

Research Article

Entrepreneurship Education: A key to solving Graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta

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Abstract

This study focused on entrepreneurship education as a key to solving graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta. The choice of this investigation was borne out of the genuine desire to bridge the existence gap in the employment market for tertiary institution graduate who acquire entrepreneurship skills as an alternative career option for self-employment. Two research questions were formulated with corresponding hypotheses. A survey research method was used in the study and through stratified proportionate random sampling 500 individuals was selected from among unemployed graduates and lecturers from various tertiary institutions in the region. A questionnaire containing 16 items was used for the study. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The data obtained were presented in tables and appropriate comments made where necessary. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship education had gained a wider acceptance in the region as an alternative career option but there is a lack of linkage between theory and practice among graduates and that government of the region should appeal to entrepreneurs so as to render mentoring role to graduate thereby assisting them to become self-employed. It is therefore recommended that the regional governments should make appropriate policies that will enhance entrepreneurial skill in the youths.

Key words: unemployment, entrepreneurship education, t-test

Introduction

The rising rate of insecurity according to Anene and Iman (2012) in Okolo (2010) cannot be divorced from the debilitating effects of poverty and unemployment, which have enveloped the country. They expressed worry over the high rate of graduate's unemployment in the country. Katsina (2010) frowned at the increasing involvement of youths in criminal activities in the country and called on government at all levels to initiate proactive curricula in our educational system. Okolo (2010) described unemployment and poverty as a very dangerous development that must be tackled in order to prevent the attendant damage to the nation. Inability of graduate to engage in gainful opportunity is due to the previous educational system that did not prepare them for gainful living, in line with this, Anene and Iman(2012) in Nagarba (2009) noted that the persistent social vices in the country, characterized by rape, theft armed robbery, kidnapping, drugs addiction, drugs trafficking and other form of misdemeanors are as a result of the ineffectiveness in the implementation of our social policies. Furthermore the fact that our tertiary graduate turn into the labour market

where jobs do not exist, leads to general frustration, idleness, redundancy and social insecurity.

Unemployment is a macroeconomic problem that does no one any good. It is a social malady. The debilitating effects on the individuals in the society are unquantifiable. It threatens the lives of Nigerians especially the youths, causing dejection, frustration, poverty and dependency on family members who have their own problems to take care of. It is interesting to note that the past government administration had in one time or the other designed several programmes with a view to fighting graduates unemployment. Regrettably however, these programmes failed to achieve the desired result partly because of poor implementation and partly because of other intervening variable/factors. Besides, it is worth stating that the ugly effects of unemployment include low national income, low standard of living, low per capita income to mention but a few. And it is against these scenarios that it become pertinent to find out how graduate unemployment can be reduced using entrepreneurship development as a key driver (Ibe and Aniagbaoso, 2013).

Bassey and Atan (2012) in Gbosi (2006) defined graduate unemployment as a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. A more encompassing definition is provided by the international labour organization (ILO) (2005) as cited in Bassey and Iman(2012) thus "the unemployed is a member of the economically active population, who are without work but available for and seeking for work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Unemployment assumed a doomsday in Nigeria scenario a decade after political independence. Akintoye (2008) showed that between 1970, and 1980, national unemployment rate rose from 4.3 to 6.4 % and further rose to 7.1% in 1987. This development was attributed to the economic depression which engulfed the nation from 1980, resulting to massive closure of businesses and retrenchment of workers. This was followed by the placement of embargo on recruitment which further worsened the graduate unemployment situation. The introduction of structural adjustment programmed (SAP) had a salutary effect on job creation leading to sharp fall in unemployment rate from 7.1% in 1987 to 1.8% in 1995. Thereafter, unemployment figure hovered around 4% between 1996 and 2000.

One worrisome trend in the Nigerian labour market of recent has been the growing incidence of graduate unemployment of tertiary institutions. Akintoye (2008) reported that graduate unemployment on as percentage of total unemployment rose from 1% in 1974 to 4% in 1984. Bassey and Atan(2012) in Debalen (2000) also reported that graduate unemployment accounted for 32% of the total unemployed labour force between 1992 and 1997. This growing incidence of graduate unemployment in the face of acute skill shortages presents a paradox which further complicates the analysis of labour market distortions in Nigeria.

