

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN THE SOUTH- EAST ZONE

**Okeke, M. N, Okonkwo, G. I
Oboreh, J. C**

*Department Of Business Administration, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University
Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria*

Abstract

The concept of entrepreneurship has become a buzzword among scholars and of general interest globally and in Nigeria, in particular because of the potentials it holds in ameliorating the increasing rate of graduate unemployment and its multiplier effect on a nation's economy. This research investigates the inclination towards entrepreneurship among university students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University and Imo State University, Owerri using a survey design and a randomly drawn sample of 90 respondents. A two- part, twelve-item questionnaire based on the Likert scale was used to generate primary data for the research. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Chronbach alpha and a reliability value of 0.84 was obtained. Two hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that entrepreneurship education is a precursor of entrepreneurial inclination and that both male and female undergraduates in business-related courses are inclined to self-employment. Based on the research findings, it was recommended that entrepreneurship education should be encouraged in Nigerian universities to serve as a catalyst for self-employment amongst graduates.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, inclination, graduate unemployment, planned behaviour theory, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, there has been an increasing interest in entrepreneurship because of its inherent value in increasing national prosperity and reducing the scourge of unemployment among young people, especially graduates of tertiary institutions of learning. In Nigeria, entrepreneurial studies have been brought to the fore in the curriculum of university education by the National University Commission by making courses in entrepreneurship compulsory for undergraduates in the country (NUC, 2004). This initiative is being pursued vigorously because of the potentials it holds for the incubation and execution of entrepreneurial ideas in young people and the multiplier effect it could have on Nigeria's economy (Kavitha, Anantharaman, and Ramanathan, (2013); Pulka, Rikwentishe and Ibrahim, 2014; Okeke and Eme, 2014). Nevertheless, the extent to which this educational policy would succeed would depend on several factors. First, the level and scope of entrepreneurial education should be stimulating enough to boost the entrepreneurial attitude of undergraduates such as to enable them to start up businesses of their own upon graduation. Second, undergraduates should purge themselves of the notion or attitude that university education is meant to prepare them to secure white-collar jobs (which are scarce and in most cases unavailable) in government offices and private companies. In other words, they must imbibe the 'I can do it spirit' rather than hold on to the erroneous belief that university education is geared towards white-collar jobs in the private and public sectors of the economy.

Entrepreneurship education has been identified as one of the variables that could help to nurture and ginger entrepreneurial attitude in undergraduates and at the same time facilitate their career choices after leaving school. Although several studies (Keat, Selvarajahand and Meyer, (2011); Beranek, (2015); Opoku-Antwi, Amofah, Nyamaah-Koffuor and Yakubu (2012); Fatoki (2014) have been carried out in other climes on the impact of entrepreneurial education on career choices, there is a paucity of research in developing countries especially Nigeria on the perception of female and male undergraduates in business-related departments on the extent to which entrepreneurship education could influence entrepreneurial propensity among university undergraduates. In addition, little is known on the perception of male and female undergraduates studying business-related programmes towards self-employment. This study seeks to fill this gap in research by examining these areas and close the identified gaps in research accordingly.

THE STUDY PROBLEM

The growing incidence of unemployment among professionals such as accountants, engineers and other graduates from universities and other tertiary institutions has become a topical issue in government circles and scholars. (Bassey and Atan, 2012). Every year graduates leave private and public universities to join the army of unemployed graduates who graduated in previous years. The implication of this is that the nation's skilled manpower remains dormant and wasted.

Statistics in Nigeria reveal that 70 per cent of the 80 million youths are either unemployed or underemployed (Mahmood, 2014). A clear evidence of the severity of graduate unemployment is the mammoth crowd of graduates that turned up during the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercise in 2014 during which a number of graduates lost their lives due to poor crowd control. For example, in 2010, the rate of unemployment stood at 21.4 per cent, rose to 27.4 per cent in 2012, and declined to 24.7 per cent in 2013 (Ekpo, 2015). These high rates clearly indicate that Nigeria has an unemployment problem, which is unacceptable to any right-thinking person. This problem has been compounded by the recent sharp drop in crude oil prices in the international oil market which has adversely affected the capacity of the various governments to provide white collar jobs for the teeming unemployed graduates. Although graduate unemployment is not peculiar to Nigeria, its negative socio-economic impact on jobless graduates and the economic cost to the Nigerian economy is quite severe and unquantifiable.

Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

The concept of entrepreneurship has been brought to the front burner in public discourse and among academics due to its crucial role in ameliorating unemployment among the youths, especially university graduates and its role in the economic growth of any nation. The quest for entrepreneurship has acquired more urgency in developing countries especially in Nigeria due to the unacceptable statistics of unemployed persons especially graduates of tertiary institutions (Ekpo, 2011).

Entrepreneurship has been identified as the best way to ameliorate graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This study defines graduate unemployment to include graduates of universities and polytechnics who are capable and willing to work but could not find a job, or are discriminated for lack of experience. In this category also includes graduates who have never worked, those who have lost their jobs and seeking re-entry into the work force, and those who are underemployed or under disguised unemployment. They constitute about 60% of the Nigeria labor supply market (Eneji, Mai-Lafia and Weiping, 2013). Based on the recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report for 2014, over 82 percent of Nigerian youths see entrepreneurship as a good career, 77 percent believe that successful entrepreneurs have high status and recognition, and 78 percent are comfortable with the level of visibility that entrepreneurs enjoy in the media. (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report for 2014 cited in Kolawole, 2015).

Gender and entrepreneurship

With increasing level of educational opportunities and awareness, women are contributing to the development of their societies. Gone are the days when women are consigned to the kitchen and the rearing of babies. Entrepreneurship is not exclusive to any sex or group of people although the resources and capacity to engage in business ventures may vary among individuals and countries. Therefore, women participation in entrepreneurial activities varies widely among countries and regions of the world. (World Bank, 2005).

Nigeria has been adjudged as one of the countries in Africa with more women entrepreneurs than men and more early-stage female entrepreneurs than males. In the same vein, Africa has been categorized as the continent with a much higher proportion of female entrepreneurs compared to other regions, with Nigeria and Zambia (both 40.7 percent) coming on top and countries like the United States (10.4 percent), the UK (5.5 percent), Norway (3.6 percent) and France (3.1 percent) lagging far behind. (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report for 2014 cited in Kolawole, 2015). The implication of this report is that African women are playing a more increasing and prominent role in their respective families as bread winners, unlike their counterparts in developed countries. A further implication of this is that entrepreneurship is not gender specific.

Entrepreneurship education

According to Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2012), entrepreneurship education can be referred to as a planned imparting of entrepreneurial knowledge in a learner to enable him or her cope with the challenges associated with running a business at the end of the training. The aim of such knowledge is to enable the learner have the requisite skills to be on his own at the end of the training. The purpose of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is to equip undergraduates with the skills and knowledge to become entrepreneurs upon graduation if they so desire. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Ojeifo, 2012). The purpose of entrepreneurship education is to enable young people develop their potentials and spirit of innovation by exploring opportunities available in their immediate environment and elsewhere to become not only self-reliant and independent after leaving school but also create opportunities for others to be gainfully engaged in productive ventures.

Entrepreneurial Inclination

An inclination simply means the way somebody feels about something: a feeling that pushes somebody to make a particular choice or decision (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Thus, entrepreneurial inclination can be referred to as a tendency, preference or predisposition to self-employment. It could also mean the personal attitudes or proclivity of an individual to think or act in a way, which suggests that he or she harbours a feeling of being self-employed in future. Thus, entrepreneurial inclination could be referred to as the degree to which an individual is predisposed to taking up entrepreneurial activities. Most studies on entrepreneurial intent merely describe entrepreneurship without stating in details what entrepreneurial inclination actually entails (Dutta and Thornbill (2008), cited in Iqbal, Melhem, and Kohash, 2013). Entrepreneurial inclination therefore refers to the attitude or mode of thinking about entrepreneurship. According to Armstrong (2008), "attitudes are developed through experiences but they are less stable than traits, and can change as new experiences are gained or influences absorbed" The implication here is that an entrepreneurial inclination does not automatically mean that an individual will eventually become an entrepreneur. Other factors and circumstances could interfere with an individual's initial predisposition to entrepreneurial thought patterns. Pihie (2009) however observes that a strong association exists between the entrepreneurial intention of an individual and his actual behaviour. Thus, entrepreneurship can be analyzed from a dual perspective of actual entrepreneurship and

entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurship falls under intentional activity which precedes the actual act of starting a business. Katz (1999) and Reynolds (1995) found intention to be a poor predictor of future behaviour because of the high influence of situational factors. The study by Ekundayo and Babatunde (2014) on the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian undergraduates found that exposure to entrepreneurship education influences students' intentions of becoming self-employed. The fundamental assumption of entrepreneurship education is that entrepreneurship is a skill or behavior that can be learned. It is therefore an area of knowledge, which can be acquired through the educational system. A similar view was expressed by Drucker (2005) when he asserted that entrepreneurship development is a dynamic process of enhancing entrepreneur skills and knowledge through structured training and institution building programmes. The extent to which this objective can be realized would depend on the individual's disposition to learn and the ease of exploiting available opportunities in the environment.

METHODOLOGY

Instrument, Sample size and sampling technique:

A two-part, twelve – item structured questionnaire based on the four-point Likert scale which covered different issues relating to the research topic was used to generate data for answering two research questions and two null hypotheses. The instrument comprises two main sections - the demographic variables and direct measures of entrepreneurial inclination. The items in the literature were largely based on the survey of literature on the various concepts related to the study. With the use of the Chronbach alpha, a reliability value of 0.84 was obtained.

This study adopted the descriptive survey approach. The design was used to examine the perception of undergraduates on entrepreneurial education, personal attitude to self-employment and the effect of gender on entrepreneurial attitudes. The study was based on a stratified random sample of 90 students from a population of 245 final year students in the five universities selected. The final year students were purposely chosen because of their assumed level of knowledge of the subject matter and their high level of exposure to entrepreneurial education. This sample size which represented 36.73% of the population of study was considered adequate and sufficient for generalization of results. Besides, a 10% sample size from a known universe or population is normally considered adequate for research project (Ogolo, 1996; Basely and Clover, 1998; Duke, 2006).

Hypotheses Testing:

In testing the two hypotheses, H_0 and H_1 were formulated.

Hypothesis one

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the mean rating of female and male undergraduate students on the effect of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis two

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male undergraduates studying business related courses and their inclination towards self-employment after graduation from the university.

Presentation of data

Table 1 – Demographic information of students.

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
18 – 20	33	36.67	36.67
21 - 25	57	63.33	100
26 or above	-	-	
Total		100	

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 2 – Gender information of respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Male	31	34.44	34.44
Female	59	65.56	100
Total	90	100	

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 3 Occupation of parents / guardian:

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Civil/ public service	19	21.11%	21.11
Self employed	71	78.89	100
Total	90	100	

Source: Field survey, 2016.

Table 4- Distribution of respondents by departments

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Business admin.	24	26.66
Banking and finance	23	25.56
Marketing	22	24.44
Accountancy	22	24.44
Total	90	100

Source: Field survey, 2016.

RESULTS

Table 5- The cluster means and standard deviation of male and female undergraduates on the item statements.

		MALES		FEMALES	
		Pooled Mean	SD	Pooled Mean	SD
S/N	Item statements				
1	Entrepreneurial education	2.89	0.81	2.73	0.81
2	Intentions after graduation	2.64	0.86	2.89	0.81

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Table 6

SEX	N	Pooled Mean	SD	Df	Prob	Z-cal	Z-tab
Males	31	2.89	0.81				
				88	0.05	-1.26	1.96
Females	59	2.73	0.81				

Hypothesis two

Table 7

SEX	N	Pooled Mean	SD	Df	Prob	Z-cal	Z-tab
Males	31	2.64	0.86				
				88	0.05	-1.86	1.96
Females	59	2.89	0.81				

DISCUSSION

The mean response of male undergraduates on the impact of entrepreneurship education on inclination towards self-employment is 2.89 with a standard deviation of 0.81 while the mean response of female undergraduates is 2.73 and a standard deviation of 0.81. The test of hypothesis one at 88 degrees of freedom and 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$) revealed that there was no significant differences in the cluster mean ratings between male and female undergraduates on the impact of entrepreneurial education and inclination to self employment.

