

Assessment of Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation among University Graduates in Nigeria

Olufemi Adetayo¹, Akinsanya Oke^{2*}, and Olusegun Aderonmu³

1. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

2. Department of General Studies, The Ibarapa Polytechnic, P.M.B. 1015 Eruwa, Oyo State, Nigeria

3. Department Business Administration and Management, The Ibarapa Polytechnic Eruwa, Oyo state.

Abstract

The study investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment generation and the effect of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on entrepreneurial performances. It also examined the impact of the university attended on employment generation among Nigerian graduates. Survey research design was employed for the study. 72 graduates' entrepreneurs which form our respondents were selected from 6 Local government Areas (LGAs) of Oyo State, South West, Nigeria, through the use of multi-stage sampling technique. Primary data were used for the study and were gathered through the use of structured questionnaire. The relationship among entrepreneurship education, training, university type, employment generation and entrepreneurs' performances were tested using t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results showed that majority (82.6%) of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurial education empowered them to start a business of their own ($r=0.826$, $p < 0.05$). Also, the results indicated that skill acquisition by majority (61.4%) of the respondents had improved their performance ($r=0.614$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the results showed that there exist significant differences between types of university attended and employment generation among the graduates' entrepreneurs. The study concluded that increased entrepreneurial education and training had led to increased employment generation among university graduates in Nigeria.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Training, Employment Generation and Entrepreneurial Performances

1.0. Introduction

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria has reached a worrisome level. Realizing this, the Federal Government of Nigeria has initiated several measures and policies aimed at reducing poverty and unemployment among the masses particularly youths. To achieve this, the Federal Government through National Universities Commission and other regulatory bodies directed all tertiary institutions to include entrepreneurial studies in their curriculum. Entrepreneurship has been described as an antidote to unemployment and youth restiveness because entrepreneurial activities have been found to be capable of making positive contribution to the economy and quality of life of the people of a nation (Adejumo, 2000). Entrepreneurship education and training entails philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges. Several studies confirmed the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth; employment generation; and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population which include women and the poor (Oluremi and Agboola, 2011).

The need for Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria becomes more imperative in view of the rapid expansion of the educational system occasioned by the deregulation of education industry in 1999. Presently, Nigeria has 124 Universities of which Federal Government owned 37 while State Government and Private controlled 37 and 50 respectively (National Universities Commission 2012). Every year these institutions turn out graduates which led to increase in entrance to the labour market without corresponding job creation. The unemployment situation in Nigeria is rising at a geometrical proportion largely due to unfriendly environment which repels investment. Despite various intervention programmes by the Federal Government of Nigeria such as establishment of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) problem of unemployment remains unabated. Realizing the failure of Federal Government in creating employment, several States and Local governments have also introduced Entrepreneurship centres and Women and Youth Empowerment Schemes in which these sets of people are trained to acquire one skill or the other and the participants were given a stipend or an interest free loan to start a cottage or small business at the end of the programme. The main purpose of these schemes was to reduce the rate of unemployment in their respective states.

It is a known fact in the literature that entrepreneurship remains the gate way to sustainable wealth creation (Ogundele, 2000) and that if a nation desires to move out of the disturbing high level of unemployment and ravaging level of poverty, adequate attention must be given to the growth of entrepreneurship (Matanmi and Awodun, 2005). We are not inundated about the importance of entrepreneurship education to successful employment generation. Omolayo (2006) refers entrepreneurship education to structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refers to the concept, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Also, entrepreneurial orientation is described as the development of entrepreneurial skills, effective and efficient application of the skills in management of business to create a significant difference from other business, recognizing the skill and allowing it to function effectively. Several studies on entrepreneurship in Nigeria had focused on its contribution to economic growth, innovation and resource allocation as well as poverty alleviation while little attention has been paid to effects of entrepreneurship training and education on employment generation. This study therefore provides an empirical investigation into the extent of the impact of entrepreneurship education and training on employment generation and entrepreneurial performance. In view of the above the following hypotheses were postulated;

H₀: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment generation.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance.

