

THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education plays a major role in the reduction of unemployment in Nigeria. However, while most Nigeria universities have initiated entrepreneurship courses in their curricular; little research is available to assess its impact and to know whether a relationship exists between students taking courses in entrepreneurial development study (EDS) and their intention of becoming entrepreneurs.

This paper provides understanding of the entrepreneurial intentions of small sampled Nigerian undergraduates. It reports finding from quantitative data retrieved from questionnaire administered to 120 undergraduates that were selected through stratified and simple random sampling. Analytical techniques used include frequency count, percentages, and inferential statistics in the form of chi-square and degree of significance to know the impact of entrepreneurship education on the rate of students' self-employment intention.

The study found that exposure to entrepreneurship education influences students' intentions of becoming self-employed. It was however discovered that most students were not very confident about their intentions due to fear of capital, failure, and lack of experience in business management. The study concludes that despite knowledge of entrepreneurship education as a contributing factor in the reduction of unemployment, Nigerian youth requires additional supports to overcome the foreseen challenges.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Employment, Intention, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, there has been increasing global concern over the continuously expanded rates of unemployment around the world, particularly in most developing countries, where the youth have been identified as the most affected groups. As a result, various governmental and non-governmental organizations have initiated policies through support agencies such as National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials & Development Council (RMRDC) among others to address the problems of unemployment among Nigerian citizens (Olayinka 2010, Emmanuel, 2012, Akhemonkhan et al., 2013).

These aforementioned strategies were initiated with the hope that the development of self-employment and small enterprise initiatives would serve as a measure to unlock the economic potentials of the people, increase the capacity to empower and equip individuals in society to participate and benefit from their national economy as well as facilitates economic development which forms the bases for transformation (Unachukwu, 2009, Ekpo and Edet, 2011). More recently, the Federal government of Nigeria established another means to inculcate self-employment

(entrepreneurship) culture in students of tertiary institutions. This mandate was given to the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) to include entrepreneurial studies in the curriculum of Nigerian Universities with the hope of reducing unemployment among fresh graduates (Aja-Okorie and Adali, 2013).

However, despite the recognition of entrepreneurship as having the potential to curb unemployment among Nigerian youth and the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, about 80% of the Nigerian youth are unemployed and about 10% are under employed with 7 out of 10 graduates remaining unemployed or underemployed (Dike, 2009). As the former minister of labour and productivity Adelokunbo Kayode has asserted, “the greatest challenge confronting government today remains massive unemployment which has served as a breeding ground for anti-social vices” in Nigeria (Olayinka, 2010).

Essentially, while bulk of existing literature have focused on the positive effects of the adoption entrepreneurship courses in the curricular of most Nigerian universities, little research have been conducted to assess its impact on Nigerian students particularly as regards whether a relationship exists between students taking courses in entrepreneurial development study (EDS) and their intentions of becoming entrepreneurs.

Thus, the question remains “how many students would really want to be entrepreneurs or self-employed as a graduate”? This paper therefore seeks to reduce the gap in existing knowledge by conducting an empirical testing and making theoretical contribution drawn from the functionalist theory to provide understanding on the impact of entrepreneurship education particularly as it affects the opinion and intention of undergraduates in becoming self-employed.

In this context, the functionalist theory provides understanding of the functional importance of education as a means of solving social problem (unemployment) in order to regulate and create new social order (job creation). Considering Herbert Spencer’s concept of function as originated from the functionalist school of thought (Perrin 1976), society function the way it does based on interdependent relationships that exist among the various social institutions that make up society. Thus, the society is likened to human body whereby each part functions for the continuous regulation of the whole body. Spencer tends to draw comparison between the society and the human body, arguing that any attempt to understand any part of the body organ must be done relating to the other part of the body because they all function to contribute towards the maintenance of the whole system. In the same vein, the various social institutions exist and persist based on the essential functions they perform in the society. In other words, to understand a component of society, one must ask ‘what is the function the various institutions such as educational institution in society perform?’ A complete answer could be quite complex and require a detailed analysis of the history of education, but one obvious answer is that education prepares individuals to enter the work force and therefore maintains a functioning economy.