The data in this study showed a z calculated value of -1.26 (Table 6) which is less than the z table of 1.96 at 5% level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of female and male undergraduate students on the effect of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intention is accepted. The implication here is that both male and female respondents in the study are of the view that entrepreneurship education enhances the inclination of young graduates towards self employment. In other words male and female undergraduates in the study perceive entrepreneurship education as a predisposing factor to entrepreneurial inclination. This finding is consistent with the empirical findings of Opoku-Antwi et al (2012) and the recent GEM report of 2014 that entrepreneurship is not gender specific. The study is also in alignment with the study by Ekundayo and Babatunde (2014) on the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian undergraduates which found that exposure to entrepreneurship education influences students' intentions of becoming self-employed.

This is also consistent with the views of Walstad (1998) that entrepreneurship education has been generally acknowledged as one of the predisposing factors that can enhance entrepreneurial attitude in youths. The implication here is that entrepreneurship can be learned.

The statistics of the test of the second hypothesis is also revealing. The pooled mean for males is 2.64 with a standard deviation of 0.86 while the pooled mean of female respondents is 2.89 with a standard deviation of 0.81.

The data in this study showed a z calculated value of -1.86 (Table 7) which is less than the z table of 1.96 at 5% level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male undergraduates studying business related courses and their inclination towards self-employment after graduation from the university is accepted. The implication here is that gender is not a barrier or hindrance to entrepreneurial

inclination. This finding is consistent with the empirical findings of Mba (2014) that business students in Batangas State University possess entrepreneurial intentions, skills and capabilities. It was also found out that entrepreneurial intention is independent of their profile variables.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship education has been generally acknowledged as a panacea for graduate unemployment. In Nigeria efforts are currently being made to encourage entrepreneurship among university graduates through entrepreneurship education and training. This approach would enhance creativity, ingenuity, and innovativeness in graduates to start small ventures of their own after graduation. Entrepreneurship is not gender specific. Thus both male and female should benefit from programmes and opportunities which are capable of inculcating the entrepreneurial spirit in young graduates. The findings of this study lay emphasis on the importance of entrepreneurship education in enhancing entrepreneurial inclination and the fact that entrepreneurship is not gender specific.

Recommendations

- Efforts should be intensified in exposing undergraduates in Nigerian universities to entrepreneurship education.
- Entrepreneurship education should be included in primary and secondary education curriculum. This will go a long way in enhancing proficiency.

REFERENCES

- Aina, B.S& Salako, H.A. (2008). Determinants of foreign investment in Nigeria: an empirical investigation. *CBN Economic and Financial Review* 39, 1, 23-29.
- Aja-Okorie & Adali (2013) Achieving Youth Empowerment through Repositioning Entrepreneurial Education In Nigerian Universities: Problems And Prospects *European Scientific Journal*, 3: (.9), 2-8.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
- Autio, E. Keeley, R.H ; Klofsten, M.; Parker, G.CG & Hay, M (2001). Entrepreneurial Intent among Students in Scandinavia and in the USA. *Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2001, 145–160. Retrieved from www.tandf.co.uk/journals.
- Basley, H.L & Clover, V.T. (1998). Research for business decisions. Business research methods. 4th ed. Publishing Horizons Inc. Columbus: Ohio.
- Bassey, G.E & Atan, J.E. (2012). Labour Market Distortions and University Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: Issues and Remedies. *Current Research Journal of Economic Theory* , 4(3): 67-76.
- Cuningham, J. B. & Lischeron, J. (1991). Defining Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 29:45-61.
- Dash, M & Kaur, K. (2012). Youth Entrepreneurship as a Way of Boosting Indian Economic Competitiveness: A Study of Orissa. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 2, 1, 10-21. Retrieved from www.econjournals.com.
- Duke, J. E. (2006). *Entrepreneurial strategy for the economic development of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. A study of selected projects/ organizations in the region.* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis). University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.
- Dutta, D. K. and Thornhill, S. L. (2008). The evolution of growth intentions: Toward a cognition-based model, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 23, Pp. 307-332.