H₀: There no significant relationship between type of University attended and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria.

2.0. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In defining Entrepreneurship, it is important to note that there are as many definitions entrepreneurship as there are scholars of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship involves identifying a problem (need) and turning it to opportunity (creation of product/service) through research with a view to satisfy the need and identifying customers who are able and willing to pay to have the problem solved. Corroborating this view, Hill and McGowan (1999) opined that, entrepreneurship is a process which involves the effort of an individual (or individuals) in identifying viable business opportunities in an environment and obtaining and managing the resources needed to exploit those opportunities. In business management, Entrepreneurship is regarded as the “prime mover” of a successful enterprise just as a leader in any organization must be the environmental change agents (Anyadike, Emeh and Uka 2012). Entrepreneurship is a perceptiveness to change and the entrepreneur is one, who always searches for change, responds to and exploits it as an opportunity (Drucker, 1985). Tijani-Alawiye (2004) defines entrepreneurship as the process of increasing the supply of entrepreneurs or adding to the stock of existing small, medium and big enterprises available to a country by creating and promoting many capable entrepreneurs, who can successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to growth and sustain them, with a view to achieving broad socio-economic developmental goals. One of these goals is sustaining employment. Justifying the need for promoting entrepreneurship culture Schnurr and Newing (1997) observed that youth in all societies have sterling qualities such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zest, dash, ambition, energy, boldness, audacity and courage which are all valuable traits for entrepreneurship development. In the same view, Shepherd and Douglas (1997) in Anyadike, Emeh and Uka, (2012) were of opinion that ‘entrepreneurship’, when treated as ‘enterprise-creation’ helps develop new skills and experiences that can be applied to many other challenging areas in life. Many Nigerian youths that roam the street possess several untapped potentials. If these potentials are well harnessed could be channeled toward productive ventures and job creation thereby reducing unemployment rate in the country. Achieving this requires entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition.

Entrepreneurship education as perceived by Omolayo (2006) is a structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Another view of entrepreneurship education is the term given to someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities. Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) noted that in the simplest of theoretical forms of studying entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs cause entrepreneurship. That is, $E = f(e)$ means that entrepreneurship (E) is a function of entrepreneur (e). Entrepreneurship education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business (Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2012). Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004) define entrepreneurship education as “the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth oriented ventures. The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2004) points out that entrepreneurship education is a life-long learning process and consist of five stage namely, basic, competency awareness, creative

application, start-up and growth. Wiklund & Shepherd (2003) postulated that entrepreneurial orientation consist of two components, namely, action orientation, which results in actual entrepreneurial behaviour; and mental orientation or way of thinking of the small business manager, which is not necessarily put into action. According to Alberti, Sciscia and Poli (2004), for effective Entrepreneurship education there should be a relationship between the goals of Entrepreneurship programme, the audiences to which the programme is delivered, the contents of the Entrepreneurship courses or modules, the method of delivery or pedagogy, and finally, the assessment that will be used. Entrepreneurial training and education encourages Nigerian to become jobs creator rather than job seekers. It also equips them with skills for constant improvement and innovations in their undertaken. Ogundele (2004) observes that for the success of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Nigeria require a new development approach which will release the best in the nation human capital for the economic development and empowerment efforts. This Ogundele (2004) calls spiritual capitalism, which will involve among others calling out the best from every Nigerians.

The link between entrepreneurship education and training and job creation has been established. For instance in United State of America where great attention is devoted to entrepreneurship education, studies have shown that as many as 5.6 million Americans younger than age 34 are actively trying to start their own businesses. One-third of new entrepreneurs are younger than age 30, more than 60 percent of 18 to 29 year-olds says they want to own their own businesses, and nearly 80 percent of would-be entrepreneurs in the United States are between the ages of 18 and 34 (Tulgan, 1999). Business and Entrepreneurship educators and generality of Nigerian should move away from the notion that entrepreneurs are born or inherited and not made. This idea is obsolete. It is widely accepted that entrepreneurship education encourages innovation, creativity, idea generation, productivity, job creation and healthy competition. Empirical studies indicated that entrepreneurship can be taught or at least encouraged by entrepreneurship education (Gorman, Hanlon & King, 1997). According to Drucker (1985), entrepreneurship is practice behaviour. It is a discipline and like any discipline, it can be learned. Therefore, it is not magic or mystery.

