

ENREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES FOR A PRODUCTIVE SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the importance of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for a productive society in the 21st century. Entrepreneurship education is education that allows for the development of skillsets, both internal and external, to produce a positive outcome in terms of productivity, innovation and economic stability. It is education that boosts the entrepreneurial spirit of the working class thereby promoting a sustainable economy. Nigeria as we know it today has maintained the status of a developing country, struggling to meet the basic demands of her citizens. For Nigeria to compete with other nations of the world, her university educational system needs to be furnished with a curriculum that is geared towards economic development, inculcating entrepreneurial skillsets in their graduates who will one day become drivers of the economy. Thus, entrepreneurship education is a necessity in Nigerian universities to bring about productivity in the 21st century Nigerian society. The paper discussed some deterrents to entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities to include lack of funding, inadequate teaching facilities, inadequate curriculum, amongst others. This paper concluded by stating that entrepreneurship education should be at the fore-front of university education in Nigeria and taking priority over all other courses in the university curriculum as it would necessitate the production of a sustainable society and a sustainable economy in 21st century Nigeria. The problems highlighted in this paper were proffered with some possible solutions which include provision of adequate funds, adoption of an all-inclusive and innovative curriculum, provision of adequate teaching facilities, amongst others.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, University Education, Productive Society.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education is education that builds economies. It is education that is geared towards boosting the entrepreneurial spirits of individuals who will one day be the leaders of tomorrow. The world has over the years developed into an entrepreneurial economy for creating business that avenue and unique and also entrepreneurs are applauded for being heroes in developing new economics and industries that are competitive (Umar,2024). For a country to sustain development, various knowledge, skills, and attitude needed to be acquired, the process of acquiring this knowledge is known as teaching and learning, thus, teaching and learning cannot take place without planning a good curriculum that will bring about development to the society (Akpokiniovo & Akpokiniovo, 2015). Rhode and Tang (2018) pointed out that the increase in economic insecurity has potential macro-economic consequences such as, unemployment increase and decrease in output growth which reinforces the sense of insecurity and further worsen macro-economic conditions which will then lead to vicious cycle. Imperatively, the Nigerian government has implemented numerous entrepreneurship development programs by bringing in entrepreneurship training courses and developing various departments dealing with entrepreneurship training courses and entrepreneurship in numerous tertiary institutions to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with relevant skills (Chan, 2019). The programmes enunciated by the government is a welcome development but have not been able to meet the needs of the graduates yet. Ogwu (2019) further stated that many youths after graduation especially at the post-basic

education level, found it difficult opening up enterprises of their own or securing any job for their sustainability. This is attributed to the lack of awareness or non-acquisition of vital entrepreneurial curricular skills while in the university. Students need skills to survive in the present day economic situation of Nigeria, such as management skills, leadership skills, communication skills, marketing skills and employability skills in order to be viable and remain relevant in the society. The students also need a diversification of knowledge that could convert knowledge to a productive venture, and the way to go in order to be at par with the society is in the way area of entrepreneurship, innovation, technology information, technology, effective management. Thus, the aim of this paper is to project ways through which entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities can thrive for productivity in the 21st century. The objective of this paper is to identify the deterring factors to the inculcation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities and also to proffer possible solutions to these problems. The study is important as the rapid decline of the Nigerian economy would lead to a high rate of unemployment thus, graduates need something to carry them through the poor economic state of the country which in the author's view is entrepreneurship education. Several papers have been written by several researchers but are yet to address this missing gap,, this work is being carried out to fill the missing gap of infrastructure, curriculum and several other issues concerning entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Universities for a productive society in the 21st century.