The percentage of labour force that is without job is alarming while the army of the under employed youths is frightening. Apart from the figures above, early last year, the National Bureau of Statistics, which puts unemployment rate in 2011 at 29.3% the situation, has over the years grown from bad to worse. From 2006 until 2011, the unemployed rate averaged 14.60%, reaching an all time high rate of 23.90% in December of 2011 representing about 20.3 million Nigerians who are currently jobless. The situation which was put at about 71% early last year would have rocketed to over 75%, throwing even some of the hitherto employed out of jobs.

Considering the soaring graduate unemployment problems in the country Okolo (2010) called on the federal government to absorb the teeming population of unemployed youths across the country. Oyelola (2010) emphasized that one of the major ways to get out of poverty is through getting a sound education that will enable the present generation to compete favorably with their counterparts in other countries. Having a healthy society the youth sector of the population needs to be rediscovered and reintegrated into the main stream.

From the forgoing, the Federal Ministry of Education made entrepreneurship Education compulsory to all students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria effective 2007/2008 academic session (Uduak and Aniefiok, 2011).Entrepreneurship Education is programme designed to provide students with the skills necessary for initiating business and managing them. It is one of the courses in the Minimum standards in Business Education programme at Nigeria certificate in Education (NCE) and degree levels. It is also a form of education that provides programme which is designed to produce competent and skilled manpower for the various sectors of the economy. It is a specialized training giving to students of vocational and technical education to acquire abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than paid employment. It enables learners to acquire basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and ideas which will equip the individuals starting a new business (Iheonumekwu, 2003; Osuala, 2004; Akpomi, 2009; Onuma, 2009).

Okifo and Ayo (2010) in Agu (2006) defined entrepreneurship education as the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipient and in the process equip him with skill and knowledge to enable him start and manage a business enterprise, it is an area of study that includes those attitudes and skills essential for responding to one's environment in the process of conceiving starting and managing a business enterprise. The primary focus of entrepreneurship education is to develop entrepreneurial skills and attitude or competencies necessary for successful entrepreneurship. These qualities include entrepreneurial culture, enterprise spirit, technical and professional competences and managerial capabilities.

It is commonly believed that entrepreneurship education is an imperative that would make a positive contribution to improving the entrepreneurship orientation of people leading to the acquisition of skills, creativity, confidence, drive and

courage in order to create employment for self and others. Entrepreneurship education has become to denote all forms of knowledge delivery that seek to empower the individual to create real wealth in the economic sector, thereby advancing the cause of development of the nation as a whole.

Basse and Archibong(2005) maintained that the goal of entrepreneurship education is intended to empower our youths irrespective of their areas of specialization with skill that will enable them to engage in income generating venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sector. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators.

The rationale for the inclusion of entrepreneurship education curricula in tertiary institution in Nigeria is that it will help graduates to acquire increased understanding of entrepreneurship, equip them with entrepreneurial approach to the world of work and prepare them as entrepreneurs and managers of new business. Thus, the objectives of entrepreneurship education according to Paul (2005) are structured to achieve the following:

1. To offer functional education for the youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
2. Provides the youths with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as catalyst for economic growth and development.
4. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
5. To reduce high rate of poverty.
6. Create employment generation.
7. Reduction in rural-urban migration
8. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that exposure of tertiary institutions' students to Entrepreneurial Education will galvanize entrepreneurial drive into them and if properly packaged, it can be a significant factor in chronic unemployment reduction among students.

Statement of Problem

In Niger-Delta, every year and after year, the unemployment rate in the region keeps going higher and higher as fresh graduate passes out from their various tertiary institutions only to be met with a long queue of their predecessors who are earlier passed out from their various universities polytechnics and college of education and are still unemployed, as there are few jobs to go round the vast unemployed population in the region. The situation has become as pathetic as year after year, job seekers and applicants are left with nothing to do than to roam about the street looking for jobs that are not available. Their case is also worsening as most of them are not employed by potential employers of labour this may be due to their lack of core technical knowledge about their discipline. This cankerworm (unemployment) which has eaten deep into the fabric of society must be reversed to avert national crisis as many graduate remain unemployed because they lack entrepreneurial skills to be self-employed. Besides, entrepreneurship education is still evolving in our tertiary institution as the programme was introduced in 2006 and effective in 2007/2008 academic sessions. This has made acquisition of relevant skills for employment more theoretical than practical. This calls for critical survey of entrepreneurship education as key to solving graduate unemployment (Oyelola, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

1. To find out the benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serves as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta.
2. To find out the challenges associated with the use of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta

Research Questions

The study was designed to provide answers to the following research questions.

