

Entrepreneurship Education and Poverty Alleviation in North-Western Nigeria: Evidence from the Polytechnic Graduates

By

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Abstract

This paper indicates and emphasizes the entrepreneurship education as the potentially emerging human resource in the 21st century in the North-western part of Nigeria graduates. In Nigeria, the idea of infusing entrepreneurship into education has spurred much enthusiasm in the last few decades. Much knowledge is not found about the economic relevance of entrepreneurship education in developing youth empowerment programs and the effect of these programs on society and economy. The development of entrepreneurship is very low in this region of the country specifically among the graduates. Entrepreneurship education development is an essential part of human resource development. And from indication we can see that economic development of the today's graduates is crucial for economic development of any country specially a developing nation like Nigeria. In this paper report, an attempt has been made to study the opportunities entrepreneurship education that the North-western graduates of country face in the present times and the relevance support this could give towards development of Nigeria economy and unemployment reduction. With regard to this study, results were derived through questionnaire-based study of a sample of 750 graduates' students of 5 polytechnics from 7 States of the region of North Western Nigeria. Probability sampling has been adopted to give chance to every respondent for selections. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship education, North Western Nigeria, Poverty alleviation, empowerment

1.0 Introduction

Globally the general need for entrepreneurship education started emerging in the mid-1980s. This is because before this period, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently and people were highly entrepreneurial and productivity engaged. Integrating the steps involved in the entrepreneurial process into the curriculum of higher educational institutions in Nigeria is a step towards sharpening students' entrepreneurial mindset. Entrepreneurship education has continued to feature as a captivating theme in the whole nation because of its potency as tool for mitigating unemployment and other social-economic challenges inhibiting sustainable development in all parts of the country.

Entrepreneurship education involves teaching and learning of the needed skills and knowledge that equip one to become self-reliant through being an effective and successful initiator, manager, innovator and risk-bearer of business undertakings. Therefore, Entrepreneurship education is an orientation that seeks to transform graduates from job seekers into job creators in order to reduce graduate unemployment and it increases students' interest in entrepreneurship as a career. The main focus to Nigeria context is to equip them with relevant skills and competences that prepare the students to become entrepreneurs and managers of new businesses soon after graduation in order to increase their household income, reduce unemployment rate that massively affect the Nation and target economic empowerment. Entrepreneurship education according to Egunjimi (2012) is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development
- Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, and to make certain bearing feasible.
- To reduce high rate of poverty
- Reduction in rural-urban migration
- Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized business.
- To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

The UNDP Report places Nigeria amongst the countries of the world that recorded the least achievement in the upgrade of the welfare of their citizens. The situation is even worse today that the country is economic less progressive, hundreds of thousands of graduates every year with no jobs to offer them. Thus, it is expected that the Nigerian educational system should rise up to the challenges of equipping the youths with the skills for self-employment in view of the economic meltdown ravaging the nation. This study therefore, attempted to assess the relationship between entrepreneurship education to polytechnic graduates and poverty alleviation in the region of North Western Nigeria.

1.2 Problems statement

Every year massive thousands of graduates are produced from different kind of polytechnic in North Western region of Nigeria. The type of education provided in those Polytechnic produces graduates for whom there exists little or no job market demands. On annual basis, graduates are produced to be gainfully employed by the formal sector of the Nigeria economy with little focus on graduate entrepreneurship. There is the observation from the public, especially industry players (*employers and human resource managers*), that most graduates from those polytechnics in this region of Nigeria lack certain qualities that enhances their performance on the job soon after their graduation. The main reason given for this perception is that in North Western Nigeria no much attentions were paid to developing Companies around the regions, they mostly solely rely on local Agricultural activities and there is no much collaboration between Polytechnics faculties and the industry/job market. And this leads to the poverty and unemployment menace, the training received by Polytechnic students has not been fully successful in equipping students with the required skills and competences needed for job creation and self -employment. This perception of most employers has made many fresh graduates find it difficult to get jobs soon because almost all the job advertisement through the mass media request for people with a number of postgraduate working experience. In North Western Nigeria and Nigeria at large, graduate unemployment has undoubtedly become a herculean national cancer of which every government has to deal with.

