

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: SURVEY DATA EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS FOR GRAD- UATE UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION

Reuben A. Agu^{1,2}; Chukwudi C. Nwokolo^{1,2}; Robert C. Ezeanwu^{1,3};
MaryAnn Ogbuakanne^{1,2}; Chidiogo F. Nwokolo⁴
& Onuobia Onyedikachi U.²

¹Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development Research

²Department of Economics

³Department of Mass Communication

⁴Department of English and Literally Studies

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Corresponding Author: chukwudi.nwokolo@unn.edu.ng, +2348033383604

Abstract

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has remained high despite the effort of the government to reduce the rate. Over the years, the nation has consistently witnessed double digit graduate unemployment rate. In a bid to reduce the rate of unemployment and especially graduate unemployment in the country, the Nigerian government had at different times initiated programmes. Despite the efforts, the rate of unemployment and youth unemployment has remained high. Following the United Nations declaration for entrepreneurship in 2005 and the adoption by the Nigerian government in 2006, the Nigerian universities through the National University Commission started a mandatory entrepreneurship development course for all undergraduates before graduation in 2007. This was aimed at making the future graduates employable and employers of labour. However, with over ten years of implementing this programme, the rate of graduate unemployment is still high. This study examined the ways students are taught in this programme using survey of 600 university graduates. The inconclusiveness of the finding led to the introduction of Delphi technique using 65 expert teachers of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. From the result, it was discovered that to reduce graduate unemployment through the entrepreneurship development programme, the combination of Business Plan, Exchange Programme/ Internship and Field Survey/ Case Studies should be adopted.

Keywords: graduate unemployment, entrepreneurship education, unemployment reduction, graduates

1.0 Introduction

For more than a decade now, Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) has been part of undergraduate curriculum in virtually all universities in Nigeria. It has been the view of policy makers that EEd would significantly facilitate reduction in graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Unemployment dialogue in Nigeria has been intense and this is not surprising as statistics show that generally youth unemployment (particularly graduate unemployment) has been on the rise, increasing from 89.0% and 3.4% in 2000 through 9.0% and 9.0% in 2005, 9.7% and 22.1% in 2010, 16.3% and 30.9% in 2015 to 19.7% and 44.0% in 2018 respectively for total youth unemployment and graduate unemployment respectively (see figure1).

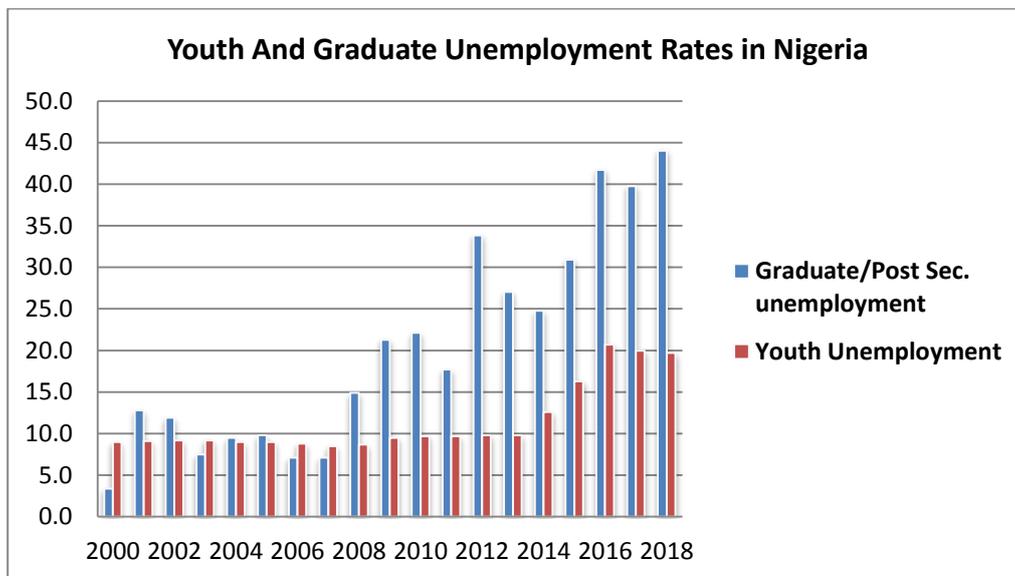


Figure 1: Youth and Graduate unemployment rates in Nigeria (National statistical bulletin (NBS) and World Bank Indicators (WBI) – various Years editions)

