education prepares the youths to be responsible and enterprising. Similar vein, Afolabi., Kareem., Okubanjo., Ogunbanjo., & Aninkan, (2017). viewed entrepreneurship education as all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. In essence, entrepreneurship education provides a platform for graduates to transform opportunities to business ventures and to manage those ventures to become a medium for job creation for themselves and others. Abisuga-Oyekunle., & Fillis,. (2017). maintained that it is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society. Galvão., Ferreira., & Marques,. (2018),

many universities claim that they offer entrepreneurship education at an advanced level whilst focusing on writing business plans, acquiring start-up capital and developing managerial skills, particularly nascent entrepreneurs. The curriculum content must be responsive enough to address the obvious short comings of present school system. This call for innovations in the school curriculum that will be responsive and relevant to solve the current and anticipated needs, problems and aspirations of the learner (Aminu,2019)..Unemployment of graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions has become a major national problem. The search for a job after graduation has become a source of frustration for graduates. Matthew, & Victo,

(2018) noted that Nigeria educational system failed to lay the foundation of economic freedom, manual skills and expertise necessary for successful industrial and agricultural development. Nigerian governments had put in place various programmes and measures ranging from N- Power, Covid- 19 palliative, survival fund, and National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to address the problem of graduate unemployment but all the programmes have not brought about the expected outcomes. This includes the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPED) which is still in operation in the country. In their contribution to the subject matter, Oyedeji, Alhassan, & Fatoki, (2019). expressed that all the programmes and measures put in place by successive governments so far have proved to be grossly ineffective in solving the problem of graduate employment in Nigeria.

Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without considerable investment in human capital. The Nigeria's teeming population plagued with unemployment can drastically be reduced through entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurship education therefore, seeks to provide students with skills, knowledge and motivation, as well as to effect attitudinal changes, necessary to encourage self-reliance through involvement in entrepreneurial activities. (Jones, Pickernell., Fisher, & Netana,2017). Through entrepreneurship education, young people learn organizational skills, time management, and leadership involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial education seeks to immerse people in real life experiences which encourage and empower them

to take ri <sup>Bashehu S, Mustapha A, Joseph S, Nwankwo C.U·Abdu G.B</sup> outcome and to become employers of labour than job seekers.

Entrepreneurship boosts economic growth by introducing innovative technologies, products, and services. Increased competition from entrepreneurs challenges existing firms to become more competitive and provide new job opportunities in the short and long term. The activities of entrepreneurs have been found to be capable of making impact on the economy of a nation and quality of life of the people through economic growth; employment generation and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population, which include women and the poor (Ndamu,2017). The governmental source of demand is primarily economic and is driven by the shift towards a post-Fordist economy, aimed at developing an entrepreneurial culture oriented to job creation (Hayter, & Nieweler, 2018). It is documented that most new jobs arise from entrepreneurial small firms (Diao, Kweka, & McMillan,2018).Unemployment is a rampant challenge in many communities and as such most people seeking employment depend on entrepreneurs to embark on new ventures and hire them.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education or enterprise education as it is sometimes called is that education which assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance rather than depending on the government for employment. Such an experience will in return produce graduates with self-confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic

development. Entrepreneurship education is According to Ibrahim (2011), the word

made of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. As such, it goes beyond business creation (Johannisson, 2018). It is about increasing student's ability to participate and respond to societal changes. Entrepreneurship education according to Mao, Morrison, & Andres Coca-Stefaniak, (2020). deals with those attitudes and skills that are necessary for the individual to respond to its environment in the process of conserving, starting and managing a business enterprise. This implies that entrepreneurship education prepares the individual to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his own business or that of other persons. (Magaji, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business. It aims at developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, competencies, and disposition that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing a business (Serifat, 2019). On the other hand, entrepreneurship education can be said to focus on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviors, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts. This type of education is open to all and not exclusively the domain of the some self-acclaimed business gurus. This is true in the sense that these behaviors can be practiced, developed and learned therefore it is important to expose all students to entrepreneurship education (Linton, & Klinton, 2019).

'entrepreneur' can be taken to mean an individual who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods and the result of one effort in entrepreneurship may be the creation of a new organization or revitalizing an existing organization in response to a perceived opportunity. Thus, acts of entrepreneurship create specific environment within which innovations build on themselves, leading to continually increasing productivity (Lans, Seuneke, & Klerkx, 2020). In school context, entrepreneurship education can be divided into three aims that are: learn to understand entrepreneurship, learn to become entrepreneurial and learn to become an entrepreneur (Ilonen, & Heinonen, 2018). In modern day vocabulary, any individual industry or business leader with innovative and creative business abilities is described as an entrepreneur or someone who engages in entrepreneurship (Obschonka. & Fisch, 2018). The entrepreneur is the one who ventures into the business of organizing and managing, while entrepreneurship is the service rendered by the entrepreneur (Bird, 2019).. The entrepreneur is the 'person' who perceives a business opportunity and takes advantage of the scarce resources to meet with unlimited opportunities profitably. The entrepreneur bears non-insurable risks and directs human and material resources to achieve economic, social, and financial goals of the enterprise.

