



Entrepreneurship Education in Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria: A Surest Way to Curb Unemployment

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Abstract. Entrepreneurship education is believed to be a powerful instrument that will reduce the unemployment scourge experienced in Nigeria today. In recent times graduates of tertiary institutions roam major cities and urban areas in search of non-existent white-collar jobs. This national economic woe is not peculiar to any particular discipline in tertiary institution in the country. In the light of this scenario the paper examined entrepreneurship education in business education programme in tertiary institutions in the country. Entrepreneurial training will expose business education students to foundation knowledge and skills required for setting up private business after graduation. Based on this fact, the paper highlights the objectives, relevance, personal characteristics of the entrepreneur, and entrepreneurship investment opportunities in business education. The paper concludes that integrating entrepreneurship training in business education programme will make the recipients to become more skilled and self-confident to start their own business. The study recommends that business education departments in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria should diversify their curriculum to give room for balanced theoretical and practical training; business education students guided on how to establish business plans and pursue goals related to entrepreneurship knowledge and skill among others.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship skills, Relevance, Characteristics, unemployment, investment opportunities.

1. Introduction

Education is the sum total of the experiences that enlightens individual's mind, increase his power of knowledge, foster insight, develop abilities and

attitudes and strengthens one's will power. Education has been widely accepted as a crucial factor for economic and industrial development of any nation. It is one of the most powerful instruments or devices needed by man for his perpetual improvement or eventual destruction. Education can heal or kill, it can become a constructive destructive weapon, which depends on what type of education is provided and who provides it. The educational system in today's world is ever changing, one which helps to develop an individual's attitude, conduct skills and competence that can be functional to create value in a range of contexts and environments either from the state-owned organisations and universities in which business education is not left out.

The unprecedented level of youth unemployment in Nigeria has contributed immensely to the worsening problem of poverty among the populace. Unemployment exists because most of the product of the educational system are job seekers rather than job creators. Unemployment leads to frustration and disillusionment which may result in crime or drug abuse. The problem of unemployment has worsened as millions of graduates of tertiary institutions have not gained employment over the years. This is due to the fact that our educational system is liberal in nature and hardly meet specific occupational needs of the world of work. Lioyde and Tokunbo (2015) cited in Sani (2017) opined that the cause of increased rate of unemployment amongst university graduates in Nigeria is manifested in lack of functional education that will bring about the training of the abundant human resources to be creative, innovative, entrepreneurial and business opportunity seekers that will transform opportunities and material resources into goods and services for sustainability.

Udo (2016) defined business education as that part of vocational and technology education programme that provides the necessary business and economic education, knowledge, skills and competencies needed to teach business subjects in secondary schools; colleges and universities. Business education is a course that prepares students to improve on the jobs or in business and equally prepares them to manage their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy (Inegbedion, Njoku, Umoru, and Liadik, 2018). Business education prepares individuals for gainful employment in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude (Saidu, Dahiru and Suleiman, 2017). According to (Udo, 2016) entrepreneurship education is one of the components of business education. It is therefore pertinent to note that individuals' activities that convert idea into economic opportunities lie at the middle of entrepreneurship.

Business education is an aspect of vocational education which equipped individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performance in the business world either as a paid worker or for self-employment (Ezeabi, 2017). However, the present-day economic realities have brought to focus inadequacies of our current educational curriculum. The over dependence of graduates of tertiary institutions on government and private establishment for employment opportunities have further exacerbated the Nigeria unemployment rate as jobs are too limited to meet the teeming population of our youthful graduates (Matiki, 2021). This has therefore necessitated a paradigm shift in our educational system to tackle these contemporary economic woes plaguing Nigeria. The introduction of the entrepreneurship education for all undergraduates in tertiary institutions in the country will be a welcome development.