- Ekpo, A.H., 2011. Nigeria and the Paradox of Jobless Growth. BSJ August 1.
- Ekpo, A. (2015). Unemployment crisis worse than NBS new statistics, Vanguard newspaper, June 21, 2015.
- Ekundayo, B. B & Babatunde, E. D. (2014). The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian undergraduates, *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature* 2, 11,15-26.
- Etuk, G.K ,Etudor-Eyo,E & Etuk, E.N (2013). Gender and entrepreneurial activities of secondary school administrators in southern Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management* 7,11,832-842. Retrieved from www.academicjournals.org/AJBM.
- Fatoki , O.(2014).The Entrepreneurial Intention of Undergraduate Students in South Africa:The Influences of Entrepreneurship Education and Previous Work Experience.*Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, 7,294.
- Fatoki, O.O. (2010). Graduate entrepreneurial intention in South Africa: motivations and obstacles. *International Journal of Business Management*, 5(9): 87-98.
- Hisrich, R. D., & Peters, M. P. (2002). *Entrepreneurship* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kavitha, R.; Anantharaman, R.N., & Ramanathan, S. (2013). Environmental, personality and motivational factors; comparism study between entrepreneurs and women non entrepreneurs in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Management*,8, 13.
- Katz, J.A. (1988) Intentions, hurdles, and start-ups: an analysis of entrepreneurial follow-through: *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, pp. 43–57.
- Katz, J.A. (1990) Longitudinal analysis of self-employment follow-through, *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 2(1), 15–25.
- Keat, O.Y; Selvarajah, C & Meyer, D. (2011).Inclination towards entrepreneurship among university students: An empirical study of Malaysian university students, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2 , 4; ,206-220.Retrieved from www.ijbssnet.com..
- Kolawole, Y.(2015). Business enthusiasm: Nigeria tops global ranking. Vanguard newspaper. Retrieved from www.vangurdonline.com.
- Kolvereid, L. & Moen, O. (1997) Entrepreneurship among business graduates: Does a major in entrepreneurship make a difference? *Journal of European industrial training*, 21(4), 754.
- Abuja: Education Trust Fund (ETF)
- Mahmood, A(2014). A paper on Nigerian Sustainable Banking Principle during the 2014 World Environment Day programme organised by the Federal Ministry of Environment in Abuja.
- Mba, A.M (2014) .Entrepreneurial Intentions among Business Students in Batangas State University Asia Pacific *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*,2, 4, 1-6. Retrieved from www.apjmr.com.
- Microsoft® Encarta (2009). Microsoft Corporation
- National University Commission (2004). Labour market expectations of Nigerian graduates. Abuja: Education Trust Fund (ETF).
- Nwachukwu, P. O, Oboada ,A. U, Undutimi, J. D.(2014). The role of university management in sustainable national development through innovation and entrepreneurial nosiness. *International Journal of Education Foundations*, 2(1), 13-24.
- Ogolo, M.B. (1996). Students guide to writing research and project proposal. Port

- Harcourt :City Creek Press.
- Ogundele, O. J. K. Akingbade,W.A and Akinlabi , H.B (2012). Entrepreneurship training and education as strategic tools for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* , 2 , 1,148-156.
- Ojeifo,S.A.(2012). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3, 14,78-82 Retrieved from www.iiste.org.
- Okeke, M. I &Eme, O.I. (2014).Challenges facing entrepreneurs in Nigeria. *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, and Management Studies*, 3, 5, 18-34.
- Opoku-Antwi,G.L Amofah,K,Nyamaah-Koffuor,K&Yakubu,A(2012). Entrepreneurial Intention Among Senior High School Students in the Sunyani Municipality. *International Review of Management and Marketing* 2, 4, 210-219.
- Pihie, Z.A.L (2009). Entrepreneurship as a career choice: an analysis of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intentions of university students. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(2): 338-349.
- Reynolds, P.D. (1995).Who starts new. rms? Linear additive versus interaction based models, Babson –Kauffman Entrepreneurship Research Conference, London, 19–23 April.
- Walstad, W.B. (1998). The effects of economic knowledge on public opinion on economic issues.*Journal of Economic Education*, 28(3), 195-205.
- Weihirch, H. Cannice M. V. Koontz, H (2008). *Management: A global and entrepreneurial perspective*. (12th ed) New Delhi: Tata McGraw Hill.
- World Bank (2005). Meeting the challenge of Africa’s development: A World Bank Group Action Plan. World Bank Board Document, 0445, Washington DC, World Bank.