

Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education and Career Intentions of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The undesirable career intentions among students have contributed to a phenomenon which has led to a constantly growing graduates' unemployment rates in the labour market. The study was conducted to determine the influence of entrepreneurship and vocational education on career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was employed in the study. A sample of 607 tertiary education students in their final year entrepreneurship and vocational education courses were randomly selected in three tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A questionnaire tagged 'Students' Career Intentions and Perception of Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education Questionnaire (SPEVEQ)' was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated first and the reliability coefficient was 0.78. This ensured the instrument was reliable for the study. Five research questions were raised and answered using frequency counts, percentages and ordinal logistics regression as methods of data analysis. Findings also revealed that paid employment was the main career intention of tertiary education students (63.2%). Entrepreneurship and vocational education significantly influenced career intentions of tertiary education students $\chi^2(1) = 229.254, p < .05$. The study recommends that Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education Development Centres (EVEDC) should be given more priority by government in all public tertiary institutions to provide financial supports and other essential materials needed towards achievement of career intention for self-employability.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Vocational Education, Career Intention, Tertiary Institutions, Students.

Introduction

The growing number of graduates churned out by tertiary institutions in Nigeria has contributed immensely to a spate of unemployed youths in the country. While limited job offers exist in the public sectors, an insatiable appetite for work in government established institutions continues to grow among Nigerian graduates. This undesirable intention has contributed to a phenomenon which has led to a constantly growing graduates' unemployment rates in the labour market. Intentions reflect an individual's willingness or plans to engage in a particular behaviour (McStay, 2008).

Career intent refers to the aim to perform particular job behaviour. In the field of entrepreneurship and vocation studies, career intention is defined as the intention to start or own a new business, be self-employed, or an intention to get employed in public organisation (Zhao, Hills & Seibert, 2005). An individual intention relies on attitudes and perceptions towards being an employee or self-employed. In today's era of globalisation, it appears that individual's career patterns no longer follow traditional work norms, and as a result, experience gained through age is not necessarily a predictor of success. It follows that youth is not a barrier to entry to self-employment and that the tertiary students of the twenty-first century may consider self-employment as a viable career option following graduation. Therefore, entrepreneurship and vocational education is a tool that is available to increase individual's key attitudes, perceptions and intentions around a particular career.

Continuous development of entrepreneurship and vocational education in developing economies are expected to generate employment and improve economic development. Oyenuga, Odunaike and Amoda (2016) asserted that vocational and entrepreneurship education (VEE) is a factor for the economic growth. Entrepreneurship education is defined as educating individual's attitudes and skills that are necessary to respond to his environment in the process of conserving, starting and managing a business enterprise (Emaraton, 2008). European Commission Communities (2006) also defined entrepreneurship education as knowledge and skills that enable learners to turn ideas into action, promotes their creativity, innovation and risk taking abilities, as well as their ability to plan and manage business in order to achieve objectives.

Thus, entrepreneurship education provides a range of attributes, such as creativity, team work, risk management, and ability to handle uncertainty in a business venture or vocation. On the other hand, Ekpenyong (2011) defined vocational education as 'the education designed to prepare skilled personnel at lower levels of qualification for one or a group of occupations, trades or jobs. Okoh (2000) also viewed vocational education as part of the total experience of the individual whereby they learn successfully how to carry on a gainful occupation which involves the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for success in the occupation. Also, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2008) as cited in Seyi (2014) defined vocational education as those aspects of education which involves general education; the study of technologies and related science; and the acquisition of practical knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. In the same vein, Okoye and Arimonu (2016) conceptualized vocational education as a form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. Therefore, vocational education prepares students for effective participation in the world of work. Occupational fields such as fruit production and beverages, carpentry and wood work, fish farming and production, computer servicing and maintenance, beads making, fashion designing, clothing and textile, hair dressing, catering services, shoe making, building construction, among others are offered in Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics in Nigeria.