In relation to the above, entrepreneurship education is seen as a distinct social institution that seeks the establishment and maintenance of a functioning economy through job creation with a wide range of interest put into consideration especially as regards unemployment reduction. For instance, Adiele (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as that form of education which inculcate into the individual learner concept, skills and knowledge on how to start a new business or create jobs. Entrepreneurship education is therefore regarded as a vital tool for the reduction of unemployment.

In conjunction to the above, this study presents analysis that could assist stakeholders in the areas of education to

develop more effective programme activities or strategies that could encourage the participation of Nigerian youth towards career in entrepreneurship.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship emerged as an important concept in global economic transformation. Studies have shown that entrepreneurship process is a vital source of developing human capital as well as plays a vital role in providing learning opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, attitudes and abilities (Shane 2003, Brana 2008, Ekpo and Edet 2011). Various scholars have given different definitions to entrepreneur. For instance, Nieman and Nieuwehuizen (2009:9) defined an entrepreneur as one who sees an opportunity in the market, creates, gather resources and grows a business venture to meet needs. Similarly, entrepreneurship has been viewed as “the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully” (Suleiman, 2006 in Unachukwu et al., 2009: 214). A more generally acceptable definition as postulated by Hisrich and Peters (2002: 10), view entrepreneurship as “the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying finance psychic and social risk, and reserving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence”.

Importantly, a number of studies relating to entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention have reported that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention (Unachukwu et al., 2009; Emmanuel, 2012, Ekpo and Edet, 2013). It has further been argued that students who graduated in entrepreneurship reached higher scores in entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurial self-efficiency than students who graduate in other discipline (Noel, 2001). Similarly in a study conducted by Wilson et al., (2007), it was revealed that entrepreneurship education serves a medium of increasing students’ interest in entrepreneurship career. In addition, some previous studies have reported findings on the impact of entrepreneurship education on career intentions and aspiration of tertiary students in Ghana, it was found that most people were motivated to a large or very large extent to start-up a business by virtue of their exposure to entrepreneurship trainings (Owusu-Ansah, 2004).

Another study from Sri Lanka, (kumara, 2012) has further revealed that students who have received entrepreneurial education often develop positive attitudes and beliefs towards self-employment and entrepreneurship intention to a large extent. Additionally, Hannon, (2009) have found that an estimated 78% of students surveyed in Ireland who have passed through entrepreneurship education expressed interest in starting their own business in the future. However, about 30% of non-business post graduates surveyed reported being interested in starting their own business at some points later in their career and 39% are interested in starting their own business through their college infrastructure.

From the above, it could be observed that most existing research conceptualize entrepreneurship education as instrumental or what facilitates self-employment intention and the reduction of unemployment. The present study aims to confirm or refute these findings within the Nigerian setting.

The Study

This study was carried out among 120 students of Landmark University Omu-Aran, Kwara state with the use of well-structured questionnaire. Landmark University is a private educational institution owned by Dr. David Olaniyi Oyedipo, the presiding Bishop of the Living Faith Church world-wide. This study seeks to get information from students

currently studying entrepreneurial development study (EDS) as a compulsory course in Landmark University. The 120 students selected from the general population include male and female from the 3 colleges: college of business and social science (CBS), college of science and engineering (CSE), and college of agricultural science (CAS). The study population Landmark University has an estimate population of 2,586 presently (as at when this study was conducted).

Landmark University is known for its focus on agriculture, entrepreneur, and science. For this purpose, Landmark University was considered an important case study. However, the fact that entrepreneurship education is emphasized in Landmark University and made a compulsory course for students does not totally guarantee an entrepreneurial intention in students, this therefore formed the rationale of interest for the researcher on the target population. The study last for a period of 7 months from October 2013 to May 2014. This enabled an in depth study to be carried out.

The Research Process and Methods

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This method enabled us to offer explanations or descriptions of issues of focus in the research and to attend to some pertinent questions ranging from what number students would want to be self-employed after graduating, to questions on why students would not want to be self-employed, and the relevance of entrepreneurship education to the reduction of unemployment among graduates?

In selecting participants for this study, stratified sampling method was used to select the departments from the 3 colleges of the university after which simple random sampling was employed to select participants from the chosen departments. This was found helpful in reducing errors of omission or biases in the selection process; above all, it ensured equal chances of representativeness.