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is an engine driving many countries' economic growth. It is the process of creating a business in order to gain profit. Many countries are now devoting their infrastructure and leading entrepreneurship education to an effective channel business support resource (Chen et al., 2015). In light of this, Sulaiman and Wanfauziah (2013) as cited in Ammani, Ogar and Okoli (2024) described entrepreneurship education as education designed to change the mind-set of students by equipping them with the skills to launch a business. Going further, entrepreneurship education is essential not only to shape the mind-sets of young people but also to provide the skills and knowledge that are essential to developing an entrepreneurship culture (Nwekeaku, 2013). Naturally, Jardim (2021) affirmed and identified the following entrepreneurial skills: creativity and innovation, the spirit of initiative, self-efficacy and resilience, strategic planning, and evaluation, resolution of problems and decision-making, transformational leadership, clear and visual communication, teamwork and networking and digital communication. These skills will aid in the creation and maintaining of the chosen business venture. This concurs with Dogan (2015) who rightly said that entrepreneurship education is an important instrument for encouraging entrepreneurial tasks because education provides the skills that students will use to sustain life. In a related development, the inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the university education curriculum in Nigeria was to equip undergraduates with skills to function well and contribute to society upon graduation (Davwet et al., 2019). Universities tend to inculcate a wide range of skills to students for critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, leadership, research methodology, and technical skills relevant to the chosen field. Additionally, theoretical and practical knowledge (academic knowledge) are often encouraged through internships, industrial training, seminars, research, projects and practical sessions in laboratories or workshops. Ofor-Douglas (2024c). It is thus imperative that the government through the Federal Ministry of Education, mandate that all University Students take entrepreneurship education as one of their general studies requirements. This is seen as a positive step in the right direction. This is done to foster a sense of independence in the young people. This progress would provide entrepreneurial human potential for national growth in addition to addressing the issue of unemployment and underemployment" (Igbongidi, 2022). In a similar spirit, the key assumption of entrepreneurship education is that entrepreneurial skills can be developed among individuals (Sirekhatim & Gangi, 2015). In light of this, entrepreneurship education is said to be crucial in boosting productivity, increasing completion and innovation, creating employment prospect and revitalizing economies (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al.,

2014). In the same pattern, entrepreneurship education brings different skills, expertise, to the society which bring progress to economic standing of a nation (Obananya, 2022). Indeed, Oosterbeek, Van Praag and Ijsselstein (2021) asserted that world wide entrepreneurship skill acquisition programs in learning institutions provide the level of education of knowledge required to exploit entrepreneurial chance, which usually assist the economic growth of those nations. In the same view, Adenike (2016) postulated that entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in social, political economic development of any nation. This is because a graduate of entrepreneurship would acquire enough knowledge and skills relevant to establish and manage small business. To him, graduate of entrepreneurship education does not provide jobs for himself alone, but also provide for others too, it in turn helps the individual to increase per capital income and hence improve standard of living. In support of the above argument, entrepreneurship as a course consist of the course that will equip the students with the skill attitudes and competences, so that on graduation, they become job creators rather than job seekers (Saleh et al., 2020).

In affirmation, there is a significant recognition that entrepreneurship education will transform graduates from employee to employers, and provide opportunity for them to key into the effort of the government to diversify the economy for sustainable development (Nwambam, 2018). Notably, entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial skills development as envisage by the scholars Edekpolor and Somorin (2017) they said that entrepreneurship education cuts across all academic disciplines, aim to equip recipients with skills to create something new or include something new with an existing product to solve problems and discover business opportunities. In the same way, developing entrepreneurial intention and skills entails a process intended to generate income for the benefit of sustainable development and economic progress (Al-Qudah et, 2022). Additionally, entrepreneurship growth is regarded as a critical link to the total economic development of a country its positive influence on economic development, particularly at the lower levels (Doh, 2020). Likewise, entrepreneurship education develops the skills that enable individuals to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life, create something valuable, and gain financial independence or personal satisfaction or both (Steenekamp, 2013) as cited in (Ammani, Ogar & Okoli, 2024). Remarkably, Acs and Szerb (2007) as cited in Riti and Kamah (2015) applauded that entrepreneurship resolves around the realization of existence of opportunities in combination with decision to commercialize them by starting a new business. Significantly, the essence of entrepreneurship education is to develop entrepreneurial skills in individuals to successfully curb unemployment and poverty (Chabra, Raghunathan, & Rao, 2020). In this regard, the mindsets of the students must be developed with the right kind of knowledge and skills for them to be able to play their significant part in the sustainable development of Nigeria (Ajoku & Chioma, 2017). The submission shared by Edekpolor (2020) submitted that the mediating role of entrepreneurial skills developed by undergraduates in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and the core values of sustainable development. Buttressing this, the level of entrepreneurship in a country has a significant positive influence on the level of economic growth in the country (Smith, 2010).