The understanding of entrepreneurship was not clear until the 20th century. This giant leap is credited to the works of economist Joseph Schumpeter in the 1930s. Most credit definitely goes to Schumpeter who described the

entrepreneur as a person who is willing and able to convert new ideas or invention into a successful innovation (Schumpeter, 1942). Unlike most authors who described the entrepreneur as someone who bears risk, Schumpeter disagrees. The authored noted that it is the capitalist that bears the risk. The early scholars in the field claim that entrepreneur reflects a kind of person willing to put his or her career and financial security on the line and take risks in the name of an idea. Such individuals spend much time as well as capital (wealth created in other to create further wealth) on an uncertain venture. According to ENE, (2018). Uncertainty can be classified into three dimensions viz-a-viz risk which are measurable statistically; ambiguity (hard to measure statistically) and true uncertainty which is impossible to estimate or predict statistically.

### **Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum**

Despite the fact that the debate surrounding whether or not entrepreneurship can be taught continuously, there has been considerable interest in entrepreneurship education over the last couple of decades (Toscher, 2019). Conceptual and contextual convergence is of paramount importance to the ongoing debate of whether entrepreneurs are born or made and to issues surrounding entrepreneurship education and its impact upon entrepreneurial activities (Uljen, & Ylimaki, 2017). Curriculum for entrepreneurship education is being developed, refined and debated (Byun, Sung, Park., & Choi, 2018). The rationale for developing and refining the curriculum is based on empirical evidence that it has concentrated on preparing students for the “take-a-job” option instead of “make-a-job” option and there is therefore an urgent need for

young people to be trained and educated in the field of entrepreneurship. This will hopefully encourage them to become job creators instead of job seekers once they leave the educational system (Jesselyn and Mitchell, 2006).

Notwithstanding inherent research flaws and generalization problems, the continuous expansion in entrepreneurship education has contributed to the emergence of a relevant curriculum, together with a range of related delivery platforms and assessment methods. (Uljen, & Ylimaki, 2017). These authors, further state that there are considerable variations in course design, content and assessment, however, have ignited acrimonious debates amongst various stakeholders, mainly in relation to course appropriateness and cost-effectiveness. The challenge to educators will be to craft courses, programmes and major fields of study that meet the rigors of academia while keeping a reality-based focus and entrepreneurial climate in the learning environment (Barnard, Pittz, & Vanevenhoven, 2018). The author further asserts that entrepreneurship is an ongoing process that requires myriad of talents, skills and knowledge, leading to unique pedagogies capable of stimulating and imparting knowledge simultaneously. However, Lorusso, & Richards, (2018). are of the view that there is nothing further removed from the truth and numerous ontological, theoretical, pedagogical and practical challenges remain impediment for entrepreneurship to make some strides. At the theoretical levels, there is no consensus regarding what entrepreneurship is.

## **Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian**

Within the framework of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), the primary goals of university education in Nigeria are to:

Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;

Develop the intellectual proper values for the survival of the individual and society;

Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;

Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;

Promote and encourage scholarship and community service; Forge and cement national unity; and Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Items above of the preceding goals are specific to development of entrepreneurship skills among undergraduates. The efforts of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in this regard are a formidable driving force for entrepreneurship education. University education is under extreme pressure to explicitly prove to society that it can make effective and efficient usage of their resources and that their activities bear relevance to the employment market, aspects only really achievable through modern management acting in accordance with the prevailing environment (Taylor, & Bhasme, 2018). This is the area universities have to demonstrate entrepreneurship capabilities in their programmes so that their graduates would largely become job creators and not job seekers.

Unfortunately, several challenges currently face Nigerian universities and other institutions in their bid to properly entrench entrepreneurship education as important curriculum issue across all disciplines. According to Hermann. & Bossle, (2020), these challenges include: Lack of lecturers with practical entrepreneurial training and consciousness. Although lecturers' awareness of entrepreneurship education has grown in the last five years and attitudes towards the new curriculum has become more positive, majority of lecturers still do not know enough the aims, contents and work method of entrepreneurship education. Consequently, they may unable to effectively impart the desired knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to their students.

The task of drawing up course content to be included in the curriculum of entrepreneurship-related education programme in Nigerian universities will require a very long educational process (Marques, Santos, Galvão, Mascarenhas, & Justino, 2018).