In the same token, **training** is the process of systematically acquiring job related knowledge, skill and attitude in order to perform with effectiveness and efficiency specific tasks in an organization. Furthermore, the acquisition of knowledge and skills during training is not desired for its own sake in industrial and commercial enterprises, it is utility that predisposes an organization to invest financial and material resources in it (Mullins, 2010). Skills required by an entrepreneur to remain innovative, generate new ideas and remain competitive can be classified into three main areas:

- i. Technical skills.
- ii. Business management.
- iii. Personal entrepreneurial skills.

Technical skills involve such things as writing, listening, oral presentation, organizing, coaching, being a team player, and technical know-how. Business management skills include those areas involved in starting, developing and managing an enterprise. The personal entrepreneurial skills differentiate an entrepreneur from a manager. Skills included in this classification are inner control (discipline), risk-taking, being innovative, being change-oriented, being persistent, and being a visionary leader among others (Osuaquwu, 2006).

Unemployment is joblessness or condition of having no job. It is described by International Labour Organization as when people are without jobs and they have actively sought work within the past four weeks. Thus, unemployment can be describe as a situation in which able bodied men and women willing and able to work sought for but cannot get any. It is a state of idleness or redundancy. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2009) defined the labour force of a country as a set of people or citizens of a country who are willing and able to make available at any given point in time their efforts for gainful employment. The unemployed are the individuals with no work, but are looking for work. The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is a major concern to the stakeholders such as parents who have invested so much in the education of their children and are expectant of reward for their sacrifices. The rates of unemployment in Nigeria cannot be easily assessed. However, According to National Bureau of Statistics (2010), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009 showed that the number of unemployed persons was 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008 and 19.7% in 2009. This showed that the employment rates have been on the increase. This is largely due to low level of employment opportunities in the public sector, the situation which compelled many of the youth seeking casual jobs and other illegal means of livelihood. The unemployment situation in Nigeria is so bad that university graduates stay at home for upwards of 10-15years without job. Consequent upon this, Nigerian Universities Certificates have become unattractive while many young ones shun University education.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the works of Schnurr and Newing (1997) that observed that youth in all societies have sterling qualities which are valuable traits for entrepreneurship development. Furthermore the works of Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004) that for effective Entrepreneurship education there should be a relationship between the goals of Entrepreneurship programme, the audiences to

which the programme is delivered, the contents of the Entrepreneurship courses or modules, the method of delivery or pedagogy and finally, the assessment that will be used. And according to Drucker (1985) entrepreneurship is practice behavior. It is a discipline and like any discipline it can be learned. And the works of Osuagwu (2006) that skills required by an entrepreneur to remain innovative, generate new ideas and remain competitive can be classified into three main areas: technical skills, business management and personal entrepreneurial skills. This study used these four works to build a model of Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Empowerment. So instead of seeking white collar jobs, graduates of Nigerian Universities, given the rightful entrepreneurship education should be job creators and Innovators and not job seekers. With entrepreneurial studies entrenched in various universities curriculum the expectation is that unemployment rate among youths would drop.