Over the past few years, there has been increasing interest in developing entrepreneurial and vocational skills of students in Nigeria as more private and public tertiary institutions are including entrepreneurship and vocational education in their

curriculum as part of their general studies (Aladejebi, 2018). In most models of entrepreneurship and vocational education programmes offered in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, students are to offer entrepreneurship studies irrespective of their course of study throughout their entire programme duration. Entrepreneurship as a general education and as a professional education component in tertiary institution is meant for all categories of students. Thus, institutions integrate entrepreneurship and vocational education for all students irrespective of initial course admission and expects them to start their own business after graduation either on vocational or professional level to alleviate poverty and join in the scheme of improving their social-economic environment in particularly and beyond for self-economic emancipation (Akinsanya, 2016). By this they can fit to work closely with entrepreneurs with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The overall mission is to produce graduates who in addition to their academic achievement will be skillful in one vocation in which they will rely on for self-sustenance and empowerment.

In view of this, Nigerian Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics started offering entrepreneurship and vocational education to their students as a way of creating awareness and encouraging future graduates to consider starting their own business ventures on graduation. The goal of introducing entrepreneurship education is in line with that of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) which emphasized on developing intellectual capacity and values for the individual survival that will provide enabling environment to acquire both physical and intellectual skills for self-reliance and becoming useful members of the society (Abdullahi & Jabor, 2019). The entrepreneurship education is expected to equip graduates with entrepreneurial skills necessary to engage in income yielding business ventures while the vocational education aspect of it is designed to identify their vocation of interest. The curriculum of entrepreneurship education is essential for developing knowledge in different disciplines that enable students to generate innovative and creative business ideas. Course contents such as financial, marketing and human resource management; ethical, social and legal aspects of business; and economics and technical studies all provide source of entrepreneurial motivation and knowledge.

According to Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014), vocational education entails the enrichment of the capabilities that influence the effective psychomotor or cognitive domains of individual in readiness for entry into the world of work in order to satisfy their intrinsic and extrinsic values, work, and aspirations such that local and national needs would be met. Recently, entrepreneurship and vocational education are two inseparable academic programmes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. The duo is part of Higher Education Institution (HEI) quality tools employed to surmount insuperable unemployment problem in Nigeria (Oshinyadi & Abioye, 2019). The study would be of immense significant to education stakeholders because early understanding of students' career intentions is important in predicting disposition of graduates towards self-reliance. It has been observed overtime that most students in the tertiary level of education have undesirable career intentions, that is, they did not prepare or have passion for the course of study offered to them to study. This situation has made so many to make up their minds to just gain admission to colleges and universities like their contemporaries toward acquiring advanced certificates without having the intention to go for the course of study leading to their career initially. This makes them to lack the diligence required to acquire the needed skills for the labour market. Of course, the

absence of these appropriate skills, graduates cannot be gainfully employed. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the influence of entrepreneurship and vocational education on career intentions of tertiary education students.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the influence of entrepreneurship and vocational education on career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) identify the career intentions of tertiary education students.
- (ii) determine the influence of entrepreneurship and vocational education on career intentions of tertiary education students
- (iii) determine the extent to which entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' self-employment intention
- (iv) determine the extent to which entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' paid employment intention
- (v) determine the extent to which entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' intention to further studies

Research Questions

Five research questions were raised to achieve the main objective of the study.

1. What are the career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State?
2. Do entrepreneurship and vocational education influence career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State?
3. To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' self-employment intention?
4. To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' paid employment intention?
5. To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' intention to further studies?