For proper analysis of the data, the following steps were taken: (1) frequency count and the percentage of responses to the research questions were calculated. (2) Inferential statistics in the form of chi-square (χ^2) and degree of significance were employed to know the importance of entrepreneurship education in the reduction of unemployment and the rate of students' self-employment intention. The formula for chi-square is shown below:

Chi-square (χ^2)

Where o = observed frequency (the number of respondent to each category of variable).

e = expected frequency calculated through the use of the formula.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

Where; o_i = observed value

e_i = expected value

Degree of freedom = $(r-1)(c-1)$

Grand total

Where r = number of rows and c = number of columns

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents data from the sampled respondents, comprising their sex and opinion on central issue of the study. The first among these distributions was the respondents' sex and this is presented as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	53	44.17%
Female	67	55.83%
Total	120	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2014

Table 1 reveal that 53 (44.17%) of the 120 respondents used in this study are males while the remaining 67 (55.83%) are females. The difference in the number of males and females indicates that there are more female students in Landmark University.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on whether they were Encouraged to Start their Own Business due to Entrepreneurship Courses Attended in Landmark University

Encouraged to Start Business	Frequency	Percentage %
Agree	94	78.3%
Disagree	7	5.83%
Neutral	9	15.8%
Total	120	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2014

The above table reveals that a majority of 94 (78.3%) of 120 respondents agreed that they were encouraged to start their own business following the entrepreneurship classes attended. Only 7 respondents (5.83%) indicated not have been influenced by the entrepreneurial classes while about 9 (15.8%) were unsure on whether they have actually been empowered by the entrepreneurship education received so far. Thus, it can be affirmed that entrepreneurship education in Landmark University encourages most students to start their own business.

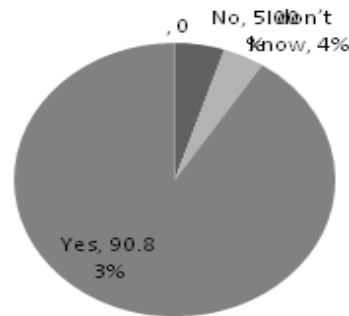
Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Whether Entrepreneurship Classes have Fully Prepared them for an Entrepreneurship Career

Entrepreneurship Classes	Frequency	Percentage %
Agree	83	69.17%
Disagree	11	9.16%
Neutral	26	21.67%
Total	120	100%

From the above, it can be observed that a majority of respondents, 83 (69.17%) indicted that entrepreneurship classes had fully prepared them for an entrepreneurship career, only 11 (9.16%) appeared not to have been fully prepared to begin a career in entrepreneurship. Therefore, it can be asserted from the responses that majority of landmark university students who offer entrepreneurship development studies have acquired skills and capacities that could enabled them become self-employed. However, it can further be deduced from their responses that it is not all students in Landmark University who offer entrepreneurship development courses that believe that they have acquired all relevant skills or develop capacity to be an entrepreneur.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by their Intention to be Self-Employed after School

Intention to Self-Employment after School	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	109	90.83
No	6	5.
I don't know	5	4.17
Total	120	100%

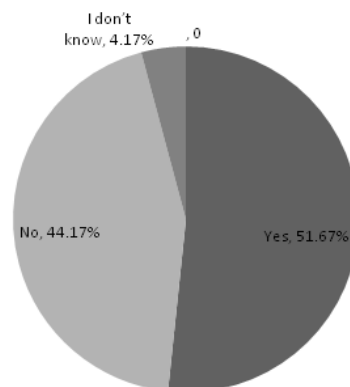


Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2014

Chart 1.0: Representing Data from Table 5

Table 4 and chart 1.0 reveal that out of 120 respondents, 109 (90.83%) interestingly would want to be self-employed after school, 6 (5%) would prefer to be self-employed. Only 5 (4.17%) respondents do not know whether they would be self-employed after school. Based on these responses, it can be argued that a majority of landmark university students have intentions of becoming self-employed after school. This is consistent with earlier research in Nigerian societies, where entrepreneurship educations have been demonstrated to have facilitated the interests or intentions of a number of youth to embark on self-employment activities (Ekpo and Edet, 2011, Emmanuel, 2012).

