

## Entrepreneurship Education for Promoting Development in the Governance of Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper examined the application of entrepreneurship education for promoting development in the governance of Nigeria. Universities are established to promote teaching, research, and community service, but the achievement of national development goals depends largely on the quality of entrepreneurship education guiding graduates toward self-reliance and job creation. Entrepreneurship education values such as innovation, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, self-reliance, and practical skill acquisition play a critical role in shaping graduate employability and economic growth. The paper discusses how the application of these values enhances wealth creation, poverty alleviation, resource utilization, and societal development. It also reviewed relevant conceptual and theoretical perspectives on entrepreneurship education and governance with emphasis placed on the need for Nigerian universities to implement practice-oriented entrepreneurial training, encourage reflective learning, and involve experienced entrepreneurs which will enhance the actualization of national development goals. The paper also highlighted the challenges confronting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, including inadequate funding, shortage of qualified personnel, poor infrastructure, lack of supervision, and non-involvement of successful entrepreneurs, which may hinder the actualization of development goals. The paper concluded that the consistent application of effective entrepreneurship education values is essential for the realization of self-reliant graduates and sustainable economic development. It suggested that university management should provide adequate infrastructure, recruit competent personnel, and ensure strong supervision of entrepreneurship education programmes for effective national development.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship Education, National Development, Governance, Self-Reliance, Unemployment.*

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### Introduction

Entrepreneurship, as one of the key drivers of national and social development, plays a fundamental role in the economic advancement of modern societies. It is an indispensable component of any meaningful national development plan, largely due to its capacity to generate, develop, and transform ideas into viable innovations. Consequently, the importance of entrepreneurship in every community, including Nigeria, cannot be overemphasized. Many developed economies have attained their current levels of growth through sustained investment in entrepreneurship. For instance, China, which was once at a comparable

developmental level with Nigeria, has experienced significant economic transformation through strategic investment in entrepreneurship education and enterprise development. In order for Nigeria to address the persistent challenge of unemployment, entrepreneurship education must be given serious attention. In recognition of this, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), has mandated entrepreneurship education as a core course for all undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. This initiative is aimed at instilling entrepreneurial mindsets in students, thereby preparing them for self-employment, job creation, and active participation in societal development. Entrepreneurship education is widely regarded as a gateway to sustainable wealth creation in Nigeria (Ogundele et al., 2012). It is therefore imperative that it be taken seriously at all levels of education. Entrepreneurship refers to the process of identifying opportunities and the ability to harness such opportunities to create profitable ventures. Otokiti (2006) describes entrepreneurship as an economic process of wealth creation undertaken by individuals who assume significant risks in terms of equity, time, and career commitment, while delivering value through products or services. Similarly, Bhat and Bay (2000) define entrepreneurship as the process of value creation through the identification and exploitation of opportunities, such as the development of new products and the exploration of new markets. The importance of entrepreneurial education in promoting self-reliance and national development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. With the recent introduction of entrepreneurship education at both secondary and tertiary levels, the expectation is that students will be motivated to become more creative and innovative. Furthermore, entrepreneurial education is intended to enhance students' ability to work collaboratively in teams, promote joint venture initiatives, and introduce learners to small business concepts and opportunities. Ultimately, it is expected to encourage students to establish business ventures, contribute to job creation, and play significant roles in the socio-economic development of society.

### **Conceptual Clarification Entrepreneurship**

The term *entrepreneurship* is derived from the French word "*entreprendre*," which means to undertake or to pursue opportunities in order to fulfill needs and wants through innovation (Ndedi, 2009). Entrepreneurs are individuals who identify opportunities and take deliberate steps to exploit them, thereby addressing the needs of individuals or groups within society.