This problem has necessitated this research to evaluate entrepreneurship education in North Western Nigeria and its effect on poverty reduction and economic empowerment through job creation. The study is to research into the type of entrepreneurship education received by the participants that developed their abilities to create their own jobs as graduate entrepreneurs soon after their graduation.

1.3 Objectives

The broad objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of entrepreneurship education at polytechnic of North Western Nigeria on the reduction of poverty at the region and improvement of national economy through job creation.

1.3.1 The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the level of entrepreneurship education at Polytechnics of North Western Nigeria that develops the abilities of their graduates to create their own jobs and be self-reliant.

- What are the key issues about North-western entrepreneurship education and what would be their specific support needs?
- Identify what is expected of policy makers and practitioners in developing entrepreneurship education that will reduce the level of poverty in the region and enhance economic growth.

1.4 Research Questions

- To what extent has entrepreneurship education served as a tool for job creation for fresh graduates who studied entrepreneurial courses at various selected institutions?
- How effective is the entrepreneurial education in the higher education institutions curricular in reducing unemployment through job creation?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Based on the literature and concepts, the following hypotheses were formulated.

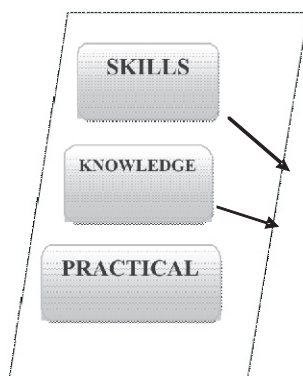
H₁: Entrepreneurship education skill contributes significantly to entrepreneurship activities of graduates.

H₂: Entrepreneurship education knowledge has significant effects on entrepreneurship activity of graduates

H₃: Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial activity has a significant impact on graduates' poverty alleviation.

Conceptual framework

Entrepreneurship Education



Poverty Alleviation

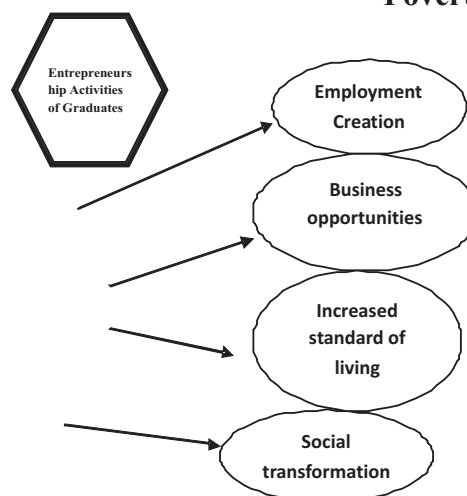


Figure I: Conceptual model of Entrepreneurship education and Poverty Alleviation. Adopted from Chinonye et al. (2015)

2.0 Literature review

Entrepreneurs as agent of social and economic change were focused upon by Ogundele and Olayemi (2004) in their call for Nigeria education curricula to concentrate on developing Entrepreneurial capabilities in Nigerians, in all Nigerian educational institutions. The objective is to ensure that Nigerian is not left behind in the global competition that is knowledge managed. Such Entrepreneurship Training will equip the people with skills for constant improvement and innovation in their undertaken. The entrepreneurship development program in Nigeria is designed to help an individual in strengthening his/her entrepreneurial motivation and in acquiring skills and capabilities necessary for playing his/her entrepreneurial role effectively (Ogundele et al. 2012).