Literature Review

The theoretical framework linking the variables of this study is the theory of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour derived from the theory of reasoned action of Fishbein and Icek (1975) was propounded by Ajzen in 1991. The theory of planned behaviour states that behavioural intentions are formed by one's attitude toward that behaviour and one's subjective norms (e.g., influence by parents, role models, peers). The theory of planned behaviour hinged on three (3) factors: the person's attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm (the influence of other people), and perceived behavioural control (personal assessment of whether one can do it or not). Ajzen (2005) stated under the theory of planned behaviour that the intention was affected by an individual's behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour predicts an individual's intention to engage in behaviour at a specific time and place. Behavioural intention represents a person's motivation to plan or decide to perform certain behaviour mindfully. Attitude towards a behaviour is the degree to which a person has positive or negative feelings of the behaviour of interest. Subjective norm relates to a person's

perception of the social environment surrounding the behaviour (Conner & Armitage, 1998). Perceived behavioural control refers to the individual's perception of the extent to which performance behaviour is difficult or easy (Ajzen, 1991). The application of the theory to this study is that students' career intentions are the products of their perceptions of entrepreneurship and vocational education programme, the ideal institutional environment that influences how entrepreneurship and vocational education studies are being taught, and their perception of initiating a successful entrepreneurial venture. A number of researchers (McStay, 2008; Abubakar, 2017; Ayedun & Ajayi, 2018; and Aladejebi, 2018) have recently used the theory of planned behaviour to explain the connection between entrepreneurship and vocational education, and career intentions in their studies.

Several recent studies have also provided empirical links between entrepreneurship and vocational education and entrepreneurial intention of students (Abubakar, 2017; Ayedun & Ajayi, 2018; Aladejebi, 2018; Abdullahi & Jabor, 2019). In a study carried out by Ekpoh and Edet (2011) on entrepreneurship education and career intentions of tertiary education students, a survey research design was adopted in drawing 500 samples of final year students from two Universities in Akwa Ibom and Cross River states, Nigeria. Results showed that entrepreneurship education impacted positively on the career intentions of tertiary education students. However, the study found that a significant proportion in moderate level of skills acquired by students after completion of entrepreneurship course. While building several empirical evidences from literatures on entrepreneurship education and intention of Nigerian university students, Abubakar (2017) used conventional content analysis to explain that there are teaming numbers of youth without jobs, thereby affecting their well-being and national security. Their study indicated that offering entrepreneurship education course is aiding students in development of favourable entrepreneurial attitude and also has a positive effect on students' intention for new venture creation.

Olokundun (2017) in a study titled 'Perceptions of students on entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions in selected Nigerian universities' used sequential explanatory mixed method incorporating survey and semi-structured interviews to determine the effects of entrepreneurship education and learning orientation on entrepreneurial implementation intentions of students in the first four universities in Nigeria. The researcher discovered that entrepreneurship curriculum contents significantly impacted students' critical thinking and generation of business ideas, entrepreneurship pedagogy significantly affected students' shared vision and identification of business opportunities, and teaching methods in entrepreneurship significantly stimulate students' interest and business startups. In 2018, Aladejebi studied the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and discovered that the behavioural component of the students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education was positive. The study showed that entrepreneurship education resulted to more students showing career interest to pursue entrepreneurship ventures after graduation.

In the determination of students' entrepreneurial intentions among tertiary institution students, Ayedun and Ajayi (2018) employed survey research design, and found that entrepreneurship education has a positive influence on entrepreneurial intentions of students (with 73 per cent explained variation). In a study conducted by Abdullahi and Jabor (2019), entrepreneurship education was discovered to have provided undergraduate students with requisite skills needed for self-reliance. Recently, Nnebe (2019) investigated the effect of technical innovation, creativity, risk taking,

opportunity recognition on skill acquisition of graduates in public Universities in South East, Nigeria. Using cognitive approach theory, the researcher found that technical innovation, creativity, risk taking, and opportunity recognition have significant positive influence on skills acquisition of graduates in Nigeria public Universities. The study concludes that entrepreneurship education had a significant positive influence on skill acquisition of graduates in public universities.