Concept of Education

Education is the fulcrum for productivity in the society. It is the foundation upon which the pillars of development are built. Scholars like Selvamm and Devil (2014) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2023d) observed that education is the gradual process of acquiring knowledge, that education is a preparation of life, explaining that the development of any nation depends mainly on the standard of its educational institutions, that is the most powerful and effective instrument for inducing radical change in the behaviour of students. In addition to this conatation, education is the only weapon to fight poverty, hunger, illiteracy, insecurity and liberate individuals and a nation to a greater height and productivity. If the people are educated, it will curb the ills in the society. Education especially at the higher level, directly influences economic growth, employability, making people more productive, which in turn promote the creation of knowledge, ideas, technological innovations and the formation of a cordial political, social and economic environment (Habibi & Zabardast, 2020).

For this reason, Tuemi (2016) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2020) notified the meaning of education as the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who became committed to it, and must be lived or acted out to qualify the person as having acquired education. This implies that no matter the education one acquires and wherever you find yourself there should be an application and transfer of knowledge to the immediate situation to solve problems and proffer immediate solutions to the problems at hand. For this reason, Tuemi (2016) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2020) notify the meaning of education as the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who became committed to it, and must be lived or acted out to qualify the person as having acquired education. This implies that no matter the education one acquires and wherever you find yourself there should be an application and transfer of knowledge to the immediate situation to solve problems and proffer immediate solutions to the problems at hand. Furthermore, education plays a key role in cultivating the skills and mindset necessary for young individuals to thrive as competitive and inventive members of society, particularly within the dynamic and swiftly evolving global economy (Ofor-Douglas, 2024a). The purpose of education is to create and sustain an enlightened mind that can elevate and progressively advance the touch points between human and environment through an inquiry predication of society. Notably, investing in a functional university education system is a pathway to meeting the obligations of a nations citizenry by improving opportunities for the educated youths and their families, strengthening their economies and keeping them in good health (Adebayo, 2012) as cited in (Ofor-Douglas, 2023b). In the same vein, that investment in the manpower of any country represents an important means of ensuring economic growth and human development. It is through the development of human capital by way of education that people can become innovative in solving societal problems (Kruss et al., 2015). can be found, it is provided to the society to inspire creativity and innovation, and moreover, it improves the nations' economy (Ofor-Douglas, 2023c). Prof Rotimi Oladele has stressed in the need for stakeholders in the education sector, particularly those in the university system, to rejig the curriculum to enable tertiary institutions (university education inclusive) to produce graduates that match societal needs in the country. This, he said, is the only way for the country to attain the desirable development. In a topic delivery paper deliver titled "Connecting Town and Gown" with the topic, Renewed Hope Agenda: The Role of the Academia, he elucidated the deficiency of higher education in Nigeria which engender the situation where students graduate from schools without being ready for the future because they lack the relevant skills to fit in. "tomorrow". Because of this lacuna, we now have tailors, plumbers, shoemakers with B.sc and M.sc in a particular social science or BA or MA in arts" To address this anomaly, the don advocated the need for rebranding and rejigging courses being offered in the tertiary institutions to align with realities of the economy and needs in the society. Equally, Utomi (2021) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2022a) noted that any reform that does not prioritize teaching skills for job development will fail to advance the nation. This implies that education must be prioritized in national development because it is the starting point of self-development.