Poverty is the state of being very poor. Nweze and Ojowu (2002) assert that poverty can be categorized into three namely: absolute poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty. These three concepts formed the basis of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. Absolute poverty is a situation where an individual or household is faced with limited financial resources and as a result, unable to meet his/her or its basic necessities of life such as food, clothes, shelter and health is the nucleus of our study. In the words of Miller (1968), Wedderburn (1974), Plotnick and Skidmore (1983), World Bank, (1996) individuals, families or groups are considered to be in absolute poverty when they lack the resources particularly real income to obtain the types of diets needed to enjoy some fixed minimum standard of living determined by a given society. Relative poverty is a situation where an individual's or a household's income is less than the average income of the population in the society being considered. The result is that the individual or household has goods and services which are lower than those of other persons or households in the society (Garuba, 2010; Oladunni, (1999); Akeredolu-Ale, 1975).

According to Ogundele et al. (2012) whom opined that, it is commonly believed that Entrepreneurship education is an absolute imperative that would make a positive contribution to improving the entrepreneurial orientation of the people. While Wiklund (1999) also postulated that entrepreneurial orientation consist 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 et al. (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. In a recent study by Chinonye et al. (2015) using a random sample of unemployed graduates and lecturers employed in Nigerian tertiary institutions, examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in South-South Nigeria. The findings of the study indicate that entrepreneurship education has gained widespread acceptance as a prospective career path choice found that entrepreneurship education is an entrepreneurial impetus to enrollees of tertiary institutions and contributes to the restructuring of employment patterns. Davey et al. (2011) compared students from European and African universities found that African students intend to be entrepreneurial than European students. Students with entrepreneurship majors tend to be more entrepreneurial than those with other majors contain a detailed review of studies which examine perception of alumni toward entrepreneurship education. Studies in the literature by Chinonye et al., (2015), Davey et al. [2011] (Ogunde et al. 2012). have revealed that Entrepreneurship education has the capacity to impact positively on the entrepreneurial mindset of young deduce responses from 250 entrepreneurs and apprentices. The findings of the study indicate formal or informal entrepreneurship training and education were significantly related to youth empowerment and social welfare improvements. Respondents with technical skills felt economically empowered or had such prospects as escape routes from poverty.

2.1 Entrepreneurship Education

According to Cope, (2003) as cited by Mamman & Nwabufo (2015), whom emphasized the need to institute an educational frame-work in Nigeria within which small and medium scale enterprise development can occur. This according to him can be achieved through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education therefore, involves teaching and learning of the needed skills and knowledge that equip one to become self-reliant through being an effective and successful initiator, manager, innovator, and risk-bearer of business undertaking. In entrepreneurship education, people already in businesses are retrained to enhance their management, record keeping ability and the profitability of their businesses while unemployed tertiary institution graduates and secondary schools leavers are taught skills in the schools and are trained to take their fate in their hands and to become entrepreneurs even right in the schools, (CEDR, 2008).

Thus, Akpomi (2010) states that entrepreneurship education develops human abilities and changes their values and attitudes in order to accelerate the process of development. She went further to say that this type of education helps individuals to innovate and foresee the future needs arising from new ways of thinking.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education and its Curriculum in Nigeria

Soludo (2006), as cited by Mamman&Nwabufo (2015), whom stated that over one hundred Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria are producing more than two hundred thousand graduates per annum. This is the evidence that the basic human capital for economic transformation of Nigeria is available for training and development to enable them provide solution to our economic problems. These graduates need to be nurtured on developing business ideas and risk taking so that the fear of venturing into new areas of businesses or starting something on their own will be wiped off their faces. They will learn to lead business combination of different sizes. According to CEDR, (2008) there is no education degree requirement to become an entrepreneur, but it is helpful to have, good support skills such as communication, Interpersonal abilities, economic understanding, digital skills, marketing, management and financial skills. Therefore, a would-be entrepreneur, should be prepared on the following areas, (Cope, 2003).