Shuaibu, Ameh and Kadiru (2020) affirmed that business education is an educational programme that equips recipients with functional and saleable skills. Thus, entrepreneurship education in business education should be seen as an innovation in the programme. It will assist young graduates to become job creators instead of job seekers. It is therefore, believed that integrating entrepreneurship education in business education programme in tertiary institutions will expose students to relevant occupational skills that will make them become very creative and self-reliant, to establish and run their own business upon graduation. Entrepreneurship education in business education programme in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria will assist to harness the business potentials of graduates of business education, thus strengthening

them to enterprise development. A country with high rate of unemployment is prone to social vices and other unwholesome activities of the youth. Youth restiveness prevalent in our society in recent times is largely attributed to the high rate of unemployment. The fact remains that the youths who are used to perpetuate unwholesome activities in any community are mostly the unemployed and such activities would be reduced if these youths are engaged in paid or self-employment.

2. Concept of Business Education

Business education is a programme of study designed to train competent and productive workforce that will be employable or become self-employed. Igboke (2014) defined business education as a dynamic field of study geared towards preparing youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. On the other hand, education about business involves preparation of youths and adults for intelligent and effective consumption of economic goods and services offered to the society in our enterprise economy. Business education will produce responsible and self-reliant citizens.

Njoku (2010) noted that business education is that aspect of educational training that helps the individual to acquire relevant skills needed for a living. Osuala (2014) described business education as an essential part of the preparation of youths for life and living. He further remarked that business education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: (i) office education – a vocational programme for office career through initial refresher and upgrading education and (ii) general education programme to provide students with information and competences which are needed by all in managing personal business affair and in using the services of business.

Agumezie (2016) stated that business education is a programme in education which prepares students for entering into and advancement in jobs within the business. Aliyu (2015) noted that business education is an educational programme which involves the acquisition of skills knowledge and competencies which makes the recipient/beneficiary proficient. Ndelegkate and Onoh (2018) affirmed that the teaching of business education is not gender sensitive as both men and women can teach and equally learn the course. At the end of their training business education students are expected to become competent and dynamic business teachers, office administrators, business men and women that will effectively function in the business world.

Ochu, Ayangi and Agiru (2019) opined that business education is an aspect of vocational education which provides skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes necessary for effective employment in any specific business occupation. Thus, business education breeds and constantly maintain adequate manpower with skills needed for productive ventures. Similarly, Ochu et al (2019) asserted that business education produces manpower that possesses the required knowledge, skills and attitudes for harnessing other resources and bringing them into goods and services demanded by the society for satisfaction of their wants.

Business education is however, broadly divided into three areas namely marketing/distributive, secretarial and accounting education. It is a course that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and it also prepares students to handle their business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy.

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) as cited in Ochu et al (2019) business education is a medium by which people can acquire office and business skills. However, business education curriculum is designed to build in the learner different employable skills and knowledge that would enable the individual earn a living by becoming entrepreneurs, employee and self-reliant. Atakpa (2024), reiterated that business education is a conglomerate of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business. However, any nation that cannot provide for its citizens the basic skills for employment or self-employment will continue to experience all forms of societal vices and challenges.

3. Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship can be conceptualized as the ability to see opportunities available, to bring about changes by starting a new organization or revitalising existing organization in response to identified opportunities and needs of the society. Entrepreneurship education prepares youths to be responsible and entering individuals who become entrepreneurial thinkers, by exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learning from the outcomes. Entrepreneurship involves the capacity to find out and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources and implement actions to take advantage of the opportunities while guided by high achievement and motivation.