Amadi (n.d.) describes an entrepreneur as an innovative individual who initiates and develops new business ventures where none previously existed. In many instances, entrepreneurial opportunities arise in areas where certain goods or services are absent. Individuals with entrepreneurial training are therefore positioned to identify such gaps and establish viable enterprises. For example, prior to the early 2000s, mobile telecommunication services were largely unavailable in Nigeria, with landline telephones being the dominant mode of communication. Entrepreneurs identified this gap in the telecommunications sector and introduced mobile networks and devices, which have since transformed communication, enabling international connectivity, such as calling from Nigeria to London with ease. This illustrates how entrepreneurs identify unmet needs within society, establish businesses to satisfy those needs, and in the process generate personal and societal value.

According to Ogundele et al. (2012), an entrepreneur is an individual who continuously seeks out, responds to, and exploits change as an opportunity. In this regard, entrepreneurs are persons or groups who possess the ability to recognize business opportunities, critically evaluate them, and mobilize the necessary resources and actions required to transform such opportunities into viable enterprises. Entrepreneurship is also understood as a process involving the efforts of individuals

in identifying viable business opportunities (Hill & McGowan, 1999). Within the Nigerian economy, numerous opportunities exist across various sectors that graduating students can identify and explore for economic engagement and self-reliance.

Dike and Effanga (2020) assert that entrepreneurship is a process of change in which innovation plays a central role. It is a fundamental requirement for economic development in both free-market and mixed economies, where innovation drives productivity and growth. Innovation enhances the marginal productivity of factors of production, thereby contributing to overall economic advancement. From the foregoing, entrepreneurship encompasses innovation, opportunity recognition, value creation, and risk-bearing in competitive markets.

Similarly, Aina and Salako (2008) describe entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of individuals to identify business opportunities and invest in them through the optimal utilization of scarce resources for profit maximization. Willingness refers to the voluntary commitment of an individual to engage in entrepreneurial activities, while ability denotes the capacity to execute such activities effectively. Entrepreneurship therefore involves both the readiness and competence to identify profitable ventures, often with limited start-up capital.

In essence, entrepreneurial activity involves recognizing unmet needs within a given environment, conducting necessary feasibility assessments, and investing resources into viable ventures that yield returns. It also entails the capacity to identify non-existent businesses within a specific locality and establish such enterprises with the expectation of profitability based on identified demand. Furthermore, entrepreneurship has been defined as the process of creating or adding value to an organization through the effective utilization of its resources (Chinedu & John-Av Kamelu, 2016).

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship Education has been defined as a form of education that equips students with positive attitudes, innovative capacities, and practical skills that enable them to become self-reliant rather than dependent on government employment (Oduwaiye, 2009). Attitudes refer to the feelings, emotions, and dispositions of individuals at a given time. In this context, a critical question arises regarding graduating students: how do they perceive themselves upon graduation, and what are their aspirations? Do they possess the inclination to establish their own enterprises, or do they prefer to wait for government employment opportunities?

Innovation refers to the introduction of new ideas, methods, or products. Graduates who have been exposed to entrepreneurship education are expected to demonstrate creativity and the ability to generate ideas that can translate into viable economic ventures. A deep understanding of entrepreneurship education enhances the capacity of Nigerian students to become gainfully self-employed entrepreneurs and, in many cases, employers of labour. Agu (2006) describes entrepreneurship education as a form of learning that transforms the thinking patterns and attitudes of learners, enabling them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and manage business enterprises. Furthermore, the personal goals, traits, and academic orientation of entrepreneurs significantly influence national development. Many entrepreneurs engage in daily business activities that contribute, directly or indirectly, to societal needs (Hatten, 2006). However, it has been argued that countries with limited natural resources tend to experience faster economic growth than resource-rich nations. This is because economies that rely heavily on natural resources often develop complacency and reduced entrepreneurial drive. In such contexts, resource abundance may discourage entrepreneurship, free trade, and the development of open economic systems (Ernst, 2005). The debate over whether a nation is resource-rich or resource-poor is largely