- i. Entrepreneurship development: this involves exposing the learners to develop business ideas, identify business opportunities and risk-taking behavior. Emphasis should be on taking calculated risk which allows for reasonable profits and minimal chances of losing one's investment. He further learns how to become innovative, resourcefulness, and task oriented.
- ii. Basic Business Management: The prospective entrepreneur learns how to run and control business. In this direction he is exposed to business planning and management. For instance, he should learn about financial planning, effective communication, decision making, time management business negotiation skills, credit management, record keeping, leadership, interpersonal skills, conflict handling and customer loyalty.
- iii. Skill Acquisition: Enterprising men and women should have the practical skill that enables them to undertake and complete activities. The following skills among others should be taught, Agro production such as fish farming, poultry management, piggery management, snail and mushroom farming. In cosmetology, making of the following and others should be taught; soap, cream, paint, tooth paste, shoe polish and air freshener.

Under Information, communication and technology, the following skills should be taught: computer maintenance, software applications, computer networking, and intercom networking. In creative arts and design, the following skills are necessary; Shoe and bag making fashion designing, hat and bead making. Furthermore, productions of brake pads from saw dust and grease from palm oil should be taught. In service-based business, travelling and courier agencies, marketing, clearing and forwarding and auto mechanics should teach while in food and catering services, attention should be given to hotel management, ice cream production and packaging. Skills in book binding, graphic designing, recharge card printing and others should be taught under printing and publishing. Other trades such as welding and fabrication, electrical/electronic, refrigeration, air conditioning and plumbing are also worthy of consideration.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Source of data

Data collected for the purpose of this research work will be based on the primary sources of data. Secondary source of data was only going to be employed in this study for the purpose of pilot study.

3.2 Data collection instrument

Different kind of methodology could be use in any study although it all depends on the phenomenon under investigation (Cooper & Schindler 2008). This study uses questionnaires method. Williams (2006) suggest that, it's one of the best collection methods that is quick to collect information from huge number of respondents.

3.3 Location of the study

The geographic locations that this study tended to collect data were North Western region of Nigeria, and the region has seven states namely; Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa State respectively. However, due to time constrained each state one polytechnic will be selected for this study.

The total number of graduate's entrepreneurs that the study tends to collect data from are 1,400 through proportionate sampling and the polytechnics chosen were on the basis of judgmental sampling.

The following table gives details of sample size throughout 7 States Polytechnics of North Western State of Nigeria

S/N	State	Name of polytechnic	Sample selected
1.	Kaduna	Kaduna State Polytechnic	200
2.	Katsina	Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic	200
3.	Zamfara	Abdu Gusau Polytechnic T/Mafara	200
4.	Sokoto	Ummaru Aliyu Shinkafi polytechnic	200
5.	Kebbi	Umaru Waziri federal polytechnic Kebbi	200
6.	Jigawa	Jigawa State Polytechnic	200
7.	Kano	Kano State Polytechnic	200
GRAND TOTAL		7	1,400

3.4 Statistical tools used

In this study, SPSS is the software that is going to be used to analyze the data gathered. Reliability test will be conducted and questionnaires were measured variable by variable to ensure its reliability rate through the use of SPSS. Furthermore, Pearson correlation and regression analysis will be used to measure the relationship between the variables. SPSS is preferred above other statistical tools because it can help the user to build better models and conduct more accurate risk analysis than any other statistical tool.

3.5 Sampling techniques

Probability sampling is the sampling technique that is going to be used in this study. According to William (2006) it's a kind of sampling method that involves random selection of respondents. The main purpose of employing this kind of sampling method is the only method that assures that every individual in the area of population that the research is going to be conducted has equal probabilities of being selected as due to its kind of population that contains different kinds of diverse customers.