1. What are the benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serves as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta?

2. What are the challenges associated with the use of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta?

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated to direct the study.

1. There is no significant difference between lecturers and graduates on the benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serves as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment.
2. There is no significant difference between lecturers and graduates on the challenges associates with the use of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment.

METHODOLOGY

The research design procedure adopted for this study was the survey research method. This appeared best suited as it would be a herculean task to interview the entire population. The source of primary data was through interview hold with some of unemployed graduates and some lecturers in tertiary institutions in the region. Through stratified proportionate random sampling technique, 500 individuals were selected from among some unemployed graduates and some lecturers. A questionnaire structured on a modified 5-point likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Moderately Agree (MA), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D), rated 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was validated by two business educators and two others in Measurement and Evaluation. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. Data analysis was done by the use of mean and standard deviation and mean of 3.00 was used as the cut-off point.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What are the benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serves as key to the solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta?

Table1. The benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serves as key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta

S/No.	Item	Mean x	SD	Remark
1.	Entrepreneurship education can play a significant role in changing views of graduates towards self-employment and through education on necessary skills to manage a business.	3.02	1.73	Accepted
2.	Entrepreneurship Education prepares the youths to be responsible and risk bearing management.	3.06	1.75	Accepted
3.	Entrepreneurship education has grown and received recognition by many tertiary institutions.	3.03	1.74	Accepted
4.	Entrepreneurship education creates a positive image for the entrepreneurs thereby contributing to the choice of entrepreneurship as a professional alternative by graduates.	3.14	1.77	Accepted
5.	There is need to have a rethink in the value of developing business plan as a process of learning and career developing in entrepreneurial Education.	3.07	1.75	Accepted
6.	It will enable graduates to evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities.	3.22	1.79	Accepted
7.	Entrepreneurship Education can be used as a strategy for channeling necessary energies of graduates away from paid employments to self-employment.	3.25	1.80	Accepted
	Cluster mean	3.11	1.76	Accepted

The data in table one above revealed that all the individual item means were above the cut-off mean of 3.00. The standard deviation values which ranged from 1.73 to 1.80 showed that the opinions of the respondents were not far from each other. Since the cluster mean was 3.11, still above the cut-off, therefore, majority of the respondents agreed that Entrepreneurship Education serves as a key to the solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges associated with the uses of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta

Table 2. The challenges associates with the use of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta.

S/No	Item	Mean x	SD	Remark
1.	Entrepreneurship education is not yet a popular vocational choice amongst youths.	3.20	1.78	Accepted
2.	Many tertiary institution administrators are largely ignorant of the value and potential of entrepreneurship education.	3.02	1.73	Accepted
3.	Teaching entrepreneurship is an all-comers game	3.04	1.74	Accepted
4.	There is dearth of teaching materials especially case materials that are suitable for entrepreneurship	3.20	1.78	Accepted
5.	Uncoordinated and weak institutional support for entrepreneurship education	3.25	1.08	Accepted
6.	The existing curricular of tertiary institution have not been successful in developing entrepreneurial skills of graduates.	3.01	1.73	Accepted
7.	Entrepreneurship Education As An Emerging Field Is Growing Rapidly. Thus, Researcher And Scientist Have To Seek For The Most Efficient Pedagogical, Methodological And Theoretical Approaches To Teaching And Learning Entrepreneurship Education	3.25	1.80	Accepted
8.	The cooperation between the business world and tertiary institution is poorly developed.	3.06	1.75	Accepted
9.	The culture of a society is a major force defining the thoughts and activities of its people.	3.14	1.77	Accepted
	Cluster Mean	3.13	1.76	Accepted

Table two above showed that items 1-9 were above 3.00, which is the criterion mean. Also, the standard deviation values which ranged from 1.73 to 1.80 indicated that the opinions of the respondents were not far from each other. However, since the cluster mean is 3.13, therefore, the respondents agreed that 1-9 are challenges associated with the use of Entrepreneurship Education as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment in Niger-Delta.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference between lecturers and graduates on the benefits to which entrepreneurship education serves as key to the solution of graduate unemployment.