Entrepreneurship education is capital intensive and both lecturers and students need money to practice the theory of initiating, establishing and running enterprises. This undoubtedly constitute constraints which subsequently frustrate the integration of the entrepreneurship in academic programmes in Nigerian universities.

Ikebuaku, & Dinbabo, (2018) highlighted nine basic factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in our universities in Nigeria. These are poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition; poor enterprising culture; lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment; unavailability of relevant funds; non-inclusion of entrepreneurship program in the

general school curricula; poor societal attitude to technical and vocational education development; inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses; insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy; and poor planning and execution of processes of action. However, one can state categorically that several of these factors are gradually being tackled by the Federal Government of Nigeria under its relevant agencies.

### **Entrepreneurship and National Development**

According to Coulibaly, Erbao, & Mekongcho. (2018). entrepreneurship through its developmental impact on individuals plays a fundamental role in the development of nations and their economies. Whereas several entrepreneurs are naturally endowed, others require some form of tutoring, coaching, or outright formal academic training programs to make them thick. Entrepreneurship education therefore should be seen as a conscious effort to develop the mind to think innovatively in order to enable the individual become creative and add value to human development. (Umoren, Akpanuko, & Akpan, 2018). An individual that acquires entrepreneurial education creates for himself or herself a unique opportunity to think out of the box always, and drive his or her evolutionary process to achieve economic independence. Once this goal is actualized, it becomes safe to assert that entrepreneurship education has met its goal of transforming the nation by developing the capacity of individual citizens of that nation. Entrepreneurship itself, aside from its usefulness to the individual, at the macro level, it enhances economic performance

and fosters economic development through the following channels:

**Entrepreneurs create new businesses:** It is the innovative spirit in the Entrepreneur that leads to the creation of new businesses and new products (Park, 2017). The fearless search by the Entrepreneur is what has given us electricity, computer, cell phones, etc. These new products and the technological advancement that breeds them are particularly helpful in improving people's well-being and their standard of living. New businesses create jobs, Increases level of disposable income: New businesses intensify competition:

### **Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Employment**

Governments worldwide have been under pressure to both cut fiscal expenditures and reduce unemployment, especially following the 2007-08 global financial crises. Over a similar period, there has also been an increased focus on the need for governments to pursue inclusive growth, rather than merely focusing on macroeconomic indicators like GDP. These trends were reflected in the eighth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which called for promoting "inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all (Park, 2017). Inclusive growth occurs when economic prosperity is long-term, sustainable, and reaches a broad spectrum of a population. Here, economic growth is viewed as successful when it is diversified across sectors, inclusive of various groups in the labor force, attributable to productive employment (not just rents), and led by the market (Momani, 2017).

Globally, there has been an increasing interest in entrepreneurship because of its inherent value in increasing national prosperity and reducing the scourge of unemployment among young people, especially graduates of tertiary institutions of learning. In Nigeria, entrepreneurial studies have been brought to the fore in the curriculum of university education by the National University Commission by making courses in entrepreneurship compulsory for undergraduates in the country (Kolade, 2018). This initiative is being pursued vigorously because of the potentials it holds for the incubation and execution of entrepreneurial ideas in young people and the multiplier effect it could have on Nigeria's economy (Kavitha, Anantharaman, and Ramanathan,(2013). Nevertheless, the extent to which this educational policy would succeed would depend on several factors: The level and scope of entrepreneurial education should be stimulating enough to boost the entrepreneurial attitude of undergraduates such as to enable them to startup businesses of their own upon graduation.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship education has been generally acknowledged as a panacea for graduate unemployment. In Nigeria efforts is currently being made to encourage entrepreneurship among graduates through entrepreneurship education and training. This approach would enhance creativity, ingenuity, and innovativeness in graduates to start small ventures of their own after graduation. Entrepreneurship is not gender specific. Thus both male and female should benefit from programmes and opportunities which are capable

of inculcating the entrepreneurial spirit in young graduates

### **Recommendations**

1. Nigerian governments need to include vocational training and entrepreneurial in the education system of their respective states in primary and secondary schools so that their people are exposed to entrepreneurship from childhood. In addition, network programs and mentorship should be instituted in their various high institution where experienced executives (presently or previous employed) can give backing to businesses for limited periods by working alongside and training staff on major projects.
2. Governments need to provide incentives such as subsidies and tax holiday to entrepreneurs who provide strong employee value propositions to prospective professional staff, like specialized training or stock option programs.
3. The government should make loan available at lower rate of interest to entrepreneurs, so that the problem of inadequate capital faced by the entrepreneurs based on the respondent's view will be alleviated or address.
4. The government (Federal, State and Local Government) should provide adequate social amenities such as electricity, good and other facilities which are require facilitating entrepreneurial activities for more efficiency.

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