

BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEIVED ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN JOB CREATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

Abdullahi Magaji

*Business Education Department, School of Undergraduate Studies,
Aminu Saleh College of Education, P.M.B. 044, Azare, Bauchi State, Nigeria
E-mail: abdullahmg18@yahoo.com*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the role of entrepreneurship education in creating job opportunities among the teeming population of undergraduate students in the country as the programme will equip the students with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business after graduation. The study adopted survey design. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The population of the study consisted of nine hundred and forty-four (944) undergraduate students. Two hundred and seventy four (274) students were sampled using proportionate sampling technique. Questionnaire was the instrument used in collecting data and the instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Business Education, Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare. A reliability of 0.74 was obtained using split-half method. Frequency table and percentage was used in answering the research questions. Findings from the study revealed that undergraduate students have acquired entrepreneurial knowledge and equally have strong intention of establishing and managing their own businesses after graduation. In view of the findings, it was recommended that there should be easy access to micro-credit for the graduates who are interested in starting a business after graduation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies show that our world has become global, uncertain and complex and hence requires people with creative, complex and diversified entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to answer the twin challenges of shrinking economies and unemployment (Iqbal, Melhem & Kokash, 2012). Markets are currently only offering limited job opportunities for university graduates (Frazao, Santos, Oliveira & Oliveira, 2010). In line with the above, Teshome (2014) opined that the world over, University and College graduates are now finding it difficult to secure employment in both public and private enterprises due to the current volatile economic environment hence the need to focus on entrepreneurship as a gateway to employment creation and stabilizing economies. According to Danko (2006), in the not too distant past in Nigeria, anybody who had gone to School, College, Polytechnic and or University was almost sure of getting one form of paid employment. Today, this is no longer the case in the country because of unhealthy situation of our economy. As such, Political instability, inconsistencies in the socio-economic policies of successive governments as well as endemic corruption led to the emergence of high level of unemployment among the teeming undergraduate students in particular and the youth in general.

Abdullahi (2019), observed that the gradual and rapid expansion of the Nigerian educational system and the growing demand for higher education leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower in the country. Currently, the number of Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Secondary Schools both federal, state and privately owned has increased and there has been the problem of absorbing the number of these graduates produced by those institutions in Nigeria every year into the economy. The current harsh economic conditions coupled with gradual increase in graduate unemployment with its attendant consequences in the country calls for the need to focus more on entrepreneurship education as a gateway to employment creation among the teeming population of unemployed undergraduates and for stabilizing the economy.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

According to Idris and Baba (2016), the federal government of Nigeria apparently worried by the soaring unemployment rate, declining per capita income, youth's restiveness in various part of the country, directed all higher institutions in the country to run entrepreneurship studies programme as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their disciplines with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. By making entrepreneurship education compulsory, government is aiming at producing opportunity or knowledge-based entrepreneurs who are expected to be critical growth drivers of our economy. There are two main reasons of the importance of entrepreneurship course in higher education. First, the fact that there are limited jobs offered in the marketplace. Therefore, entrepreneurship subject is taught to encourage students to create jobs to overcome unemployment problems. Second, the need to change students' mindset from finding jobs to creating jobs after graduation. In short, entrepreneurship education offers a mix of skill building and also a mind-set shift from job seeking to job creation (Wilson and Sepulveda, 2010). According to the National Policy of Education (2013), University education should make optimum contribution to national development by "making entrepreneurship skills acquisition a requirement of all Nigeria universities". It is against this background this study was carried out to determine the perception of business education students on the role of entrepreneurship education in job creation among the teeming population of undergraduate students in Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the role of entrepreneurship education in creating job opportunities among the growing number of undergraduate students in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

- Find out the entrepreneurship knowledge acquired by the undergraduate students.
- Determine the entrepreneurial attitudes among the undergraduate students.
- Determine the role of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among the undergraduates students of becoming self-employed after graduation.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following questions.

