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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nigerian universities. Entrepreneurship education was introduced in universities to reduce the unemployment rate among graduates. It is a form of education which seeks to provide entrepreneurial skills for students so as to be self-employed and be a job creator after graduation. Despite its objectivities to reduce graduate unemployment in the country, there still persist increase in graduate unemployment in the country. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The paper equally examined entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nigeria. It further discussed the problem of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, among which is entrepreneurship education curriculum implementation, absent of qualified lecturers/instructors. Recommendations were raised, among which is; Universities authorities should ensure adequate implementation of entrepreneurship education Curriculum and should be made as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their discipline.

Introduction

Education is an effective instrument to ensuring national development; involves the inculcation of basic skills, knowledge and attitude which will enable participants function effectively and contribute to social and economic development their society and to the nation at large. It is seen as a comprehensive way through which human develop literacy skills, technological advancement and ability to harness natural resources in the most effective way.

Higher education plays greater role in ensuring a nation's development through advancement of knowledge, researches and production of efficient human resources.

University education in Nigeria are designed specially to produce high manpower, development of intellectual capability of individuals and acquisition physical and intellectual skills (FRN, 2013). Graduate produced by universities expected to be highly conscientious and professionally inclined to be self-reliant employer of labour and function effectively in the world of business. Akhumentokun Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013) noted that the expansion of university education in Nigeria

has had a tremendous increase in graduates' turnout yearly without a corresponding provision for their well-being in terms of employment opportunities. Most of these graduates are unemployed due to the fact that they do not possess the skills required to be employable and self-reliant but rely solely on government for employment. Chiacha and Agu (2013) observed that the issue of unemployment has been one of the major problems bedeviling Nigerian Government (Federal, State and Local), parents, graduates and the society at large, which has resulted in youth restiveness in form of kidnapping, prostitution, banditry, armed robbery, political thugs, cyber fraud and high poverty rate. Jake (2012) observed that university education in Nigeria has not met the goals and objective for its establishment. Uzoka, and Nwaizugbo (2021) also observed that university education curricula in Nigeria lacked the required contents to develop values, attitude and skills that will enable graduates to nurture their entrepreneurial abilities to realize entrepreneurship opportunities around them. Adebisi and Oni (2012) observed that lack of entrepreneurial skills among students in tertiary institutions is no doubt a major factor contributing to the problem of graduate unemployment in Nigeria.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (present and past administrations) recognized the high rate of unemployment and poverty among the youths who constitute the larger part of the population in the country, and has made provisions for various policies (both governmental and non-governmental) to eliminate and eradicate these problem bedeviling the country, but none of these policies and collaborations yielded the intended result, amongst these policies and programme includes; National Directorate for Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials and Development Council (RMRDC) among others to address the problems Nigerian citizens (Evans-Obinna, 2016). Most recently, the Buhari led administration also introduced various social investment programmes for youth empowerment such as N-power, Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (Youwin), Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), N-Tech, N-Agro, Youth Entrepreneurship Support Programme (YES-P) among others. As promising and enticing these programmes are, youth unemployment still persists in the country. This led to the introduction of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions by the government in collaboration with the National Universities Commission (NUC) in order to equip students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies so as to be job creators and not job seekers after graduation.

Entrepreneurship education was designed to improve the economic, technology and industrial development of the nation and as well as reduce poverty to its barest minimum. It is the type of education designed to equip and develop in students' skills and knowledge needed which will enable them start and manage their personal business after school (Ali & Ali, 2013). The inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education as a compulsory course for students in tertiary institution took effect from the 2007/2008 academic session, which led to its inclusion to the curriculum of universities and other higher education in Nigeria. This later graduated to some of universities having centre for entrepreneurship education (Aliyu, 2008).

Unemployment among youths in Nigeria has been on the alarming rate, it has remained a major problem bedeviling the nation. Ayinla and Ogunmeru (2015) maintained that unemployment in Nigeria has grown large to the extent it cannot be addressed by mere campaign or word of mouth. It is the basis of low productivity, crime, internet fraud among other vices. Similarly, Olorunfemi (2021) noted that unemployment among graduates in Nigeria resulted in general insecurity such as

terrorism, violent crimes, advanced free fraud and other sundry unpatriotic behavior.

The scourge of graduate unemployment in Nigeria had led to the criticism of the university curriculum which had been tailored towards theoretical goals without adequate practical. Despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in all institutions, the country is still experiencing graduate turnout without specific skills and practical work to engage in. This has led to the question on how the entrepreneurship education in various institutions are been taught. Moudassir Alamzeb Imran and Waheed (2020) observed that graduates from universities acquire the theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship education without been exposed to practical aspect which would have develop in them the entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to start their personal businesses upon graduation and be a job creator for themselves and others. This observation was supported by Olorunfemi (2021), who stated that graduates in our universities acquire knowledge without entrepreneurial skills which would enable them, on graduation to practice what was learnt in school, and deprived them the opportunity to contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. Also, Emily (2012) expressed that graduates produced in higher institution are not adequately trained to become employable or self-productive in terms of starting their own business. This paper therefore seeks to address entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nigeria, causes and challenges and solutions.