With the massification of universities in Nigeria, the number of graduates churned out yearly has quadrupled, thereby making the graduate component of the unemployed to increase relative to others. In reaction to this, education planners in Nigeria introduced compulsory EEd in the country as a bulwark against rising youth and graduate unemployment. Empirical studies by: Clark, Davis and Harnish (1984); McMullan, Long and Willson (1985); Flemming, (1994); Vespar and McMullan (1997) and; Luthje and Franke (2002) show that EEd is crucial in facilitating graduate start – ups and business growth. For instance, in Massachusetts University, EEd has been cited a vital factor in making over 80% of alumni

created companies to survive (National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, 2004). Preston (2001) captured the importance of EEd in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) thus:

MIT students and faculty create roughly two new inventions every day..... MIT's Technology Licensing Office files four patents a week, licenses hundreds of inventions to industry each year, and creates ten to twenty new start-ups a year around these inventions. Between 1985 and today, the MIT licensing office has created over 200 companies. These companies currently employ thousands of people and have a market value of approximately \$20 billion. In Massachusetts alone there are 1,065 companies founded by MIT alumni; worldwide there are more than 4,500 companies created by MIT alumni.

In some other universities like: Stanford University; University of Victoria, Canada; Babson College; and Harvard University, EEd has been mentioned as one of the factors that make alumni establish successful companies (National Agency for Enterprise Construction, 2004). Nevertheless, there are contradictory findings regarding the positive contributions of EEd. Gorman, Hanlon and King (1997), Luthje and Franke (2002) have observed that EEd in our universities may not necessarily yield positive contributions.

EEd has different outcomes in different countries, the reason for this as noted in the background report of the study “entrepreneurship education at universities – a benchmark study” by National Agency for Enterprise Construction (2004) is probably due to differences in the pedagogies used in EEd delivery across countries. The report isolated some pedagogies used in most universities in the US and Canada, which have been identified as effective in delivering EEd. The universities that use those pedagogies were adjudged best practice universities, and these best practice universities categorization were supported by the rankings of national and international ranking systems such as entrepreneurship rankings from the Financial Times, US News, Business Week, Entrepreneur Magazine, Success Magazine, and Entrepreneur.com for universities in the United States, and the Report of a National Study for Entrepreneurship in Canada for Canadian universities (National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, 2003). Best practice in EEd refers to a pattern of EEd delivery that exposes students to the possibility of inculcating a very high level of entrepreneurial skills as a result of using a variety of pedagogies especially those that are high on the psychomotor and affective domains. Best practice EEd pedagogies as used in best practice universities include: business plan competition; internship; use of model teachers (use of lecturers with real life entrepreneurship experience); mentor – mentee interaction and relationship; field trips; business games; industry spin –

offs; business incubation; experimental laboratories; case studies; practical business projects; and students entrepreneurship conference. This study has categorized these pedagogies into light pedagogies (those that do not require high commitment of the university like case studies, business plan competition, and field trip) and the heavy pedagogies (those that require high commitment of a university).

Another variant of pedagogy mostly used in many universities in Africa (Nigeria inclusive) for general service delivery is the traditional lecture method. The traditional method of lecture delivery has been criticized by educational and industrial experts as not being innovative enough to successfully deliver EEd because it lays a lot of emphasis on the cognitive domain to the neglect or near total neglect of the psychomotor domain. Unfortunately, some aspects of entrepreneurship (enterprise setting) are practice based and rightly require its teaching to go beyond cognitive threshold to psychomotor. This implies that EEd delivery should mostly involve the psychomotor domain. It is however not certain the type of pedagogy (or set of pedagogies) used in Nigerian universities in delivering EEd that could be adjudged to be the best in terms of effective delivery of EEd since it is relatively a new programme in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Arising from the fact that EEd is highly psychomotor and should use mainly experiential pedagogies in its delivery, the plausibility of best practice universities using experiential pedagogies become wide on mark. Success stories from the best practice universities show that the use of such pedagogies could enhance EEd outcomes (National Agency for Enterprise Construction, 2004). However, the traditional method of EEd delivery, though heavily criticized, stresses the cognitive domain and hence the theoretical aspect of EEd which is required in student's evaluation for award of degrees. Interestingly, and in order to deliver EEd, Nigerian universities are allowed to select or choose the pedagogy or set of pedagogies that could enable them be effective in delivering EEd. Several combinations of aforementioned pedagogies are being put to use. For instance, some universities use the lecture method of teaching together with business plan competition to drive EEd, while others use internship / case studies together with business plan completion. Can any of the pedagogies or a given set of pedagogies constitute a benchmark that can adequately drive EEd in Nigeria? Even, is there any need to evolve benchmark pedagogy for EEd? These constitute the crux of this study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the pedagogies used to teach Entrepreneurship Education (EEEd) in Nigerian Universities. Specifically, the study carries out investigations to:

1. Find out the pedagogies used in teaching entrepreneurship education in universities in Nigeria.
2. Find out which of the pedagogies used in teaching Entrepreneurship Education (EEEd) is most effective in inculcating entrepreneurship skills in the graduate?
3. Find out if the entrepreneurship skills (ES) inculcated through Entrepreneurship Education (EEEd) can make graduates pursue a career in entrepreneurship.

Research Questions

1. What are the pedagogies employed in the teaching of EEEds in Nigerian Universities?
2. Do EEEd pedagogies in Nigerian universities correspond with those of global Best practice universities?
3. Are the pedagogies used in the teaching of entrepreneurship in Nigeria effective in inculcating entrepreneurship skills in students?

Methodology

The data for this study was obtained from primary source. Primary data was used to elicit information from 600 Nigerian university graduates. The questionnaire was in 4 points likert scaled format which implied that any mean of 2.5 and above signified acceptance while below is rejection. However, the inconclusiveness of this method made the study to also adopt the Delphi study technique. For the Delphi technique, 65 proven teachers of entrepreneurship development in the Nigerian universities were sampled. This means that a total of 665 persons were enumerated for this study. Specifically, the 600 Nigerian graduates were used to identify the entrepreneurship education pedagogies used in teaching them entrepreneurship development using a well-structured respondent friendly questionnaire. Since the response of these Nigerian university graduates who passed through the entrepreneurship development programme in their undergraduate were unable to identify the pedagogy that works for unemployment reduction in Nigeria, the study adopted the Delphi technique using 65 proven teachers of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

RESULTS

Table 1 Identification of the entrepreneurship pedagogies used for Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria.

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Your school used real life entrepreneurs in teaching you entrepreneurship development	2.51	1.15	Accepted
You were taking to another school or sent for internship to enhance your understanding of entrepreneurship development programme	2.84	1.08	Accepted
You were linked to incubation centres/industrial parks during your entrepreneurship programme.	1.50	0.50	Rejected
You were taught how to document a business plan	3.23	0.88	Accepted
You engaged in field survey and case studies during your entrepreneurship education programme.	2.14	1.41	Rejected

From the table, it could be deduced that only three of the pedagogies for entrepreneurship development are used by Nigerian universities in teaching entrepreneurship development to undergraduates. Precisely, the use of incubation centres/spin-offs/industrial parks and field survey/case studies with means of 1.50, and 2.14 respectively were below the minimum mean for acceptance, which implies that the two pedagogies are not in use in Nigeria. This informed the rejection of the two pedagogies as seen on the decision column of table 1. On the other hand, the use of real life entrepreneurs as teachers, exchange programme/internship and business plan competition with means of 2.51, 2.84 and 3.23 respectively were accepted as the only pedagogies used in teaching entrepreneurship to undergraduates in the Nigerian universities. This implies that the pedagogies used in teaching entrepreneurship development in the Nigerian universities were real life entrepreneurs as teachers, exchange programme/internship and business plan competition.