- Do undergraduate students acquire entrepreneurship knowledge during their studies?
- What are the entrepreneurial attitudes of the undergraduate students?
- Does entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intentions among the undergraduate students of becoming self-employed after graduation?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Institutional Economic Theory serves to analyze, in a holistic way, the contextual factors as determinants of entrepreneurship. According to this framework, institutions include any form of constraint that human beings devise to shape their interaction. They can be either formal—such as political and economic rules and contracts— or informal—such as codes of conduct, attitudes, values, norms of behavior, and conventions. In fact, it has been stated that this theory currently supplies the most consistent and appropriate conceptual framework to probe the influence of the environmental factors on entrepreneurship in a region or country (Veciana, 1999:25). This paper therefore focused on the informal factors to determine the role of entrepreneurship education in job creation among undergraduate students.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Ubong (2013) define entrepreneurship as the act of generating, developing and managing business ideas successfully. This definition could imply that entrepreneurship has to do with the planning, development, management and control of a business outfit, with a view to generating financial gain. Kuratko (2003), define entrepreneurship as a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new, novel ideas and creative solutions. Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur, which can be defined as "one who undertakes innovations, finance a business venture in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods". This may result in new organizations or may be part of revitalizing mature organizations in response to a perceived opportunity. The most obvious form of entrepreneurship is that of starting new businesses (referred as Start-up Company); however, in recent years, the term has been extended to social and political forms of entrepreneurial activity. When entrepreneurship is describing activities within a firm or large organization it is referred to as intra-preneurship and may include corporate venturing, when large entities spin-off organizations (Shane, 2003).



According to Norman and Jeffrey (2016), an entrepreneur is one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth by identifying significant opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalize on them. Although many people come up with great business ideas, most never act on their ideas.

2.3 Entrepreneurship Education

Bukola (2011) opined that the need for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria started emerging in the mid-1980s. This is because before this period, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently. In the mid-80s, the Nigeria economic collapsed while youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof. There was large-scale layoff of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjustment policies and bad economic trends in the country. In the face of this situation, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged. According to Agu (2006), entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business. According to Ekpoh and Edet (2011), entrepreneurship has become one of the main alternatives for students after they graduate. This is because entrepreneurship offers many benefits, such as setting up one's own business and the possibility of having significant financial rewards than working for others. Thus, the significance of entrepreneurship education being taught is based on the consideration that entrepreneurs are needed to solve the nation's socio-economic problems (Ciputra, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

The design used in the study was descriptive survey. The population for the study comprised of 944 (300 and 400 level) undergraduate students of Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare affiliated to university of Maiduguri and that 274 students were selected as the sample size using a proportionate random sampling technique. Krejcie and Morgan in Kolo (1992) table of sampling was used as a guide in determining the sample size. The instrument used is a five points Likert scale response structured questionnaire of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) and Undecided (UD). The instrument has two sections of A and B. Section A sought the demographic data of the respondents while section B consisted of 21 items requesting the respondents to indicate the level of their agreement or otherwise regarding the problem of the study. The instrument was face validated by experts in business education department. The final draft of the validated instrument was pilot tested at Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa, Jigawa State with a sample of 40 undergraduate students that were in 300 level. A reliability of 0.74 was obtained using split-half method. The instrument was administered to the selected respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. Out of the 274 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 250 copies were retrieved indicating a return rate of 91%. Frequency table and percentage was used in answering the research questions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of descriptive data

The results obtained from the analysis of the data collected were presented as follows:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents. (N = 944)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	638	68
	Female	306	32
	Total	944	100 (%)
Level of Study	300	410	43
	400	534	57
	Total	944	100 (%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The demographic profile of respondents presented in table 1 above indicates that 68% of the respondents were male while female constitutes 32%. The table also reveals that 43% of the respondents were in 300 level of their studies while 57% were in their final year of study.

4.2 Research Question 1

Do undergraduate students acquire entrepreneurship knowledge during their studies?



Table 2: Respondents' Entrepreneurial Knowledge

S/N	Item Statement	Responses					
		Agreed		Disagreed		Undecided	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	I learn how to identify business opportunities during my studies	210	84	40	16	00	00
2.	I learn how to invest and manage a business	225	90	20	08	05	02
3.	I learn better the steps one has to take to establish a new business	223	89	27	11	00	00
4.	I learn the procedures one need to take in order to start a new personal business	185	74	35	14	30	12
5.	I acquire the knowledge on how to develop business plan	205	82	30	12	15	06
6.	I acquire the practical managerial skills for establishing a new business	190	76	35	14	25	10
7.	I learn how to identify sources of business finance	220	88	20	08	10	04

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Results in table 2 above shows that the respondents have agreed that due to their participation in entrepreneurship education have acquired entrepreneurial knowledge for them to effectively participate in entrepreneurship activities after graduation. This is evidently shown in the level of their agreement with the 7 items asked regarding their agreement or otherwise on the entrepreneurial knowledge they acquired during their studies.

4.3 Research Question 2

What are the entrepreneurial attitudes of the undergraduate students?