In another recently conducted study, Ndofirepi (2020) used a cross-sectional survey of a sample of 308 vocational education students in Zimbabwe to study the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial goal intentions. The results showed that the effects of entrepreneurship education variable had a positive and statistically significant relationship with need for achievement, risk-taking propensity, internal locus of control and entrepreneurial goal intentions. Boldureanu et al. (2020) assessed the influence of exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models (chosen by students) during entrepreneurship education classes on student entrepreneurial intentions. Their study revealed entrepreneurship education based on successful entrepreneurial role models positively influence the entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions of students and could lead to higher orientation of student perception towards social benefits of entrepreneurship (new jobs) compared to financial ones (high income).

However, the extent to which entrepreneurship and vocational education are related to students' career intention is inconclusive among researchers. Ekpoh and Eder' (2011) study revealed only 27% of tertiary education students showing their career intentions towards self-employment compared to 30% who showed career intention towards paid employment. In another related study, Jacob and Ariya (2015) found a wide gap between entrepreneurship education teaching and students' intention for self-reliance. More than three-quarter of the students in their study claimed that the training has not prepared them for self-reliant after graduation, and only 20.7 per cent of students preferred to be self-employed. Tijani (2017) study found no significant combined moderating effect of student's personal factors on the dynamics between university support and students' entrepreneurship tendency. Similar to this finding, Oguntimehin and Olaniran (2017) revealed no significant difference between male and female students' entrepreneurial intentions. The work of Iro-Idoro and Iro-Idoro (2015) and Saraih et al. (2017) uncovered that entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy may also reduce or raise entrepreneurial behaviour among Nigerian youths.

Methodology

The study used descriptive research design to describe the variables of interest. The population used for this study was 6,072 tertiary institution students who were 2019/2020 final year entrepreneurship and vocational education students in Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Federal College of Education, Osiele, and Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo. Six hundred and seven tertiary (607) educational students were randomly selected as samples. The samples were selected using proportionate random sampling technique to represent at least 10 per cent of the entire study population as a good representative (Table 1). Thus, 432 respondents were randomly selected in Tai Solarin University of Education, 90 respondents were randomly selected in Federal College of Education, and 85 respondents were randomly selected in Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic.

Table 1
Population and sample size for the study

Tertiary Institution	Population	Proportion of Sample selected	Sample Size
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun	4,325	10%	432
Federal College of Education, Osiele	895	10%	90
Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo	852	10%	85
Total	6072	10%	607

The researchers used self-constructed instrument tagged 'Students' Career Intentions and Perception of Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education Questionnaire (SPEVEQ)' to collect data from the respondents. The instrument has two main parts (A and B). Part A was designed to gather data on career intention after graduation, and Part B was designed to collect data that describes respondents' attitudes and perception of entrepreneurship and vocational education programmes. This part has 20-item with four point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The psychometric properties of the instrument were determined using validity and reliability. Expert validation of the instrument was conducted by two measurement evaluators in the Department of Educational Management in Tai Solarin University of Education. The coefficient of reliability for the instrument was determined using Split-half reliability. Test-items were administered to 20 parallel students not included in the study, and the test items were divided into two comparable halves. The correlation of the sets of scores gave 0.78. The researchers applied Spearman-Brown prophecy formula to determine the whole 20-item questionnaire using the formula:

$$total\ test = \frac{2r_{split-half}}{1 + r_{split-half}}$$

$$r_{total\ test} = \frac{2(.78)}{1 + .78}$$

$$r_{total\ test} = .88$$

Hence, the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire by split-half was 0.88, and thus reliable. The SPEVEQ instrument was administered to the respondents by the researchers and two other trained researcher assistants in their respective institutions. Frequency counts, percentages, and ordinal logistics regression were used to analyse the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State?