Table 2a Effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education pedagogies

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
The pedagogy used in teaching you entrepreneurship education redirected your thinking on entrepreneurship	2.00	1.17	Rejected
The pedagogy made you contemplate on becoming an employer	2.34	1.16	Rejected

The pedagogy exposed you to why businesses fail.	1.50	0.50	Rejected
The pedagogy made you consider starting your own business(es)	2.10	1.27	Rejected
The pedagogy enlightened you on sourcing for fund to start-up your business	2.38	1.37	Rejected
The pedagogy improved your understanding of the business environment	2.40	1.47	Rejected
The pedagogy increased your drive for creativity, value addition and innovation.	1.06	0.23	Rejected
With the entrepreneurship education, you now see wider opportunities than before.	2.29	1.28	Rejected
The pedagogy used in teaching you entrepreneurship development has equipped you with the right managerial attributes to excel in your chosen business.	1.91	1.27	Rejected

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 2b Delphi study result for pedagogy to be adopted for entrepreneurship education

Pedagogies	Ranked 1 st	Ranked 2 nd	Ranked 3 rd	Ranked 4 th	Ranked 5 th
Use of real life entrepreneurs as teachers	-	-	4	28	33
Use of exchange programme/internship	9	28	28	-	-
Use of incubation centres/spinoffs/ industrial parks	-	3	6	29	27
Use of business plan competition	53	8	2	2	-
Use of field surveys/case studies	3	-	25	6	5

Source: Delphi study, 2019

The result on table 2 showed that the graduates declined on the effectiveness of the pedagogies in solving the unemployment quagmire in Nigeria. This was because the means of all these items were less than the minimum mean for acceptance of 2.5 for a 4 points likert scaled instrument. Specifically, they refused that the pedagogies used in teaching entrepreneurship education could not redirect their thinking, made them contemplate on becoming employers, exposed

them to why businesses fail, consider starting their own business, enlightened them sourcing for fund to start-up their business and improved their understanding of their business environment. In the same way, they rejected that the pedagogies were unable to drive the creativity, value addition and innovation; see wider opportunities than before and has equipped them with the right managerial attributes to excel in your chosen business.

Since the information from the respondents could not explain the pedagogy or combination of pedagogies that should work for graduate unemployment reduction, the study employed the Delphi study technique. From the responses, it could be seen that 53 of the 65 experts (proven teachers of entrepreneurship) accepted the use of business plan competition as the best pedagogy to use for entrepreneurship development. This was followed by the use of exchange programme/internship and use of field surveys/case studies. The least ranked pedagogy was the use of real life entrepreneurs. Further discussions with the experts showed that the use of only the business plan competition as the only pedagogy may not yield a desirable result. The experts agreed that the use of business plan competition combined with the use of exchange programme/internship and field survey/case studies would reduce the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education pedagogy is paramount towards achieving an impactful entrepreneurship development programme that can reduce graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This study examined the pedagogies used in teaching undergraduates entrepreneurship development to find out the one or combination that can reduce graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The findings showed that there is explicitly a pedagogy or combination of pedagogies that should work to bring about impactful entrepreneurship development programme. Based on this, the Delphi technique was introduced and in clear term, it showed that the use of Business Plan pedagogy was the best method to having impactful entrepreneurship development programme but its use alone cannot bring about the desired outcome hence the need to combine it with exchange programme/internship and field survey/case studies. From the discussions in this study, the EED pedagogy that works to reduce graduate unemployment rate in Nigeria are combination of Business Plan, Exchange Programme/ Internship and Field Survey/ Case Studies.

References

- Gorman, Hanlon, D., and King, W. (1997). Some research perspectives on entrepreneurial education, and education for small business management: A ten-year literature review. *International business Journal*.
- Luthje, C., Franke, N., (2002). Fostering entrepreneurship through university education and training: Lessons from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. European Academy of Management (EURAM) 2nd Annual Conference on: Innovative Research in Management. May 9 – 11, 2002, Stockholm, Sweden
- McMullan, W.E., Long, W.A., and Wilson, A (1985). MBA concentration on Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, 3 (1). 18 – 22.
- Menzies, Tereza or Yvon Gasse (1999) Entrepreneurship and Canadian Universities: Report of a National Study of Entrepreneurship Education.
- National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, (2003) Entrepreneurial Education in the Danish Educational System.
- National Agency for Enterprise and Construction, (2004). *Entrepreneurship Education at Universities – a Benchmark Study*. Background Report for the Entrepreneurship Index 2004, December 2004).
- Vesper, K. and McMullan, E.W., (1997) New venture scholarship versus practice: When entrepreneurship academics try the real things as applied research. *Technovation*, 17 (7). 349 – 358.