Findings from this study also reveal that despite the high number of respondents that conceived the goal of becoming an entrepreneur, it was observed that a number of them were unsure about the reality of their intentions. This was observed in the way the sampled undergraduates expressed fears and some obstacles that could hinder the realization of their goals. This can be observed from chart 1.1 below.



Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2014

Chart 1.1: Distribution of Respondents Based on the Belief that there are Barriers that can Affect their Decision to Start up a Business

In chart 1.1, a high number of respondents, that is, 62 out of 120 respondents (51.67%) indicated that there may be

barriers in starting their own business, about 53 (44.17) of respondents do not believe that certain obstacles could affect their intention to start up a business. It can be deduced therefore that most students perceive that there are barriers in becoming self-employed.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by their Perceptions of Fear Lack of Capital, Fear of Failure, Lack of Marketing Skills, and Lack of Experience

Fear of Lack of Capital, Fear of Failure	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	63	52.50
No	55	45.83
I don't know	2	1.67
Total	120	100%

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2014

As indicated in the above table about 63 (52.50) said yes to the fact that they envisaged some fears that could limit their desired dream of becoming self-employed. Certain factors such as fear of limited or lack of capital to start up a business, fear of failure, lack of marketing skills and lack of experiences on entrepreneurship were listed as inhibiting factors that could affect their dream of becoming self-employed. However, a relatively large number of respondents (about 45.83%) do not recognize these factors as potential hindrance to their plan of becoming self-employed. However, these data provide understanding that the dream of becoming self-employed can be hindered due to these aforementioned factors that were identified by majority of the respondents.

EMPIRICAL TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

This section entails the testing of the different hypotheses that has been stated earlier in this research work. The significance of this test is to validate the hypotheses that are found to be true with both independent and dependent variable having a relationship and resulting into their acceptance while those tested to be untrue are thereby rejected.

Hypothesis One

Entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention

In testing this hypothesis, H₀ and H₁ were formulated.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention.

In order to test this hypothesis and to identify relationships among the data, a correlation analysis is performed on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention.

Table 6: Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention

Entrepreneurship Education	Self-Employment Intention		
	Yes	No	Total
Agree	37	30	67
Disagree	39	14	53
Total	76	44	120

$$X^2_c = 4.29 > X^2_t (0.05) = 3.84, df = 1, n = 120$$

DECISION RULE

Since the observed chi-square, $X^2_c = 4.29$ was found to be greater than the expected chi-square $X^2_t (0.05) = 3.84$ with the degree of freedom at $(2-1) (2-1) = 1$. The Null hypothesis (H_0) which states that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention was REJECTED and the Alternative hypothesis was ACCEPTED. This shows that there is a relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention.

Numerous studies have found similar results. This study therefore confirms the study conducted by Kumara (2012) which also revealed a relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. It also corroborated with Autio et al (1997) findings that entrepreneurship education created a positive image for entrepreneurship career. This study also confirms Fayolle, (2005) and Emmanuel (2012) research that entrepreneurship courses creates more entrepreneurial students which in turn lead ultimately to a greater number of students willing to start their own businesses.

Hypothesis Two

Entrepreneurship education and unemployment reduction

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and unemployment reduction.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and unemployment reduction.

In testing this hypothesis, we cross tabulated respondents' data on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention

Table 7: On the Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intention

Entrepreneurship Education	Unemployment Reduction			Total
	Yes	No	I don't know	
Agree	71	3	1	75
Disagree	14	0	0	14
Neutral	22	7	2	31
Total	107	10	3	120

$$X^2_c = 14.68 > X^2_t (0.05) = 9.49, df = 4, n = 120$$

DECISION RULE

As indicated in the above table, the observed chi-square $X^2_c = 14.68$ is greater than the expected chi-square $X^2_t (0.05) = 9.49$ with the degree of freedom at $(3-1) (3-1) = 4$. The Null hypothesis (H_0) which states that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and unemployment reduction is REJECTED and the Alternative hypothesis (H_1) was ACCEPTED. This shows therefore that entrepreneurship education can be a significant factor in the reduction of unemployment in Nigeria including the potential to achieving sustainable economic development in the country. The result of this study is therefore in conjunction with many other studies previously conducted in Nigeria (Olayinka 2010; Arogundade, 2011; Emmanuel, 2012; Aja-Okorie and Adali, 2013 Akhemonkhan et al., 2013) which viewed entrepreneurship development as an important strategy for the creation of self-employment opportunities and

reduction of unemployment situations in Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

Relationship between entrepreneurship education and perceived barriers to self-employment

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Entrepreneurship education and students perceived barriers to becoming self-employed is not significantly low.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Entrepreneurship education and students perceived barriers to becoming self-employed is significantly low.