Concept of University Education

A university is a frontier of ware house made up of academicians of great reputes of town and gown who impact and transfer knowledge to students through teaching and learning, research and community services for the nation development. It is a place of citadel of knowledge of town and gown of all highly repute respected academic intellectuals. Moreover, university education is the stage of education that develops the abilities and knowledge necessary for one to find employment. The society place high on university education because it is through it that the variety of vocations that contribute to the advancement of society are created (Ofor-Douglas, 2022b). Daniel (2018) as cited Okpe and Igwebuikie (2019), rightly stated that university education prepares people through teaching and learning for acquisition of knowledge and skills for job performance in civil service, business organizations, private enterprises. It is a key factor in a nation's efforts to develop a highly skilled workforce to compete in the global economy. It therefore plays a critical role in preparing individuals to meet the needs of contemporary society, especially concerning sustainable

development. University education makes prime contribution to national development by making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). On the other hand, the universities have a long history in every society and are founded with the goal of providing labour (Ofor-Douglas, 2024a). As a result, the aim of university education is to increased skilled manpower, that are efficient and effective in their chosen field of study and who will help to cause growth and national contribution to national development (Ofor-Douglas, 2021) as cited in (Ofor-Douglas, 2023a). In collaboration, Ceptureanu (2016) affirmatively declared that institutions of higher education (university education inclusive) play a vital role in providing society with skilled human resources that have specific skills according to the economy's needs. Further emphasized, University education is very important to the lives of youths seeking to create sustainable futures for themselves. These youths must therefore acquire the necessary skills needed to obtain jobs or create these jobs for themselves. University education, does not only encompass teaching to acquire jobs, but it also creates an avenue for students to procure value or get a renewed sense of values already known so that an individual can apply to improve himself and lifestyle (Ofor-Douglas, 2021b). Anwar and Saha (2017) as cited in Ofor-Douglas (2021c) mentioned that education makes man a right thinker and a correct decision maker, which means it exposes man to think extensively and critically. In Nigeria, aligning educational policies with sustainable development goals is critical for addressing societal challenges and fostering long-term prosperity (Ofor-Douglas, 2024b). Higher education (university education inclusive) is intended to create and disseminate knowledge and to develop higher order cognitive and communicative skills in young people, such as, logical thinking ability, the motivation to challenge the status quo and the capacity to develop sophisticated values (Chan, Brown & Lindlow., 2014). As noted by, Karatas (2006) as cited in Awotwe (2020) acknowledge that higher education institutions (university education inclusive) are established to contribute to the development of a country, provide the society with qualified human power, conduct scientific research and compete with other countries in the area of knowledge, technology and research and development. In a similar pattern, universities' importance grows as knowledge gradually supplants other resources as the primary engine of economic progress and education steadily establishes itself as the cornerstone of personal wealth and social mobility (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Ako & James, 2018). Also appealing further, the importance of university education and other educational institutions for the development and growth of a country continues to garner attention and interest (Nnadozie et al, 2023; Asanga et al; 2023; Emeka et al; 2023; Ako and James, 2018; Boyi, 2024) as cited in Ukhurebo et al., 2024). Establishing the fact that, due to the high unemployment rates among universities graduates, issues relating to young graduates' employment are a concern in the current difficult socioeconomic climate and massification of higher education (university education inclusive). These jobless occurrences are linked to graduates' lack of entrepreneur abilities, technical abilities, leadership and business management abilities, and creative thinking are just a few examples of the different skill sets that might be categorized as entrepreneurial (Ezenwanne, 2023). Edokpolor and Mafidon (2017); Edokpolor and Egberi (2017) highlighted the challenges as unqualified manpower, inadequate training and technical know-how, lack of modern facilities, nor up-to-date curriculum etc. The graduates lack knowledge of entrepreneurial expertise and start-up ideas and are now unable to appropriately identify opportunities (Ezenwanne,2023). Several methods need to examine the different ways and strategies for which the university education standard will be raised keeping in mind curriculum upgrades, teaching methods and technological advancement. This is to create an environment for critical thinking, practical and theoretical knowledge (Ofor-Douglas, 2024c).