4.0 Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic profile of sample

Questions	Options	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	485	57.9	1.753	0.431
	Female	352	42.0		
Age	Below 20	113	13.5	1.804	0.910
	21-30	312	37.2		
	31-40	309	36.9		
	41 & above	103	12.3		
Program	National Diploma	289	34.5	3.167	1.079
	H N D	367	43.8		
	PGD	83	9.9		
	CERTIFICATE	98	11.7		

Institution (State)	Kaduna State Polytechnic	94	11.2	1.678	0.731
	Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic	95	11.3		
	Abdu Gusau Polytechnic T/Mafara	185	22		
	Ummaru Aliyu Shinkafi polytechnic	180	21.6		
	Umaru Waziri federal polytechnic	93	11.1		
	Kebbi	92	10.9		
	Jigawa State Polytechnic	98	11.7		
Kano State Polytechnic					

Source: developed by the researcher through SPSS Analysis.

Empirical Analysis

The empirical analysis of study shows the correlation and regression results of study that what data is suggested about existing variable relationship. The correlation analysis shows that how much variables are depending upon each other while regression analysis shows that one-unit change in independent variable cause how much change in dependent variable. Table 2 provides some useful tests used to validate the hypothesis of present study.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

Variables	Mean	S. D	GEE	MEE	AEE	ETD
Generalized Entrepreneurial Skills	1.906 0	.639	1			
Entrepreneurial Knowledge	1.909	0.553	0.445*	1		
Entrepreneurial education practical	2.005	0.673	0.378*	0.365*	1	
Entrepreneurial start-up Development and practices	1.929	0.611	0.577*	0.526*	0.539*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (99%) level, **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (95%) level, ***Correlation is significant at the 0.10 (90%) level Source: Developed by Researcher through SPSS Analysis.

The correlation analysis shows the variable dependency upon each other. In present study the SPSS analysis shows, firstly, the mean and standard deviation of variables. Correlation value should be less than 0.80; if it exceeds the limit, variables dependency also increased. In present study correlation between motivational entrepreneurial education and generalized entrepreneurial education is 0.445, which is moderate correlation between both variables and shows no dependency on each other.

The correlation between augmented entrepreneurial education, generalized entrepreneurial education and motivational entrepreneurial education is 0.378 and 0.365 respectively, what shows a weak correlation between variables. And the last one is entrepreneurial startup development correlations with other independent variables is less than 0.6 which shows moderate correlation among variables.

Regression analysis in this study shows how much independent variables (Generalized Entrepreneurial skills, Entrepreneurial knowledge and Entrepreneurial Education practical) impact dependent variable (Entrepreneurial startup development and practices). In the present study multiple regression analysis was used because there three independent variables. The regression model of study is given below:

Equation: Generalized Entrepreneurial skills, = $\alpha + \beta_1$ (Entrepreneurial knowledge) + β_2 (Entrepreneurial Education practical) + β_3 (Augmented Entrepreneurial Education) + e
(1)

Overall responds of the students at five selected tertiary institutions of North Western Nigeria

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	I believe with this curriculum, most of the students will be self -reliant after graduation	68%	10%	12%	13%	8%
2.	Entrepreneurship education in tertiary educations curriculum has been reducing the level of unemployment in Nigeria since its introduction	71%	20%	-	7%	2%
3.	Despite not been in social science or art department, I believe	55%	25%	10%	10%	-
4.	The practical aspect of the entrepreneurship training duration is enough for me to coup up	49%	15%	-	20%	16%
5.	The entrepreneurship teachers at my institution are well qualified and they delivered well.	51%	8%	-	31%	10%
6.	The lecturers of entrepreneurship aligned the curriculum with my field of study	40%	10%	-	30%	20%
7.	NBTE need to create more space in their curriculum in order for us to coup well in this course	70%	20%	-	15%	5%
8.	The school management send us to the right area for practical aspect	84%	10	-	6%	-
9.	Graduate entrepreneurial skills can be increased through continuous entrepreneurship education.	76%	20%	-	4%	-
10.	Majority of students from this institution are self -employ after graduation	55%	15%	10%	15%	5%
11.	Your State government has be supportive in provision of support in terms of skills acquisition programs and fund	48.9%	26.1%	-	15%	-