dependent on knowledge, which in turn is shaped by the quality of education available to its citizens. As noted by Otokiti (2006), Nigeria remains underdeveloped despite its abundant natural resources because it lacks the most critical resource—knowledge. This assertion holds true to a considerable extent, particularly when learners are unwilling to acquire knowledge and when educators are unable to effectively impart it. When students graduate with adequate entrepreneurial skills and competencies, their orientation shifts towards identifying and pursuing business opportunities that can contribute positively to both personal development and societal advancement. Tamuno and Ogiji, as cited in Akpan and Etor (2013), describe entrepreneurship education as a form of education capable of fostering the growth and development of enterprises through technical and vocational training. It not only enhances enterprise development but also contributes significantly to national economic growth. When students acquire and apply entrepreneurial skills, they are able to generate income, thereby contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. Similarly, Okiti (2009) views entrepreneurship education as a gateway to employment opportunities and job creation, which ultimately promotes self-reliance and self-employment among university graduates. Indeed, entrepreneurial knowledge empowers graduates to identify investment opportunities, establish businesses, and contribute to job creation within society.

### **Entrepreneurship Education and Standard of Living in Nigerian Governance**

The quality of instruction within any educational system can only be effectively sustained when the system upholds respect for the worth and dignity of the individual learner. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) emphasizes that the skills to be acquired by learners must be integrative in nature, well-rooted, and capable of withstanding the test of time.

Njoku (2003) categorizes essential life skills into cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, which are necessary for functional living and holistic human development. However, the Nigerian educational system is currently confronted with several societal challenges that undermine the attainment of these objectives. Issues such as rape, sexual harassment, cultism, forgery, and examination malpractice have increasingly infiltrated the system, thereby eroding the ethical foundations of education. Consequently, these vices have contributed to declining standards and widespread poverty, which further affects the quality of life of citizens.

Awotua-Efebo (1999), as cited in Anyanwu (2020), observes that the system often produces graduates with little or no practical skills necessary for functional living. He further notes that many students graduate without practical exposure to the equipment and tools for which they were supposedly trained. This deficiency has significantly contributed to the rising incidence of unemployment and poverty within the society.

Nonetheless, Anyanwu (2020) maintains that there is hope for improvement, and this hope lies in the effective integration of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian educational system. He argues that when properly implemented, entrepreneurship education can instill in learners the ability to recognize business opportunities, acquire skills for both paid and self-employment, and develop competencies necessary for self-reliance. It also provides individuals with technical and vocational knowledge essential for agricultural, commercial, and industrial development.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship education exposes learners to career awareness by broadening their understanding of available opportunities within the world of work. It enhances awareness of the increasing complexity of modern technology, production processes, and management systems, while also equipping learners with knowledge of success and failure factors in business development. In essence, entrepreneurship education empowers individuals to create wealth,

become self-reliant, and contribute meaningfully to economic development. It plays a significant role in poverty alleviation and serves as a form of insurance against unemployment and economic dependency (Orisa, 2013).

### **Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education for National Development**

Implementation has been defined by Ogbonnaya (2010) as the process of carrying out planned objectives. In the view of Akudolu (2009), the implementation of any policy or set of objectives can only be achieved when all instrumental activities are executed within a strategically planned entrepreneurial environment. This implies that effective implementation of entrepreneurship education requires the provision of workshops, adequate facilities, proper funding, instructional materials, and qualified, competent lecturers.

Entrepreneurship education is widely regarded as a key solution to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria and beyond. However, despite its introduction into Nigerian universities over the past decade and a half, observable impact on graduate employment has remained limited. Graduate unemployment continues to rise, with many graduates still roaming the streets in search of white-collar employment. The increasing unemployment rate in Nigeria is partly attributed to the inadequate acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among graduates, which leaves them ill-prepared for post-graduation economic engagement. Consequently, many graduates continue to rely on the expectation that government will provide employment opportunities. This raises concerns about the extent to which entrepreneurship education is effectively implemented in universities, particularly in Delta State. Effective implementation of entrepreneurship education should produce graduates who are self-reliant, equipped with relevant skills, motivation, and positive entrepreneurial attitudes. When properly implemented, entrepreneurship education has the potential to significantly reduce unemployment in the country.