Concept of a Productive Society

A productive society is a society in the 21st century that is blossoming in terms of its economy and its gross domestic products (GDPs). A productive society is a thriving society in terms of economy, social, environmental, technological advancement in the development of knowledge and skills which are in terms of the strength of its workforces and manpower in the country for the production

of services and out puts. likewise, additionally, his is because entrepreneurial activities have been found to be capable of making positive impacts on the economy of a nation and the quality of life of the people. (Adejumo, 2000) as cited in (Riti & Kamah, 2015). While, Knowledge economy demands skills of creativity, innovation, collaboration and critical thinking from effective teaching and learning to empower youths in Nigeria. A fundamental characteristic of entrepreneurship is the capacity to generate employment, and increase wealth (Ogwu, 2019). On a global scale, students' knowledge of entrepreneurship education helps them better understand global issues, challenges in entrepreneurship and how to utilize sustainable development in the 21st Century, technology has advanced to a higher level and must by extension be used by students for problem solving for entrepreneurship and sustainable development to thrive there needs to be a collaboration amongst educational institutions, the government and individuals in the society (Ofor-Douglas, (2024d). Meanwhile, this is why 21st Century education hopes to inculcate innovativeness and creativity within the students to foster new ideas that would develop and change the world (Ausat et al, 2023) as cited in Ofor-Douglas, 2024e). additionally, It goes to show for any nation or economy to thrive entrepreneurship education should be a part of its university's curriculum (Ofor-Douglas, 2024e).

Problems Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Universities for Productivity in the 21st Century Society.

Various authours have identified some of the challenges facing entrepreneurship education for productivity in the 21st century. According to Osakwe (2015), the challenges causing a hindrance to entrepreneurship education were outlined to include:

1. Lack of manpower and infrastructure/instructional facilities
2. Inadequate provision of funds by the government
3. Lack of awareness, counselling and orientation on entrepreneurship education and
4. Lack of systematic plans to address the existing gap of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions.

Obizue, Duru & Obizue (2017) cited the following challenges as deterrents to entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities to include:

1. Lack of planning
2. Lack of experience
3. Poor financial management

From the above problems cited, the author has gleaned the following problems as challenges to entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities to include:

1. **Lack of funding:** This is a major problem that hinders the progress of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. Funds are an intricate part of a project. Funding is simply the provision of finances for a particular purpose or to carry out a specific project. Without the presence of adequate funds, such project will remain at its planning stage and would likely become an afterthought. Proper funding is necessary to establish ideas and actualize goals in any organization (Ofor-Douglas, 2024). Education is the fundamental factor for development and as such, investing in human development through education cannot be overemphasized (Umaru, 2013) as cited in (Ofor-Douglas, 2021a). Entrepreneurship education thus requires adequate funding for the enhancement of its activities. Olayiwola, cited in Aja-Okorie and Chukwu (2023) reported that the federal and state governments are responsible for funding public institutions by grants/subventions provided by either the federal or the state governments with very little or insignificant contribution by the students in terms of fees. The funds provided by the federal/state government have proved to be insufficient and cannot adequately cater for entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.
2. **Poor teaching facilities:** This is another major problem facing entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities in the 21st century. The problem of poor teaching facilities for entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is largely due to the lack of funds in

Nigerian universities. Odeh et al (2016) rightly stated that the acute shortage of educational facilities in institutions or higher learning in Nigeria is due to inadequate funding and has led to decline in the quality of higher education in the country. Entrepreneurship education requires a lot of facilities for teaching of a variety of skills. The absence of these materials/facilities will inevitably mean that Entrepreneurship education would be taught from a theoretical perspective rather than using a practical approach which is the best method of teaching such entrepreneurial skills.