The Oxford English dictionary described an entrepreneur as one who undertakes an enterprise, acting as intermediary between capital and labour. Atakpa (2009), while citing Kathryn and David (1994) opined that the function that is specific to entrepreneur is the ability to take factors of production, land, labour, capital and use them to produce goods and services. Thus, the entrepreneur perceives opportunities that other business executives do not see or care about. Agonmuo (2009) described an entrepreneur as a person who undertakes and develop a new enterprise at some risk of failure or loss. He is the one who shoulders the risk and uncertainty of using economic resources in a new way and one with the right motivation, energy and ability to build something by his or her effort in order to satisfy his customers and make profit

Entrepreneurship may be seen as the attitude, skill and actions of an individual starting a new business. An individual entrepreneur is creative and has the ability to take risk. He is good at recognizing opportunity, analyzing it, making decision to act on it; gathering resources and implementing a programme that will lead to the emergence of a new enterprise and profits. This means that an entrepreneur requires personal skills at judgement, patience, endurance and ability to work with people. Owolabi (2011) noted that entrepreneurship studies is all activities aimed to foster entrepreneurial mindset, attitudes and skills, covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, startup, growth and innovation. He further described entrepreneurship as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them.

Nwabama (2019) viewed entrepreneurship as the identification of the general characteristics of entrepreneurs and how potential entrepreneurs can be trained in management techniques needed for effective survival of an organization after acquisition of occupational skills. The central objective of entrepreneurship education is to promote self-employment independently and increasing the rate of economic development (Mbah and Imaku, 2017). The scholars affirmed that entrepreneurship is the ability, willingness and urge to identify a business opportunity and utilize available resources to make profit.

Arogundade (2011), citing Nwagwu (2007) stated that entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together the factors of production which include land, labour and capital so as to provide a product or services for public consumption. Thus, the operational definition of entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of a person to acquire educational skills, to explore and

exploit investment opportunities and manage a useful business enterprise. Similarly, Ebele (2021) as cited in Orhorhoro (2022) asserted that entrepreneurship education is a potent and viable tool for self-employment, job and wealth creation. It entails the spirit of self-reliance with the ability of the learner to impact on the growth and development of an enterprise through technical and vocational training. Thus, entrepreneurship is the ability to see opportunity, assemble the necessary inputs with the willingness to take entrepreneurial risk to run an enterprise.

2.1 Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a functional education centered on making graduates to be job producers rather than job seekers.

Oborah (2009) listed the objectives of entrepreneurship education to include the following:

- To offer functional education to the youths which will enable them become self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profits and become job producers.
- To provide youths with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities
- To Provide young graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty become possible and easy.
- To Provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit graduate who will receive training and tutoring in skills relevant to management of small business.
- To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas
- Provide graduates with skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.

However, the essence of entrepreneurship education is to produce entrepreneurs who can make use of their initiative and innovative skills to invent business and manage same in order to escape the frustration of unemployment and poverty.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Skills

Entrepreneurship skills are the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gain (Olagunje, 2014). Entrepreneurial skills are also transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, attitudes, and commercial understanding required by the 21st

century workplace necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education. This exposes the relevance of entrepreneurial skills, both as an end in itself and as a means to an end, hence its capacity to enhance one's potentials for learning. Entrepreneurial skills can be defined as an ability to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the necessary rewards, personal satisfaction and independence (Histrich, Richard, Peters, and Michael, 2012).

Entrepreneurship skill is the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise for the sustenance of one's self and the society in general. Udo-Aka (2018) noted that entrepreneurial skills training helps the youth to develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as the ability to take initiative, creativity, seek out and identify business opportunities, develop budgets and forecast resource needs, understand various options for acquiring capital and trade-off associated with each option, and communicate effectively and market one's self and one's idea. Entrepreneurship skill training is a deliberate attempt to provide trainees with relevant knowledge, appropriate skills, competences and right attitude to effectively run and manage a business outfit. However, entrepreneurial skill training programmes provide the basics of starting and operating small businesses.

Orhorhoro (2022) stated that a person who is well trained in entrepreneurial skills comes out to be a successful entrepreneur and a productive member of the society rather than being a parasitic consumer. He believed that an entrepreneur needs a combination of these skills to make himself or herself really entrepreneurial, self-reliant and productive. He further remarked that these skills are inherent in the four business education options namely: Office Management and Technology (OTM) Accounting option, Marketing option and Entrepreneurial option.