### **Approaches to the Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education for National Development**

Greene (2017) identifies four major approaches to teaching entrepreneurship education: starting a business, serious games and simulations, design-based learning, and reflective practice.

#### **1. Starting a Business:**

This approach emphasizes experiential learning, where students are encouraged to establish and operate their own businesses as part of their entrepreneurship education. It is based on a venture-oriented model that involves learners actively engaging in entrepreneurial activities. To venture is to undertake or attempt new initiatives without fear of potential risks or outcomes. This approach fosters creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, as students collaboratively address challenges encountered in business formation and development.

#### **2. Serious Games and Simulations:**

In this approach, Greene highlights the use of games as an effective pedagogical tool in entrepreneurship education. This method is based on two key assumptions. First, games are structured around rules and gameplay, which encourage learners to understand systems and processes. Second, games provide an engaging and enjoyable learning experience, which enhances student participation. Through gaming, students are exposed to simulated real-world situations where they learn decision-making and problem-solving skills. Common digital games such as puzzles, football simulations, racing games, and scrabble can be adapted for educational purposes.

These tools help learners develop entrepreneurial thinking by simulating real-life business challenges and scenarios.

### **3. Design-Based Learning:**

This approach involves teaching entrepreneurship through a design-oriented framework that enables students to identify and act on entrepreneurial opportunities using methods such as observation, fieldwork, and creative problem-solving. Opportunity recognition is central to this approach. Entrepreneurs are trained to observe their environment critically in order to identify viable business opportunities. Lecturers can adopt this method to help students develop entrepreneurial thinking skills, enabling them to discover and exploit new opportunities effectively.

### **4. Reflective Practice:**

The concept of reflective practice was introduced by Donald Schön (1983), who argued that theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient for effective professional practice. Instead, professionals develop competence through continuous engagement in practical experiences. Reflection involves the process of critically analyzing past experiences to derive meaning and improve future performance. Greene (2017) also emphasizes that reflection is a key mechanism through which knowledge is constructed from experience. Students tend to learn more effectively from what they observe and practice than from theoretical instruction alone. Therefore, incorporating real-life entrepreneurial experiences into teaching enhances students' ability to internalize knowledge and apply it effectively in future ventures.

## **Factors to Consider in The Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education**

### **Personnel for the Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education**

Personnel, according to the Free Dictionary, refers to the individuals employed within an organization or business to perform specific services or functions. In the context of education, schools are organized institutions, and teachers or lecturers constitute the personnel employed to impart knowledge and facilitate learning among students. However, concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy and quality of lecturers available to effectively handle entrepreneurship education, particularly in universities in Delta State.

The effective implementation of entrepreneurship education is highly dependent on the availability of qualified and sufficient lecturers, as their role in transmitting knowledge and practical skills is indispensable. The National Universities Commission (NUC, 2011) stipulates a staff-student ratio of 1:30 for entrepreneurship education courses, implying that one lecturer should handle approximately thirty students. However, this standard is often not observed in many universities in Delta State, where departments typically have over one hundred students with an insufficient number of lecturers to manage them effectively. Enoch (2015) observes that none of the teacher training institutions is currently offering intensive training programmes in entrepreneurship education for prospective teachers. This situation may contribute to the shortage of qualified personnel in universities offering entrepreneurship education courses. Consequently, entrepreneurship education lecturers are expected to possess strong subject-matter competence. Supporting this view, Akudolu (2011) asserts that continuous professional development leads to the production of quality teachers. Regular training through workshops, seminars, and related programmes is therefore essential in building competent personnel with both theoretical knowledge and practical entrepreneurial experience.