3. **Outdated curriculum:** Another problem facing entrepreneurship education is that of an outdated curriculum in Nigerian universities. Most universities in Nigeria have not updated their curriculum to include entrepreneurship education and are still fixated on a curriculum geared towards the obtainment of white-collared jobs upon graduation. As a result of the derailing economy over the years, it is pertinent that universities look towards redesigning their curriculum so as to prepare their graduates for life after the university. Curriculum redesigning is the process of creating a structured and planned framework for instruction, taking into account specific learning goals, objectives, and content (Keating, 2014). For a country to sustain its development, various knowledge, skills and attitudes need to be acquired, the process of acquiring this knowledge is known as teaching and learning, thus, teaching and learning cannot take place without planning a good curriculum that will bring about development to the society (Akpokiniovo and Akpokiniovo, 2015).
4. **Lack of supervision:** Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities faces difficulty in thriving due to the lack of supervision of the implementation of the programmes promoting entrepreneurship education in the university. Nwaogu (2020) adequately elucidated that supervision is an act of taking charge of people and being responsible for making sure that they do their work such as teaching and learning. Supervision in relation to entrepreneurship education in universities is to the effect that the instructors and other people in charge of entrepreneurship education are adequately monitored to allow for the aims and objectives of entrepreneurship education to be achieved. The absence of supervision of instructors in charge of entrepreneurship education in the university leads to incidences of stolen or broken teaching facilities, mismanagement of available funds for entrepreneurship education, lackadaisical attitude towards teaching entrepreneurship education amongst others.
5. **Lack of motivation:** Another factor that contributes to the inefficiency of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for productivity in the 21st century society is the lack of motivation for entrepreneurship education. Zipagan (2022) cited that motivation is a driving force that inspires positive conduct or deeds at work and also improves the predisposition to remain committed. Denga (2015) further mentioned that motivation is the internal factor that ignites, propels, pokes, energizes, arouses, spurs, directs, regulates and sustains behaviour towards goal attainment. It is a psychological condition that encourages, activates or drives and directs and channels a person's behaviour, attitudes and actions which are always associated with the achievement of goals, both organizational goals and personal goals of each member of the organization (Dhyan Parashakti et al, 2020). The cost of starting up enterprises using the knowledge derived from entrepreneurship education is very expensive. This would no doubt discourage the students from engaging in business ventures thus the aims and objectives of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities cannot be achieved. Students require motivation in form of grants, loans or cash prizes to carry on business ventures. However, these grants, loans or cash prizes are hard to come by and students also find it hard to access the existing grants, loans or cash prizes available due to factors like tribalism, discrimination, lack of "connections" to access these funds, amongst others.

CONCLUSION

The paper has established that entrepreneurship education is to be at the forefront of university education in Nigeria. The country cannot provide adequate jobs for its graduates. Thus, these graduates have no choice but to depend on themselves to provide a means of making ends meet. The paper examined entrepreneurship education through the lens of various authors and these authors agreed with the paper when emphasising on the necessity of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities today. The paper discussed some deterrents to entrepreneurship education for productivity in 21st century Nigerian society to include lack of adequate funds, poor teaching facilities, outdated learning curriculum, lack of supervision amongst others. Ogwu (2019) recommended that there is a need to direct the consciousness and awareness of Nigerian youths towards being empowered with the technological and managerial skills that are there in the school curriculum. Possible suggestions to the problems stated in the paper include the following:

Suggestions

1. Adequate provision of funds for entrepreneurship education by relevant stakeholders.
2. Provision of state-of-the-art materials/facilities for teaching entrepreneurship education.
3. Use of a 21st century curriculum inculcating entrepreneurship education.
4. Adequate supervision should be carried out on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. Instructors for entrepreneurship education in the university should be made to give regular reports on the facilities, funds and overall progress of entrepreneurship education in the university.
5. Motivation through the provision of loans, grants or scholarships to students to enable them start their businesses or even gain further knowledge in entrepreneurship.
6. Use of workshops and seminars to give lectures on entrepreneurship education so as to promote awareness and to train instructors on how to properly teach entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for productivity in the 21st century society.

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