Hayton (2015) opined that entrepreneurial skills is the capacity to recognize and seize market possibilities and client demands. According to Hayton, a more comprehensive set of leadership and management abilities is required for effective business performance including these entrepreneurial qualities. Based on this study, entrepreneurs should focus their attention on two categories of abilities including (a) planning skills and (b) interpersonal skills.

- **Planning Skills:** Planning skills in entrepreneurship is referred to as the ability of the entrepreneur to formulate, develop and

carry out their business venture. These abilities are crucial for the accomplishment of any entrepreneurial activity because they aid the business owner in establishing clear goals, allocating resources effectively and navigating the difficulties and uncertainties associated with beginning and expanding a company. The following are some of the essential facets of planning abilities for entrepreneurs.

- **Vision and Goal Setting:** The capacity of entrepreneurs to define or identify specific attainable company goals they would like to achieve in the future is referred to as vision and goal setting skills. In this sense, business owners must have a distinct vision of the outcomes they hope to achieve. The goals that result from the vision should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable relevant and time bound). Setting goals that are realistic will keep business owners motivated and focused. When defining precise goals, the manager should recognize that doing the right thing is more important than being able to do things correctly, which is why it is crucial to have a defined and constrained number of goals.
- **Business Planning:** It is essential to have a specific and limited goals because while creating specific goals, the manager should understand that doing the right thing is more important than being able to do things correctly.
- **Marketing Skills:** According to Ezeani and Ezeomoyi (2012) Marketing expertise is a crucial skill that affects a company's ability to succeed or fail. They also suggest that in order for graduates to become successful entrepreneurs, rigorous training is needed because marketing is a very difficult and illusive activity.
- **Resource mobilization skills:** Sani (2017) opined that the capacity to grasp the process of harnessing the various resources (materials, finance, people and time) is a way to accomplish what the organization set out to achieve entails resources so that they may focus on dominating the market. Effective management is essential. This includes allocating time, money and human capital to reach the business goals. Thus, entrepreneurs must prioritize where to allocate their resources.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Interpersonal skills refer to the ability of an entrepreneur to effectively interact, communicate and build

positive relationship with people including team members, suppliers, investors and other stakeholders. These skills are critical for the success of the entrepreneur because they influence various aspects of the entrepreneurial journey from team collaboration and customer relations to securing funding and partnership.

Here are some key interpersonal skills important to the entrepreneur.

- **Communication skills**

Entrepreneurs require great communication skills. Strong communication skills are essential for entrepreneurs to convert their ideas, vision and goals clearly and persuasively. This include both verbal and written communication as well as active listening to understand the means and concern of others.

- **Leadership skills**

Entrepreneurs often need to lead and respect their team. Effective leadership involves setting a positive example, motivating others and providing guidance and direction.

- **Team building skills**

Building and maintaining a cohesive and productive team is critical for the success of a business. Entrepreneur should have the ability to select the right team members, delegate task and foster a collaborative work environment.

- **Conflict resolution**

Conflict can arise in any business. Entrepreneurs needs to be skilled at resolving conflict diplomatically and finding solutions to benefit all parties involved.

- **Negotiating skills**

Negotiating skills are vital when dealing with suppliers, customers, investors and partners. Entrepreneurs must be able to negotiate deals, contracts and terms that are favorable to their business.

- **Networking skills**

Building a strong professional network is essential for entrepreneurs to access resources, gain industry insights and identify opportunities. Effective networking involves establishing and nourishing relationships with other professionals.

- **Customer relation**

Entrepreneurs should be able to build strong relationship with their customers. These include understanding their needs, addressing concerns and providing excellent customer service.

The possession of these entrepreneurial skills by business education graduates will not only help them to gain employment but also help them to progress within an enterprise as entrepreneurs so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions.

4. Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education

The economic development of any nation demands active participation in all economic activities by its people. This could be achieved through entrepreneurship development education. Thus, the more people are trained to use their innovative, creative and initiative abilities to be self-employed, the more the realization of the vision of entrepreneurship education will be actualized.

a. Entrepreneurship education is an avenue for discovering knowledge, acquiring human and social skills that are relevant for participatory development and change. It is designed to inspire and provide potential entrepreneurs into the field of knowledge of current and prospective entrepreneurs.

b. Entrepreneurship education aims at supporting pupil's knowledge, skills and attitudes of a kind they need in their studies or later in their working life. It exposes them to recognize the role of people's enterprise, desires, active and creative as the starting point for entrepreneurship.

c. Entrepreneurship education help student experiences various aspects of business ownership while understanding the basis of the economy, career opportunities that results, and the needs to master skills to be successful in a free market economy.

d. Entrepreneurship education enables the recipient stand on their own because of the knowledge, skill and creative ability they have gained which are also needed for self-employment without relying on government for paid jobs.

e. Entrepreneurship education will lead to increased employment, reduce poverty level, bring about entrepreneurs working together for common good and consequently establishing a stronger economy.

f. Entrepreneurship abilities and skills will contribute effectively to economic activities leading to self-employment and creation of jobs. This will help to expand opportunities for others to be employed.

g. Entrepreneurial studies will produce entrepreneurs that will stimulate rural economic and industrial development thereby contributing to the development of rural and less developed areas.

h. The acquisition of entrepreneurship skills will be beneficial to the society: entrepreneurs can recognize a genuine opportunity when they come across one.

i. Finally, entrepreneurship development is a reliable economic measure in tackling the problem of unemployment in any economy. It can be oriented towards different ways of realizing opportunities. The most obvious form is that of starting new business which is generally referred to as start-up company.

5. Personal Characteristics of the Entrepreneur

An entrepreneur is a person or individual with the capacity, ability and courage to take calculated risks. He is innovative and can establish and manage a business for purpose of profit, growth and wealth creation in an economy. Some of the important characteristics often attributed to successful entrepreneurs are listed below:

5.1 Characteristics Traits

a. **Self Confidence:** Confident, independent individuality

b. **Task-result oriented:** Need for achievement, profit oriented, persistence, perseverance, determination, hard work, drive, energy, initiative.

c. **Risk taker:** Risk taking ability like challenges.

d. **Leadership:** Leadership behaviour, gets along with others, responsive to suggestions and criticism.

e. **Originality:** Innovative, creative, flexible (openness of mind), resourceful, versatile and knowledge.

f. **Future oriented:** Foresight perceptive and imaginative.

However, Schumpeter in Oguonu and Okpukpara (2019) suggested the five categories of behaviour that characterize an entrepreneurial venture viz introduction of new goods, introduction of new methods of production, opening of new market, opening of new sources of supply and industrial re-organization. He is of the view that innovation is the key element of the entrepreneurial activity and maintained that one behaves as an entrepreneur only when carrying out innovation.

6. Entrepreneurial Employment Opportunities in Business Education

Business education is a major component of Vocational Education emphasized by the National Policy on Education in Nigeria. The goal of business education as well as other aspects of Vocational Education is the provision of skills to youths in an effort to reduce poverty, unemployment, urban migration and ignorance in economic affairs (Nwokolo, 2000). In consonance with this view Aina (2002) stated that business education is majorly concerned with the development of an individual with emphasis on personal skills and attitudes, communication and computation skills, technological literacy, employability skills, broad and specific occupational skills and knowledge.