### **Infrastructure and Facilities for the Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education**

Effective teaching and learning in any educational system require the provision of adequate infrastructure and facilities. These include classrooms, laboratories or workshops equipped with appropriate tools, as well as furniture such as chairs and tables, whiteboards and markers, projectors, public address systems, fans or air conditioning units, and relevant instructional materials. These facilities are essential for ensuring learner comfort and facilitating meaningful teaching and learning processes. Enoch (2015) supports this position by stating that without adequate physical and material resources, meaningful learning cannot take place.

In many Nigerian universities, entrepreneurship education is currently delivered with grossly inadequate facilities, and in some cases, without any functional infrastructure. Osarenrun-Osaghe (2012) attributes the need for retraining of Nigerian graduates before they become employable to the wide gap between school-based workshop facilities and those available in actual workplaces. Entrepreneurship education is fundamentally skill-based and cannot be effectively delivered through theoretical instruction alone. Practical engagement is essential to provide students with firsthand experience that enhances their entrepreneurial competencies.

Odusanya (2012), in his study, found that most skill-based courses are taught predominantly in theoretical form, with little or no practical application, largely due to the absence or inadequacy of relevant facilities. Even where such facilities exist, they are often insufficient to accommodate the large number of students. For entrepreneurship education to be effective, adequate infrastructure and functional facilities must be in place. Furthermore, Owoye and Yara (2011) emphasize that the availability of adequate facilities not only enables students to access learning resources referenced by instructors but also supports self-paced learning and independent study. In essence, effective entrepreneurship education must be practice-oriented. Practical training cannot be effectively implemented without the necessary tools and facilities. In this regard, government and other stakeholders in education are encouraged to provide and maintain adequate infrastructure such as classrooms, workshops, and laboratories, properly equipped with relevant instructional resources. This will enhance students' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, promote self-reliance, and improve productivity upon graduation.

### **Challenges encountered in the Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education**

Since the introduction of entrepreneurship education into Nigerian universities, its implementation has not been fully effective due to several challenges. Nwekeaku (2013) identifies the following constraints:

#### **• Lack of Adequate and Skilled Personnel:**

Lecturers handling entrepreneurship education are often drawn from various academic departments without prior training in entrepreneurship pedagogy. As a result, many lack the requisite competence to effectively deliver the course. In addition, the number of qualified personnel available to teach the subject remains insufficient.

#### **• Hasty Preparation:**

The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum was implemented with undue haste. Although the initiative is commendable, adequate research and pilot testing to determine its effectiveness were not sufficiently conducted prior to nationwide adoption.

• **Poor State of Infrastructure:**

Many Nigerian universities are faced with infrastructural deficiencies, including unreliable electricity supply, poor road networks, inadequate telecommunication systems, insufficient water supply, and a shortage of classrooms. According to Nwekeaku (2013), these challenges further undermine the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education.

• **Faulty Foundation:**

As the popular saying goes, “a house built on a weak foundation is bound to collapse.” Entrepreneurship education was introduced at the tertiary level without adequate foundational grounding at the primary and secondary school levels, thereby weakening its overall implementation structure.

• **Inadequate Funding:**

Since its introduction, entrepreneurship education has not been supported with dedicated funding. Effective implementation requires adequate financial resources for the provision of classrooms, workshops, libraries, computers, and other instructional materials necessary for practical learning.

• **Lack of Commitment:**

A lack of commitment among students also poses a significant challenge. Many students do not fully understand the objectives of entrepreneurship education and therefore do not take the course seriously. On the part of lecturers, lack of proper training and qualification often leads to low motivation and reduced commitment to teaching the subject effectively.

• **Lack of Supervision:**

Drawing from McGregor’s Theory X, which assumes that individuals generally avoid work when possible, effective supervision becomes essential. However, inadequate monitoring by regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) and weak internal supervision within universities have contributed to lax implementation of entrepreneurship education.

• **Poor Knowledge of Subject Area:**

Due to the absence of formal training institutions specifically dedicated to entrepreneurship education, lecturers are often selected from unrelated disciplines. This results in a lack of in-depth understanding and firsthand knowledge of entrepreneurship principles and practice.