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities

Entrepreneurship education involves teaching and learning of the vocational skills and practice which will enable the recipients to become self-reliant, job creator and undertake the risk of business establishment. According to Azonuche and Umeri (2012), Entrepreneurship education is a form of education that seeks to provide knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation to students for entrepreneurial success in any setting. Entrepreneurship education entails teaching students, learners and would-be businessmen, the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees (Ezeani, 2012). Francis and Uke (2015) noted that entrepreneurship education prepares youths to be responsible and enable individuals to become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome. It provides students with the ability to seek investment opportunities after school. It entails the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitude and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, 2012).

The aim of entrepreneurship education is to ensure students take advantage of personal resourcefulness to be self-employed and be an employer of labour after graduation. Entrepreneurship education is concerned with innovation of ideas in form of creation of wealth through production of goods or service that meets customers' needs. Entrepreneurship education provides practical knowledge, skills attitude and motivation needed to students to develop entrepreneurial success in any setting. It equips them with the ability to seek investment opportunities in their immediate environment so as to contribute to economic development of their community and the country.

The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), in the 2013 edition of the National Policy on Education, identified entrepreneurship education as "Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects", and listed thirty-four (34) of them under section 38.2.5 of the policy. They include;

auto body repair and spraying painting, auto repair merchandising, air conditioning and refrigeration, clothing and textile, dyeing and bleaching, painting and decorating, upholstery, book-keeping, store keeping, GSM maintenance and repairs, mining, tourism, fishery, marketing, salesmanship, catering craft practice, garment making, printing craft practice, cosmetology, photography among others (Francis & Uke, 2015). These are the entrepreneurial skills which students are expected to acquire after their involvement in entrepreneurship education which will enable them to be either employable or be an employer of labour themselves. These skills are essential ingredients expected to be at the disposal of prospective graduates in order to be a successful entrepreneur, manager or an employer of labour.

According to Nwite (2016), entrepreneurial studies are out to making beneficiaries to think creatively to job creation during their undergraduate days and after graduation from the university, other inclusive benefits of the programme includes; Empowerment of students, creation of employment, diversification in business and individual confidence. Similarly, Evan-Obinna (2016) highlighted so of the benefits of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions to includes;

- i. To offer functional education for the youth to enable them to be self-employed and self-reliance
- ii. To provide the students with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative identifying novel business opportunities.
- iii. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- iv. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
- v. To reduce high rate of poverty
- vi. Create employment generation
- vii. Reduction in rural-urban migration.

Entrepreneurship Education and Graduate Unemployment

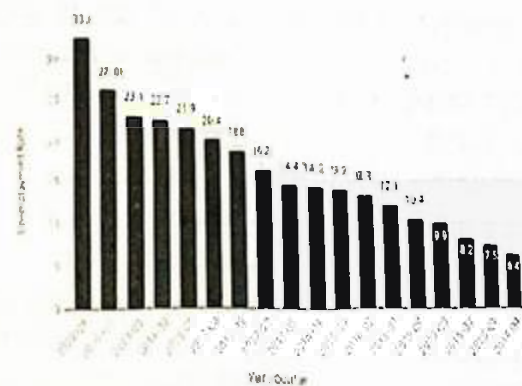
Graduate unemployment has been one of the major problems bedeviling Nigerian government. Unemployment has become a pandemic afflicting Nigerian graduates on a daily basis, especially as the country's population increases (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014). Adenomon and Folorunso (2021) noted that the alarming rate of graduate unemployment and jobless not only result in low-or-no-income production but also in a low substandard level of living. The authors observed that unemployment causes poverty in the country. The human resources that should have contributed to the growth of the country's economic development have been rendered inactive due to the incidence of unemployment. Graduates roam about the streets looking for non-existing job in the labour market because they lack the entrepreneurial skills, these has led to many of them involved in criminal activity and other unpalatable economic practices. Adegbami and Adewole (2013) expressed that unemployed graduate due to idleness indulged in unpatriotic vices such as prostitution, thuggery, drug addiction, internet fraudsters, drug addiction and selling, armed robbery and even

assassination making them suitable tools in the hands of desperate politicians. Ayinla and Ogunmeru (2018) expressed that unemployment is a situation people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. Olorunfemi (2021) observed that graduate unemployment refers to the unemployment among people who are graduated from tertiary institution and who are qualified to work or have any given point in time worked. Graduate unemployment as a specific type of unemployment with people with academic degree from higher institution working zero hour and earning zero income.

Entrepreneurship education involves creation of attitude, knowledge and skills that are necessary for individuals to responds to his environment through managing and establishing their personal business as an entrepreneur and or as a job provider. NUC inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of Nigerian universities is considered an effective way of equipping graduates with the desired employability and entrepreneurial skills needed to self-employed after school. The aim of its introduction is geared towards reducing graduate unemployment and boosting the economic activities of the country. However, with the laudable objectives and benefits entrepreneurship education provided for students before their graduation from school, and coupled with the intention of the federal government and NUC for its inclusion into tertiary institutions curriculum as a compulsory for all students irrespective of their discipline, there still persist graduate unemployment. Chiahia and Agu (2013) asserted that many university graduates upon completion of their National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) programme are faced with reality of unemployment leading to high rate of poverty, insecurity and crime rate. The high rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has been blamed on the fact that most graduates from Nigerian universities lack entrepreneurial skills.