Source: Authors, 2012

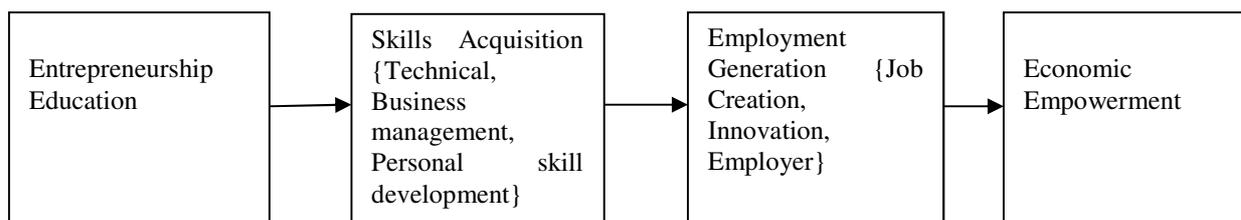


Fig 1: Model of Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Empowerment

3.0. Methodology

Survey research design was employed for this study. The study population was graduate entrepreneurs in the 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Oyo state, South West Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. In the first stage, 6 Local Government Areas were selected using purposive sampling technique. The Local Government Areas (LGAs) that were selected are; Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-East, Egbeda, Oyo West, Saki East and Ogbomoso North; representing 2 Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each of the 3 Senatorial Districts. These Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected because they have a higher concentration of Entrepreneurs. Lastly, 12 entrepreneurs were selected from each of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) through convenient sampling technique. This brings the sample size to 72. Primary data were used for the study. Data were gathered through the use of structured questionnaire specifically designed to elicit information needed for the study and were analyzed using frequency tables, t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

4.0. Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education on employment generation among Nigerian graduates the social demographic characteristics of the respondents were discussed as shown in Table 1 below. There are more male graduate entrepreneurs (78.3%) than female (21.7%). The University attended by respondents varies from Federal (55.0%), State (36.7%) and Private (8.3%). This shows that majority of the graduate entrepreneurs attended Public University. The number of years of exposure to entrepreneurial education and training also varies from 3 years (40.0%), 2 years (58.3%) and 1 year (1.7%) among the respondents. This indicates that majority of the respondents have minimum of 2 years of entrepreneurial education and training while in the University. Furthermore, the industry in which the entrepreneurs operate varies from Fabrication (23.3%), Construction (11.7%), Arts Gallery (11.7%), Trading and Supply (18.3%), Transport (1.7%) to School Proprietorship (33.3%) which indicates that majority of the respondents operated in the fabrication and education industry.

Table 1: Social Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		No. of Resp.	%
Gender	Male	47	78.3
	Female	13	21.7
Total		60	100.0
University Attended	Federal	33	55.0
	State	22	36.7
	Private	5	8.3
Total		60	100.0
Year of Training	3 yrs	24	40.0
	2 yrs	35	58.3
	1 yr	1	1.7
Total		60	100.0
Type of Business	Fabrication	14	23.3
	Construction	7	11.7
	Art Gallery	7	11.7
	Trading/ Supply	11	18.3
	Transport	1	1.7
	School Proprietorship	20	33.3
	Others	-	-
Total		60	100.0

Source: Authors, 2012

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

4.2.1. Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment generation.

Table 2 below shows the Pearson Correlation on the relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation

Table 2: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation

Variable	N	R	Df	P
Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation	60	0.826	58	0.05

Source: Authors, 2012

Table 2 shows the relationship between entrepreneurial education and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria. Since $r = 0.826$ $p < 0.05$, we accepted the alternative hypothesis. Thus, there is significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria. The $r = 0.826$ shows that 82.6% of the dependent variable (employment generation) was explained by the independent variable (entrepreneurial education). The results show that there is positive significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurial education strategically empowered them to start their own business. The results confirmed the findings of Wiklund and Shepherd (2003), Luthje and Frank (2002) that there exists a positive correlation between education and business creation. This shows a good degree of dependency of employment generation among University graduates on entrepreneurial education.

4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance.

Table 3 below shows the Pearson Correlation analysis on the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance

Table 3: Relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance.

Variable	N	R	Df	P
Skill acquisition and Entrepreneur's Performance	60	0.614	58	0.05

Source: Authors, 2012

Table 3 shows the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance. With the $r = 0.614$ $p < 0.05$, we accepted our alternative hypothesis which state that there is a positive relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance. There is therefore significant positive relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial performance. The $r = 0.614$ shows that 61.4% of the dependent variable (entrepreneurial performance) was explained by the independent variable Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($r = 0.614$) which is the proportion of entrepreneurs' performance explained by skill acquisition shows that 61.4% (majority) of entrepreneurs' performance was contributed by skills acquired. The results agreed with the findings of Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi 2012; Garuba, 2010 that technical education empowers the youth and led to the production of craftsmen and technicians.