• **Non-Involvement of Experienced and Successful Entrepreneurs:**

Given the practical nature of entrepreneurship education, it would be expected that experienced entrepreneurs play a significant role in its delivery. However, in most cases, this is not so, as the course is largely handled by academic staff without practical entrepreneurial experience. The exclusion of experienced entrepreneurs limits the practical relevance of the programme and undermines its objectives.

**Reasons Entrepreneurs Fail In Business in Nigerian**

According to Griffin (2002), approximately 63 percent of all new businesses fail to celebrate their sixth anniversary. Supporting this view, Ottih (2000) observes that not all businesses continue as going concerns over time; while some survive and grow, others eventually collapse. He further notes, based on empirical research, that although all businesses are exposed to failure risks, the

mortality rate is significantly higher among new enterprises. For instance, out of 380 recorded business failures, enterprises less than three years old accounted for 202 failures, those between three and five years recorded 93 failures, those between six and nine years recorded 58 failures, while businesses over ten years accounted for 27 failures.

**Griffin (2002) identifies four major factors responsible for the failure of new businesses, as follows:**

**1. Managerial Incompetence or Inexperience:**

Some entrepreneurs assume that common sense, hard work, or enthusiasm alone are sufficient for business success. However, without adequate knowledge of basic managerial principles and decision-making processes, such individuals are unlikely to achieve long-term success in business.

**2. Neglect:**

Neglect also contributes significantly to business failure. Some entrepreneurs attempt to run businesses on a part-time basis or allocate insufficient time to their ventures. However, establishing a new business requires full commitment and significant time investment. Entrepreneurs who are unwilling to dedicate adequate time and effort are less likely to sustain their ventures.

**3. Weak Control Systems:**

Inadequate control systems can result in serious operational challenges. Effective monitoring mechanisms are essential for tracking business performance and identifying potential risks early. Without such systems, managers may become aware of problems only when they have escalated beyond manageable levels.

**4. Insufficient Capital:**

Inadequate funding is a major cause of business failure. Many entrepreneurs tend to be overly optimistic about the speed at which profits will be realized. However, most new businesses require months or even years before becoming profitable. For example, Amazon.com operated for several years without profit. Experts generally recommend that new businesses should have sufficient capital to sustain operations for at least six months to one year without generating income.

**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that knowledge acquisition, which is a core outcome of education, is one of the most powerful instruments for empowering individuals. It enables people not only to realize their potential but also to effectively engage with and adapt to their social and material environments, particularly in a dynamic knowledge-driven and market-oriented world.

Education plays a central role in enabling individuals to respond meaningfully to developmental opportunities, as it forms the foundation for sustainable economic, political, and social development. The primary objective of schooling is to promote socio-economic integration within society, thereby equipping individuals to perform essential economic, social, and political roles.

However, the colonial legacy of the Nigerian educational curriculum failed to adequately equip school leavers with practical skills necessary for self-reliance and meaningful livelihood. As a result, a large number of graduates remain unemployed due to a lack of vocational and entrepreneurial training, thereby contributing to rising poverty levels and declining standards of living. In this context, entrepreneurship education presents a viable solution to these challenges. It has the potential to reduce poverty and stimulate socio-economic development by equipping

individuals with flexible, practical skills required for participation in knowledge-intensive economic activities both locally and globally.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are made:

1. The Federal and State Governments should formulate and implement effective policies that support the successful implementation of entrepreneurship education programmes in order to enhance their impact within educational institutions.
2. University administrators should establish clearly defined strategies for the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education and ensure strict adherence to these approved approaches.
3. Educational stakeholders should ensure the adequate provision of both human and material resources required to enhance the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education programmes.
4. Only competent and qualified personnel in entrepreneurship education should be recruited by educational managers to ensure effective delivery of entrepreneurial programmes.
5. Educational stakeholders should ensure the adequate provision, maintenance, and sustainability of entrepreneurial infrastructure to support effective implementation within educational institutions.

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