Evidence have shown from National Bureau of Statistic (NBS) that graduate unemployment in Nigeria is on the increase yearly. Unemployment rate in Nigeria is estimated to reach 32.5% in 2021, this figure is projected to increase further in 2022. Chronological data shows that the unemployment rate in Nigeria rose constantly in the past years. In the fourth quarter of 2020, over 33 percent of the labour force was unemployed (Adenomon & Folorunsho, 2021).

Unemployment Rate - Q4 2020



lasting solution to bring unemployment pandemic into an end and or reduce it to the minimum Nigeria universities not been able to bring an end to graduate unemployment and or reduce it to minimum level. However, despite its introduction, graduate unemployment is still on the increase. From the observation of (Chiahia & Agu, 2013;

Maina, 2013), there are some factors that hindered the objectives of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria universities, these includes;

Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum Implementation

The objectives of entrepreneurship education are promising towards reducing graduate unemployment in the country, if only the curriculum content of the course is well implemented. Most universities did not implement the curriculum to the letter. Olorunfemi (2021) observed that despite entrepreneurship education been a novel in the curriculum of universities, only few universities have introduced it as a compulsory course for their students and most of them did not implement the curriculum to the letter. This has no doubt hindered the aims of which entrepreneurship education was introduced and directly or indirectly affects graduate entrepreneurial skills and employability status.

Inadequate Instructional Facilities

Entrepreneurship education is a practical designed oriented course, which required the use of instructional materials during teaching and learning. Without the provision or availability of the required instructional resources, the required entrepreneurial skills intended to be learnt will not be acquired. Ayomike (2013) stated that without the provision of instructional facilities for entrepreneurship education, students will not be equipped with the skills needed to explore the area of opportunities for job creation. Similarly, Atakpa (2016) opined that the deplorable or complete absence of infrastructural and instructional facilities has contributed to the poor development of entrepreneurship education in universities in Nigeria.

Absence of Qualified Lecturers/Instructors

Entrepreneurship education is a vocational course, meaning it requires lecturers who are skills in certain vocational discipline to handle the course. This is not the case in most of the universities teaching the course. Agbonlahor (2016) stated that the capacity of lecturers and instructors that teach entrepreneurship education in universities have been fingered as a reason for the poor-quality delivery. Similarly, Amadi and Amakodi (2019) affirms that Nigerian universities do not have adequate and high-level manpower for effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in the country. Nwite (2016) noted that in practice, some universities simply design one or two entrepreneurial courses, taught by some lecturers who have no practical experience of entrepreneurship while students take such as a requisite for graduation. This is some lecturers teach the course within the four walls of the lecture rooms as against the centres assign for it.

Student Readiness

Student readiness matters a lot if the intended objectives of entrepreneurship education is to achieved. Students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education is not encouraging, most students are exposed to quick paid job especially those that engage in internet business such as trading of Bitcoin and internet fraud. All this affect students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. Adhan, Yahya and Husam (2012) asserted that the social pressure by the society has greatly affects youth not to engaged in entrepreneurial activities but to engaged according to the dictates of the society.

Shortage of Funds

Lack of funds also hindered the objectives of entrepreneurship education. The establishment of business required a startup capital, no matter how skillful one is in a particular line of business, if the funds to be expended on the business is not available, then the business is died even before its start. There is no availability of funds in form of soft loan and grants by either the government or non-governmental agencies for students after graduation to establish and startup their personal business from the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge gathered from entrepreneurship education. Daze (2010) Observed that it is no longer news that poor funding and poor control of financial resources which are intricately tied together have destroyed many laudable programmes and policies of Nigeria's National Policy on Education.

Suggestions

To address the issue of entrepreneurship education and graduate unemployment in Nigeria, this paper suggests the following plausible ways for entrepreneurship education to bring about unemployment among graduate in Nigeria;

1. Universities authorities should ensure adequate implementation of entrepreneurship education Curriculum and should be made as a compulsory for all students irrespective of their discipline.
2. Government through the ministries of education, agencies such as TETFund and NUC should provide building and instructional materials for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in the existing universities and should be made a prerequisite for giving approval to newly established ones.
3. Universities should ensure qualified lecturers/instructors with different pedagogical approach in entrepreneurial skills and experience be made to handle entrepreneurship education in all universities in the country.
4. Government through the ministries of education, labour and productivity and relevant stakeholder should ensure proper orientation is given to students as to why they need to equip themselves with entrepreneurial skills before graduation so as to be self-reliance, employer of labour and employable.
5. Government should as matter of urgency set up an agency who would be saddle with responsibility of granting loans to graduate purposely to startup their own personal business.

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