Table 3: Respondents' Entrepreneurial Attitudes

S/N	Item Statement	Responses					
		Agreed		Disagreed		Undecided	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	I prefer entrepreneurial career to become self-employed	215	86	20	08	15	06
2.	I prefer entrepreneurial career to create a new business	195	78	25	10	30	12
3.	I consider entrepreneurship a desirable option	235	94	10	04	05	02
4.	My interest in entrepreneurship have greatly improved	228	91	12	05	10	04
5.	I prefer entrepreneurial career to create more wealth for my self	195	78	35	14	20	08
6.	I prefer entrepreneurial career to create job opportunity to others	178	71	37	15	35	14
7.	I feel motivated towards entrepreneurship as a career to acquire personal security	215	86	25	10	10	04

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 3 above reveals the respondents' level of agreement with the 7 items asked regarding their attitude toward entrepreneurial activities. The results show that entrepreneurship is a desirable career option to the respondents and that entrepreneurship education is important in preparing them to become potential entrepreneurs.

4.4 Research Question 3

Does entrepreneurship education influences entrepreneurial intentions among the undergraduate students of becoming self-employed after graduation?

Table 4: Respondents' Entrepreneurial Intentions

S/N	Item Statement	Responses					
		Agreed		Disagreed		Undecided	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	I consider self-employment very important to me after graduation	212	85	20	08	18	07
2.	The notion of working for myself is very appealing to me	198	79	22	09	30	12
3.	My personal satisfaction with self-employment keeps on increasing	215	86	15	06	20	08



4.	I have a strong feeling of starting my own business right after graduation	232	93	13	05	05	02
5.	I intend to start my business within one to two years after graduation	225	90	10	04	15	06
6.	I intend to establish my own business immediately after retirement from civil service	57	23	153	61	40	16
7.	I have no intention of starting and managing any business in my life	23	09	207	83	20	08

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 4 above shows the respondents' level of agreement regarding their entrepreneurial intentions after graduation. The results reveal that entrepreneurship education influences respondents' intentions of establishing and managing business enterprise of their choice after graduation. Their levels of agreement demonstrates that they have a strong passion of becoming self-employed than job seekers after graduation.

4.5 Findings from the Study

- The undergraduate students have acquired entrepreneurial knowledge due to their participation in entrepreneurship education.
- The students have demonstrated strong entrepreneurial attitude toward entrepreneurial career option after graduation.
- Entrepreneurship education influences the entrepreneurial intentions of the respondents in becoming self-employed after graduation.

5. DISCUSSION

Discussion of the findings from the study was based on the research questions raised to guide the study presented as follows:

Results in Table 2 reveals that the respondents have agreed that due to their participation in entrepreneurship education have acquired entrepreneurial knowledge for them to effectively participate in entrepreneurship activities after graduation. This result is in agreement with the findings of Igbal, Melhem & Kokash (2012) who found that most students who participated in entrepreneurship education believed that the programme had given them enough knowledge and skills to successfully start their own businesses. Also, a study by Mapfaira and Setibi (2014) found that 73% of students were willing to start their own businesses after going through entrepreneurship education.

Results in Table 3 reveal that entrepreneurship is a desirable career option to the respondents and that entrepreneurship education is important in preparing them to become potential entrepreneurs. This finding is in tandem with the findings of O'Connor (2012) which reveals the critical role of entrepreneurship education in promoting entrepreneurial mind-set, entrepreneurial attitude, and entrepreneurship as a future career. Also, a study by Edigbonya (2013) reveals that entrepreneurship education positively impacts on university students' attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Results in Table 4 reveal that entrepreneurship education influences respondents' intentions of establishing and managing business enterprise of their choice after graduation. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Willie and et al (2009) on a survey conducted among Nigerian undergraduate students reveals that entrepreneurship education has a significant influence in motivating them to become entrepreneurs after graduation. Also, a study by Yakubu, Dabo and Baba (2018) reveals a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and the students' entrepreneurial intentions.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the role of entrepreneurship education in creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Nigeria. Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that as a results of participation in the entrepreneurship education, most of the students demonstrated willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities after graduation. Also, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education have equipped the students with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills which promotes entrepreneurial attitude among them and equally influences their entrepreneurial intentions of becoming self-employed than job seekers after graduation.

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- Students should be motivated to start and manage business after graduation by making start-up capital available to them.



- There should be easy access to micro-credit for the graduates who are interested in starting and managing a business after graduation.
- As part of teaching entrepreneurship course, the lecturers/institutions need to invite industries that provide loans for start-up business to the students and advise them on the procedures of obtaining loans.
- Higher institutions in Nigeria need to establish data bases of students who successfully established their own businesses after graduation for monitoring and technical support where necessary.

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