Table 2

Career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State

Career Intentions	Frequency (n)	Percentage(%)
Further studies	72	11.9
Self-employment	151	24.9
Paid Employment	384	63.2
Total	607	100

The respondents were asked to indicate their career intentions after graduation. Results on table 2 revealed that the majority of the respondents representing 63.2% ($n=394$) indicated paid employment, 24.9% ($n=151$) of the respondents indicated self-employment, and only 11.9% ($n=72$) of the respondents indicated further studies.

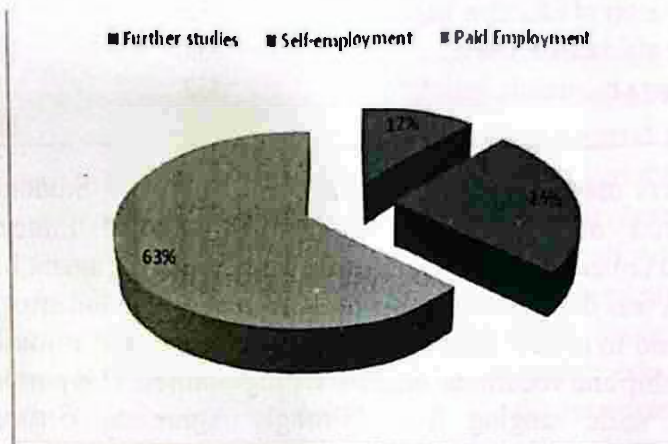


Figure 1: Career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in Ogun State

Research Question 2: Do entrepreneurship and vocational education influence career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State?

Table 3: Model fitting information showing the influence of entrepreneurship and vocational education on career intentions of tertiary education students.

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	515.025			
Final	285.771	229.254	1	.000

Link function: Logit

The final logistics regression model presented on table 3 revealed that entrepreneurship and vocational education significantly influenced career intentions of tertiary education students, $\chi^2(1) = 229.254$, $p < .05$. This implies that entrepreneurship and vocational education influenced career intentions of tertiary education students in Ogun State.

Research Question 3: To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' self-employment intention?

Table 4

Cross-tabulation of tertiary education students' responses to career intention predicted by entrepreneurship and vocational education

Career Intentions	Predicted Career Intention			Total
	Further Studies	Paid Employment	Self-Employment	
Further Studies	0 (0.0)	71 (98.6)	1 (1.4)	72 (100)
Paid Employment	3 (0.8)	192 (50.0)	189 (49.2)	384 (100)
Self-Employment	0 (0.0)	28 (18.5)	123 (81.5)	151 (100)
Total	3 (0.5)	291 (47.9)	313 (51.6)	607 (100)

Note. Figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 4 showed that out of 151 respondents who indicated self-employment as their career intention, about 123 respondents representing 81.5% of them were correctly predicted and influenced by entrepreneurship and vocational education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The result implied that entrepreneurship and vocational education largely influenced tertiary education students' self-employment intention.

Research Question 4: To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' paid employment intention?

The results on table 4 revealed that out of 384 respondents who indicated paid-employment as their career intention, about 192 respondents representing 50.0% of them were correctly predicted and influenced by entrepreneurship and vocational education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The result implied that entrepreneurship and vocational education moderately influenced tertiary education students' paid-employment intention.

Research Question 5: To what extent does entrepreneurship and vocational education influence tertiary education students' intention to further studies?

The results on table 4 revealed that out of 72 respondents who indicated further studies as their career intention, about none of the respondents were correctly predicted and influenced by entrepreneurship and vocational education in tertiary institutions in Ogun State. The result implied that entrepreneurship and vocational education had no influence on tertiary education students' intention on further studies.