In order to test this hypothesis and to identify relationships among the data, a correlation analysis is also performed as in hypothesis one and two above. For this reason, we did a cross tabulation of relationship between entrepreneurship education and perceived barriers to becoming self-employed.

Table 8: On the Relationship between Entrepreneurship Education and Perceived Barriers to becoming Self-Employed

Entrepreneurship Education	Perceived Barriers to Becoming Self-Employed			Total
	Yes	No	I don't know	
Yes	61	2	5	68
No	50	2	0	52
Total	111	4	5	120

$$X^2_c = 4.04 < X^2_t (0.05) = 5.99, df = 2, n = 120$$

DECISION RULE

As shown above, it was found that the observed chi-square $X^2_c = 4.29$ is lesser than the expected chi-square $X^2_t (0.05) = 5.99$ with the degree of freedom at $(2-1) (3-1) = 2$. The Null hypothesis (H₀) which states that entrepreneurship education and students perceived barriers to becoming self-employed is not significantly low is ACCEPTED and the Alternative hypothesis (H₁) was REJECTED. This shows therefore that the barriers to students' self-employment intention are high.

From these findings, it is obvious that a number of obstacles could militate against respondents' decision to becoming an entrepreneur. This finding upholds the research previously reported by Owusu (2004) which reveals that many students and graduates have fear of obstacles that could affects the outcome of entrepreneurship programmes.

DISCUSSIONS

This study on entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention has been 'carefully' examined through the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The overall finding of the study is that there is a strong relationship between students' exposure to entrepreneurship education and their intentions to becoming self-employed. This was observed as majority of respondents in the study indicated their willingness and believed they have developed capacity to establish their own business based on the fact that they have benefited from entrepreneurship courses offered in Landmark University.

Thus, this study affirms that the provision of entrepreneurship education to Landmark university students has impacted in them skills and knowledge as well as affects their decision or intention to set up a business enterprise.

It was however found that despite the high rate of entrepreneurship intentions, most Landmark university students perceive different barriers that could limit their plan or decision to start up their own business. This was revealed when the students were asked whether they perceive any barriers and obstacles that could affect their intentions in starting their own business. Such findings confirm Brenner et al (1991) report where a majority of respondents considered their actual situation and constrains upon their intentions to operate their own business.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, entrepreneurship education has impacted on the self-employment intention of Landmark University students. It has been affirmed in this study that, a high number of students of Landmark University has strong intentions of becoming self-employed by virtue of their exposure to entrepreneurship education. This suggests that entrepreneurship education could serve as an important means of empowering or developing the capacities of youth in tertiary institutions and a medium through which to generate employment opportunities for other graduates and themselves. In other words, quality entrepreneurship education play a vital role in equipping Nigerian youth with necessary intellectual capacity, skills and right type of work habit or attitude that could enable them to create jobs for the growth of Nigeria economy.

Importantly, this research has addressed the gap in the literature by examining the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' self-employment intention. Relating to the functionalist theory as used in this study, it can be argued that the function of entrepreneurship education in maintaining a stable societal development cannot be overemphasized. It further justifies the need to inculcate and solidify entrepreneurship education in Nigeria universities in order to create and maintain an entrepreneurship culture, attitude and drive especially within the young age group.

However, considering the manner in which most respondents exhibited fear of capital, failure and other challenges in achieving their goal of becoming entrepreneur, this study concludes that Nigerian youth require further supports such as sufficient capital, conducive environment and different levels of supports. In other words, there is need for governments and other stakeholders, such as the media, schools and investors, to create a more enabling environment for youth to inculcate entrepreneurship culture as well as ensuring their access to finance; mentorship and other basic needs that would enhance their capacities to achieve a successful career in entrepreneur.

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