4.2.3. Hypothesis 3

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between type of University attended and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria.

Table 4 shows the relationship between type of University attended and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between type of University attended and Employment Generation

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	P(sig.2 tailed)
Federal University	33	4.09	1.805	58	1.528	P<0.05
State University	22	4.00	1.365		2.602	P<0.05
Private University	5	3.50	0.940		1.356	P<0.05

Source: Author's 2012

The empirical results in Table 4 shows that there is significant relationship between the type of University attended and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria. Since, the t-value of the Federal University ($t=1.528$, $P < 0.05$), State University ($t=2.602$, $P < 0.05$) and Private University ($t= 1.356$, $P < 0.05$), there is significant difference in employment generation by graduates of the three categories of University sampled. Also, the results show a significant relationship between the type of University attended and employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria. Therefore, the type of University attended (Federal, State or Private) determines to a larger extent the level of employment generation among University graduates in Nigeria.

5.0. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The study highlighted a number of areas that those who are concern with entrepreneurship education and training of youths would found useful when making decisions. The study showed that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurship education, training and employment generation among university graduates in Nigeria. This means that entrepreneurship education and training at Federal, State and Private University as well as other tertiary institutions should be the core of employment generation efforts of government and all those that are concern with solving employment problems among Nigerian youths. This implied that special attention should be paid to entrepreneurship education and training at university level. Furthermore, the study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and performance of entrepreneurs. This means that entrepreneurship education enhances successes of entrepreneurs. In view of this, attempt should be made by both the government and entrepreneurship educators and instructors to improve the curriculum of entrepreneurship education by teaching skills that are tailored toward graduate self-employment.

5.2. Recommendations

The curriculum for entrepreneurship education should be reviewed regularly to accommodate changes in our environment and meeting the need of the students. At the same time half of the period used for National Youth service should be spent acquiring more skills that will make them employer of labour rather than been job seekers.

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Profile of the Authors

Mr. Adetayo, Hezekiah Olufemi is a Lecturer II in the Department of Business Administration, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. He holds a Bachelor's of Education in Guidance and Counseling from University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria in 1992, P.G.D. Management Studies in 1997, Master of Business Administration in 2002 and Master of Philosophy in Business Administration in 2012 all from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Business Administration in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

His area of interest includes General Management, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and use of ICT for Human Development.

Mr Oke Ebenezer Akinsanya is a Principal Lecturer in the Department of General Studies, The Ibarapa Polytechnic, Eruwa. Oyo State. Nigeria. A former head of the department of General studies, The Polytechnic Ibadan Adeseun Ogundoyin Campus, Eruwa Oyo State. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy, in 1989, Post- Graduate Diploma in Management Studies, in 1993, Master's degree in Business Administration in 1998 and a Master of Philosophy in Business Administration (Major; Entrepreneurship) in 2012 all from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Osun State.

He is a member of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) and the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM). His area of interest includes General Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship.

Mr Olusegun Aderonmu is currently a Principal Lecturer in the department of Business Administration and Management, The Ibarapa Polytechnic, Eruwa. Oyo State. A former heads of the Departments of Secretarial Administration and Financial Studies, The Polytechnic Ibadan, Adeseun Ogundoyin Campus, Eruwa. Oyo State. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Education in 1985 from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Kaduna State, Nigeria, a Master's in Business Administration in 1997 from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Osun State.

He is a Chartered Banker and a Chartered Accountant, which makes him a member of the reputable Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria in 2001 and Institute of chartered Accountant of Nigeria in 2011. His area of interest includes Accountancy, Entrepreneurship, Public Finance and Cooperative Society Development.

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