Discussion of Findings

The results from research question one revealed that paid employment was the main career intention of tertiary education students, followed by self-employment and further studies. One probable reason for this incident is finance. Finance is a major barrier to young graduate seeking a venture start-up. In order to overcome this barrier graduate often paid employment as first destination career to accumulate saving that will assist in business start-up. A joint career intention would probably provide the necessary finances for business start-up and will serve as back-up should there be little or no means of sourcing funds. This finding was supported by previous works conducted by Onuma (2009) and Ekpoh and Edet (2011). Their findings revealed that tertiary education students in Nigeria majorly preferred paid employment to self-employment or further education or a combination of both. Graduates' social expectations are oriented to working and having a job in non-governmental enterprises or for a job in government institutions. The result also showed that about one-quarter of tertiary education students were identified as would-be entrepreneurs. This is in line with about 26.8% Ekpoh and Edet (2011) identified as having high preference for self-employment opportunities.

The result from research question two revealed that entrepreneurship and vocational education influenced career intentions of tertiary education students. This means that attitudes towards entrepreneurship and vocational education influence career intention of students. The implication of this finding is that higher positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and vocational studies among students will sustain an intended outcome of the programme in tertiary institutions. The would-be entrepreneurs can find inspiration, ideas, and ways to reinforce their intention before graduation. In

line with previous studies, such as Abubakar (2017), Olokundun (2017), and Ayedun and Ajayi (2018), the current finding show that learning entrepreneurship by exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models is important in influencing student career intentions and in improving their attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The result aligns with those obtained by Ndofirepi (2020) and Boldureanu et al. (2020) that entrepreneurship education based on successful entrepreneurial role models positively influence the entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions of students and could lead to high orientation of student perception towards social benefits of entrepreneurship.

Findings also revealed that entrepreneurship and vocational education largely influenced career intentions of tertiary education students towards self-employment. However, a moderate and no influence were recorded for career intentions towards paid employment and further studies respectively. These results provide evidence that entrepreneurship and vocational education predicted more proportion of students with positive attitude to engage in self-employment after graduation than engaging in paid employment or further studies. The results also fact check the existing relationship between offering entrepreneurship and vocational education and students' intention to become entrepreneurs—that is, what is termed entrepreneurial intentions by researchers. Pulka, Aminu and Rikwentishe (2015) and Jacob and Ariya (2015) findings corroborate this results. Pulka et al. (2015) found that entrepreneurship education has impact on the students' intention to start business very soon while the students showed that they are equipped with skills of identifying business opportunities and managing business effectively. Jacob and Ariya (2015) discovered that the training received has prepared them for self-reliant after graduation, and only 20.7 per cent of students preferred to be self-employed. The findings also provide evidence for the theoretical perspective of entrepreneurial and vocational planned behaviour which discusses that entrepreneurship and vocational education is associated with behavioural intentions that can enhance individual's intention for self-employability. Role models, in particular, can stimulate individual self-efficacy by providing vicarious experiences to students and increasing positive emotional reactions to entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The study concludes that entrepreneurship and vocational education offered students in tertiary institutions influenced their career intentions, and to some extent entrepreneurship and vocational education predicted correctly that most of students with initial intentions to be self-employed would ended up being entrepreneurs after graduation than getting involved in paid employment or in search for further high education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education Development Centres (EVEDCs) should be given more priority by the government in all public tertiary institutions to provide financial supports and other essential materials towards the achievement of career intention for self-employability.
2. Financial aids should be made available and accessible to final year students who possessed high level of intentions for new business startup in the future.

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respective vocations.

3. Management in tertiary institutions should work towards improving positive attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship and vocational education by delivering the needed teaching and learning materials for instruction.
4. Entrepreneurship and vocational education courses should be made compulsory for all students at every level in all tertiary education institutions by the relevant governing bodies (such as the National Universities Commission, National Commission for Colleges of Education etc) to help breed graduates with more career intention towards self-employability.
5. The teaching of entrepreneurship and vocational education courses should be tailored towards a more practical-oriented approach to redirect student interests who were hoping for paid employment after graduation.
6. Facilitators of entrepreneurship and vocational education courses should work towards engaging students in writing final year project in the forms of developing feasibility studies, business plans, and grantsmanship before being certified in their respective chosen vocations.

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