Entrepreneurship education offered under Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria will expose business education students to the numerous self-employment opportunities prevalent in the discipline. The various entrepreneurial options in

private enterprise and investment options in business education programme that will curb unemployment rate and reduce poverty as well as enhance economic survival are listed below:

S/N	Description of Investment	Requirement
1	Establishment of computer business centre	Personal effort, Partnership, Government assistance
2	Establishment of an internet centre	Personal effort, Partnership, Government assistance
3	Establishment of book binding centre	Personal efforts, Computer training in decoration, Co-operative assistance
4	Establishment of accounting firms (through joint effort)	Agreement with intending partners, Fund raising requiring government assistance
5	Distribution/ sales of office stationaries	Personal effort, co-operation, credit facility
6	Printing and selling of recharge cards	Personal effort, Co-operative Credit facility
7	Desktop publishing, production of invitation cards, envelope for harvests, wedding programmes and book-typesetting	Provision of conducive business environment, Start-up facilities and support
8	Establishment of private commercial schools	Personal efforts, Government credit facility
9	Establishment of Secretarial training, centre/provision of secretarial services	Personal efforts, provision of enabling environment by government
10	Provision of leasing services (e.g office machines)	Personal efforts, Credit facility
11	Marketing of Computer accessories/advisory services	Personal effort, Co-operative facility
12	Distribution/marketing of all categories of consumer goods	Personal effort, fund raising
13	Establishment of retail outlet	Personal efforts, site location, customer relations and Fund raising
14	Establishment of photocopying centre	Personal effort, Fund raising
15	Office decoration/ Ergonomics consults	Personal effort, vocational training in decoration, government assistance

Culled from Oduma and Ndinechi 2007

The above table has been carefully designed to showcase a cluster of private self -investment or entrepreneurship development options in business education. If business education graduates can choose from one of these options and with government intervention, I strongly believed that it will help to reduce unemployment drastically and eradicate poverty. In this direction, Oduma (2009) noted that the increasing attention that entrepreneurship is receiving is not quite surprising because the challenges of living posed by global economic recession leaves nobody in doubt that one has to create something new with value, different and attractive to increase ones financial status and to have a living that is worth it.

However, exploiting and harnessing, these entrepreneurship opportunities in business education requires creativity and innovation. Creativity and innovation therefore, underscores the imperative or objectives of the discipline especially in this era of graduate unemployment ravaging the country. Individual creativity and inventiveness is a desirable aspect of education that must be put into perspective. Innovation is the transformation of an idea into a new or improved saleable product or operational process in industry, commerce or business in general. This consists of:

- Generation of new ideas.
- Application of knowledge to achieve a specific end.

- Refinement of existing models (goods/services) for use.
- Restructuring of technology to suit the environment; and generating new ideas in its application.

Okpan (2011) while citing Popham (1974) remarked that entrepreneurship education is meant to inculcate into the individual what it takes to effectively and efficiently harness and utilize the available human, material and financial resources for the production of goods and services. The table in the previous page also shows that the skills acquired in any area of business education like office education, distributive/marketing education and accounting education will promote training in entrepreneurship as well as enable graduates establish small businesses on their own.

7. Conclusion

It is common knowledge in our society today that paid employment (white collar jobs) is hard to come by in recent times. It is equally obvious that the trend of unemployment is not peculiar to any particular discipline in our tertiary institutions. With all the craving opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship education is now widely believed to be a viable alternative to non-existent paid employment in our society. Hence, there is need for its integration in all disciplines or areas of specialization.

8. Recommendations

1. Business Education Departments in Tertiary Institutions should diversify their curriculum to give room for balanced theoretical and practical business training. And business education students guided on how to establish business plans and pursue goals related to entrepreneurship knowledge and skills.
2. Entrepreneurship development courses introduced in tertiary institutions should be made more functional and students exposed to practical skills and work activities as this will make them believe in dignity of labour where educational programmes are planned for work. This will make the youths to have interest in becoming productive members of the society rather than engaging in social vices.
3. The government should endeavour to equip all departments offering business education in tertiary institutions with functional/learning facilities especially as it affects new technological equipments used in the modern office.
4. On-campus small ventures should be organized and students made to be stakeholders and to participate in establishing and running such ventures.

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