5.0 Result Discussion, Conclusion and recommendations

Entrepreneurship education has the potential to develop students' competencies, knowledge and skills to confidently act on opportunities, address issues and solve problems that have arisen in their communities. However, this literature review found barriers in developing students' entrepreneurship capabilities and intent, and in supporting teachers to implement effective programs. From the above analysis we can see that respondents point out key successes of this program into the curriculum by the NBTE. As we can see from;

➤ Questions one, Majority of the respondents 68% and 10% believed that most students will be self-reliant after they have acquired the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship likewise 71% and 20% of respondents believed that Entrepreneurship education in tertiary education curriculum has been reducing the level of unemployment in Nigeria since its introduction. Furthermore 55% and 25% agreed that despite not being in social science or art department, they believe with the training they have got on entrepreneurship they can be self-employed after my graduations even though 10% disagreed with this assertion.

However, in area of practical aspect of the entrepreneurship training duration is enough for the students to cope up with their studies even though majority 49% and 15% have agreed but 36% disagree with this. Further 59% believed that entrepreneurship teachers at my institution are well qualified and they delivered well, though 41% disagree. 50% of the respondents opined that lecturers of entrepreneurship aligned the curriculum with my field of study and 50% also disagreed. 94% of the respondents agreed that school management send them to the right area for practical aspect while only 6% disagree. Graduate entrepreneurial skills can be increased through continuous entrepreneurship education training 96% also agreed with this only 4% disagreed. 70% of this research respondents believed that, majority of students from this institution are self-employed after graduation only 20% disagree and 10 are undecided on this question. 75% respondents also believed that their State government has been supportive in provision of support in terms of skills acquisition programs and fund supports to entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, there is no knowing how long or how deep the impact of the current economic depression caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will penetrate our globe and standard of living.

Entrepreneurship education has the potential to develop students' competencies, knowledge and skills to confidently act on opportunities, address issues and solve problems of unemployment's that have arisen in various states of Nigeria. However, this study found barriers in developing students' entrepreneurship capabilities and intent, and in supporting teachers to implement effective programs. Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution at large requires urgent attention and focuses to support and enable young people to understand how they can adapt to a changing environment to lead and understand the emerging possibilities in their lives. This research work found benefits for students who experience entrepreneurship education including, the development of self-efficacy, motivation and engagement, positive attitudes for identifying and acting on opportunities with knowledge, skills and creativity. Future success in the aftermath of a pandemic requires students to be adaptable, resilient opportunistic, innovative and entrepreneurial which are all capabilities that can be developed through effective entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations:

Below are some recommendations for addressing the problems facing entrepreneurship education and its graduates.

- Based on the study findings, some school management e.g. Abdu Gusau Polytechnic Talata Mafara need to find the right people competent to teach students entrepreneurship as they indicate they are not the right man for the course as in order for entrepreneurship education to be effective students need positive 'hands on' experiences to be fostered throughout so that they can build entrepreneurial intent and confidence. This study found that majority of those teachers at various institutions need opportunities to build confidence, knowledge and capacity in order to develop effective entrepreneurship education learning experiences that are relevant to today's students and prepares them for future life challenges. And Entrepreneurship education can be effectively implemented with experiential approaches to learning, such as value creation (Lackeus, 2020) and support from external trainers to develop programmes (Ho et al., 2018). This study also found that the selected tertiary institutions graduates have been emerging with high rates of intent to be employees and not business developers or owners.

- State Government should empower graduates of entrepreneurship education in the direction of credit facility, site acquisition for establishment of their enterprises, equipment and machines for the take-off, extension services and gestation period of five years to repay any loan given to them to ensure mastery, stability and growth.

- Skills Training Centres (STC) which are in form of Post-Secondary Technical Training Institutes should be established in every local government area for school leavers and adult learners to acquire employable skills, knowledge and values needed in a competitive global economy and for self-employment for onward poverty reduction.

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