Table3. Two-tailed t-test result of the mean responses of lecturers and graduates on the benefits to which Entrepreneurship Education serve as key to the solution of graduate unemployment.

Category	M	X	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-cal	P	Decision
Lecturers	100	3.42	.61	498	0.19	1.96	0.05	NS
Graduates	400	3.61	.54					

The data in table three showed that the calculated t-value of 0.19 of 498 degree of freedom is less than the t-table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significance difference between lecturers and graduates on the benefits to which entrepreneurship education serves as key to the solution of graduate unemployment is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significance difference between lecturers and graduates on the challenges associated with the use of entrepreneurship education as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment.

Table4. Two-tailed t-test results of the mean responses of lecturers and graduates the challenges associated with the use of entrepreneurship as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment.

Category	M	X	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-cal	P	Decision
Lecturers	100	3.24	0.52	498	0.16	1.96	0.05	NS
Graduates	400	3.21	.45					

Table four above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.16 at 498 degree of freedom is less than the t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference lecturers and graduates on the challenges associated with the use of entrepreneurship education as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

As it can be seen from the analysis of the data above, entrepreneurship education is a programme designed to change the orientation and attitude of graduates from being a job seeker to job creator. This is in consonance with the previous findings of (Kolvereid and Moen, 1997; Owusu-Ansah, 2004; Uduak and Aniefiok, 2011) that entrepreneurship education helps graduates to acquire increase understanding of entrepreneurship and equip them with skills relevant for job creation. The study evidence shows that entrepreneurship education creates inspiring awareness to business opportunity, provides exposure to entrepreneurship process. Builds self confidence, equip graduates with knowledge and skills and engender self-employment as an alternative career option (Uduak and Aniefiok, 2011, Oyelola, 2010; Arogundade, 2011; Bassey and Olu, 2008).

On the challenges associated with the use of entrepreneurship education as the key to the solution of graduate unemployment, the lecturers and graduates perceived that there are a number of obstacles militating against entrepreneurship education, such as reorientation of graduates, orientation of tertiary institution administrators, who is to each entrepreneurship, lack of teaching materials, uncoordinated and weak institutional support for entrepreneurship education, research in entrepreneurship education, tertiary institutions-industry gap, and entrepreneurship culture (Inegbenebor, 2005; Sacid; Mohammed, Harm & Martin, 2010; Ayodele, 2006; Onu, 2006; Eno-Obong, 2006; Aliu, 2007; Daodu, 2007).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the governments have made several attempts to solve the unemployment problem among graduates by setting up various agencies to provide solution to the ugly problem. Notable among these agencies are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). These attempts, however, have not been able to make substantial impact essentially because of policy inconsistencies, poor governance and ineffective targeting of the poor, resulting in resources being thinly spread among projects, overlapping functions, poor coordination and unsustainable designs among others. Apart from the above, the field is still bedeviled with some problems prominent among others are: orientation of graduates, orientation of tertiary institutions administrators, who is to teach entrepreneurship, lack of teaching materials, uncoordinated and weak institution support for entrepreneurship education, research in entrepreneurship education, tertiary institution-industry gap, and Entrepreneurship culture (Inegbenebor, 2005; Sacid, Mohammed, Harm and Martin, 2010; Ayodele; 2006; Onu, 2006; Eno-Obong, 2006; Aliu, 2007; Daodu, 2007; Ibe and Aniagbaoso, 2013)

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered.

- (1) The youths should be properly encouraged to become entrepreneurs through implementation of relevant policies, in order to forestall the problem of graduate unemployment in the region.
- (2) The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should intensify effort to re-orient unemployed graduate on the benefits of not solely relying on Government for paid jobs.
- (3) The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) should as a matter of serious concern make funds available to all the registered graduates of Entrepreneurship education to set up their business enterprises.
- (4) The enterprise college set up by the government should enroll graduates of Entrepreneurship education for in order to acquire practical skills.

(5) There should be direct linkage between education and employment. To this effect, skills appropriate for the economic development should be emphasized in the educational institutions.

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