

## Scaling up Educational Intervention in Entrepreneurship Development for Youth Employment in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The Important role of education in promoting entrepreneurship is now widely recognized. Thus, reinforcing entrepreneurial education in schools, vocational education institutions and universities has significant impact on young generations. It encourages employability skills development and self-employment opportunities. It also promotes innovation and entrepreneurial skills development which are essential for social cohesion, personal development and active citizenship. This paper posited that the success of entrepreneurship is driven by education. Education therefore imparts knowledge, skills and inculcates value which is responsible for building human capital that breeds, drives and sets technological innovation and economic growth. Hence, developing individuals through educations is becoming an important goal of entrepreneurship. This paper proposes scaling up education intervention in entrepreneurship. The authors based their reports on information from research findings of past research work. An in-depth finding reveals the role of education in entrepreneurship development. It is evident therefore, that education occupies a significant place in scaling up entrepreneurship development. Also, there exists a positive correlation between education and youth entrepreneurship development. It was therefore, recommended among others that entrepreneurship skills should be reactivated among youths at all levels of education and in other informal settings through entrepreneurship education so as to make them psychologically ready for business venture in the world of work.*

**Key word:** Education, Entrepreneurship, Development, Scaling up, Intervention,

### **Introduction**

Education plays essential role in scaling up entrepreneurship in a developing economy like Nigeria. This is because entrepreneurship has emerged over the past three decades, as arguably, the most potent economic force that the world has ever known (Osborne, 2010). The focus of economic development, and even of collegiate business programs, has shifted more heavily toward entrepreneurship. This increased interest in the entrepreneur's role in the economy has led to a growing body of research, attempting to identify the factors that promote entrepreneurship. Peterman and Kennedy (2013) posited that a high level of entrepreneurial activity is assumed and shown to contribute in fostering competition, innovation, economic growth, job creation and well-being of the citizens. According to these authors, there is vivid agreement on the role of education on entrepreneurship development. Educational intervention in entrepreneurship help entrepreneurs drives innovation; speed up structural changes in the economy and force old incumbent companies to shape up thereby making an immense contribution to productivity (Peterman and Kennedy 2013).

Moghimi (2015) considered entrepreneurship as growth and development power of organizations and societies. Therefore, curriculum planners should reengineer education into the development of entrepreneurial thinking. This would result in the development of entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship innovation, as observed by Jonah (2011) has become a major academic concern in different societies. Up scaling education for promoting entrepreneurship is inevitable in order to align activities in societies with modern world of work. Education in this process is considered as one of the most important upscaling components.

In modern societies where complexities are increasing day by day, progress is impossible without necessary education dynamics (Gates, 2016). In proportion to development of entrepreneurial skills in the current situation, the education system in each society needs to be promoted (up scaled) qualitatively and quantitatively. Policy making and planning in entrepreneurship education is now one of the most crucial areas of need leading to development of human capital which is the most decisive factor in the development or underdevelopment of any nation. Cooper, Bottomley and Gordon (2004) maintained that entrepreneurial development is inextricably tied to education, since education is a light

that shows mankind the right direction to surge as well as being an engine for the growth and progress of any nation. Osaklinle (2010) opines that education does not only impacts knowledge, skills and values, but it is also responsible for building human capital which drives technological innovation and economic growth of the nation.

Currently, emphasis is shifting away from the general education that encourages mere acquisition of certificates to skill-based education which centres more on what one can do and the ability to apply requisite skill in real work environment (Aluwong, 2010). Agi and Yellowe (2013) added that education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude towards entrepreneurial development. Gates (2016) said that education and entrepreneurship are the basis for transformation, industrialization and a high way to global knowledge economy. It also leads to national transformation and development, through reduction in poverty and ensuring peace and security. Agi and Yellowe (2013) further asserted that the goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient scaling up of education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values that help individuals to be creative in thinking and innovation.

Entrepreneurial skills, as observed by Debyser (2013) has evolved over time to embrace creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to set-up and run a successful business. The author also added that entrepreneurship is now considered as a key competence for all citizens and should therefore be promoted at all levels of education as a lifelong learning programme. Here, entrepreneurship is perceived as a driver for growth and job creation as well as a means to make economies more competitive. Hence education is vital for upscaling, changing cultures and igniting entrepreneurial mindsets of youths.

A considerable number of studies have been empirically reviewed on education and entrepreneurship and there exist a consensus among researchers that entrepreneurship can be taught and that entrepreneurial attributes can be positively acquired through by educational programmes. Harmon (2013) in a study analyzing the relationship between education and entrepreneurship using data from the United State of America. He observed a positive correlation between education and entrepreneurship. The researcher found out that success in entrepreneurship increases with increase level of education but this might stem from the fact that more talented individuals are both more successful and educated. The researcher further observed that acquisition of more education increases the profit-generating capacities of the entrepreneur, making more highly educated individuals become successful entrepreneurs. Furthermore, education increases the opportunities and drive potential for successful entrepreneurs to strive in the midst of global market complexities.

Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013) examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education and employment stimulation in Nigeria. They discovered that entrepreneurship development could be an effective tool for poverty reduction, stimulating employment. It would as well fast-track the realization of the benefits of universal primary education and promotes gender equality. These researchers explained that self-sufficiency, self-sustainability, self-support culture and self-employment are the end point of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship development therefore, can fulfill government's unfulfilled responsibility of creating and providing employment to its citizenry.

Considering a study conducted by Idogho and Ainabor (2011), which investigated the extent to which the entrepreneurial education introduced in tertiary institutions in Nigeria has impacted on students, the entrepreneurial skills and intentions needed to set up a new business. The result of the analysis showed that there is a positive correlation between the entrepreneurial skills and students' establishment of owned business. It was found out that students who received instructions in entrepreneurship education showed a greater desire to set up new business after graduation. In similar studies on college student's intention to become entrepreneurs, Christian (2010) earlier studied Batak students' intention to be entrepreneurs and found that 65% of the respondents had intention to be entrepreneurs.

A study on Balinese students' intention to be entrepreneurs, showed that out of 105 respondents, 65% showed their intention to be entrepreneurs and 35% more indicated their desire to be large scale entrepreneurs (Lie, 2014). Similar study earlier carried out by Gerald (2006) on Javanese students' intention to be entrepreneurs found out, that out of 194 respondents, 74.4% showed their intention to be entrepreneurs and 22% indicated their desire to be large scale entrepreneurs. Furthermore, a study conducted by Muhammad (2013) on the impact of Business education and family background on entrepreneurial potential of students from various universities in Pakistan revealed that

Business education and family background have no significant impact on the entrepreneurial skills and potential of students. A research carried out by Ewumi, Oyenuga and Owoyele (2012) on the entrepreneurship education as panacea for youth unemployment implication of vocational counseling for sustainable national development; found that entrepreneurship education assist students to create wealth for themselves after graduation.

### **Education Intention**

Education has to do with the development of individual potential or the development of intellect and character. It is to develop or reform an individual's sense of responsibility thereby making him a better person. According to Ekan (2012) education could be described as the best investment that one can make as educated youths would be able to have good jobs, meaningful life for themselves and increase national productivity. The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2014) refers to education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. It is also a dynamic instrument of change. Ukeje (2008), referred to education as one of the most powerful instruments ever invented by modern civilization because education prepares one for life and it is a process of accumulating knowledge, skills and values. Education is also responsible for building human capital which breeds, drives and sets technological innovation and economic growth of the nation. Education in its broadest meaning, as noted by Osakinle (2010), is any process by which an individual gains knowledge and insight, develops attitudes or skills. It is an experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character and physical status of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmit it accumulated knowledge, values, skills from one generation to another (Soyinka, 2012). The function of education is both social and academic. Its social function is to help each individual become more effective member of the society by passing to him/her the collective experience of the past and the present. Its academic function is to enable individual lead a more satisfying and productive life by preparing him/her to handle new experience successfully (Sadler, 2010).

Aluwong (2010) sees education as the key to national development. This is because, it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips youths in society to participate in, and benefit from their national resources and economy.

### **Entrepreneurship Development**

Entrepreneurship is derived from the French word *entreprendre* which means to undertake (French Dictionary, 1728). Hence, entrepreneurship is the process of undertaking activities concerned with identifying and exploring business opportunities while assuming its attendant risks. Entrepreneurship involves taking chances, because new business does not emerge by accidents (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011). Timmons (2009) viewed entrepreneurship as the ability to create knowledge out of nothing, the capacity to understand how to find, organize and control the resources which are mostly in the hands of others. Adeoye (2015) refers to entrepreneurship as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action, which includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve set objectives.

The entrepreneurial function implies the discovery, assessment and exploitation of opportunities. In other words, new products, services or production processes; new strategies and organizational forms and new markets for products and inputs that did not previously exist are either discovered or created (Adebayo and Kolawole, 2013). The entrepreneurship opportunity is seen as an unexpected and yet unvalued economic opportunity. Entrepreneurial opportunities exist because different agents have differing ideas on the relative value of resources or when resources are turned from inputs into outputs. The theory of the entrepreneur focuses on the heterogeneity of beliefs about the value of resources (Alabi, Alanana and Bahal, 2014).

The entrepreneurial function can be conceptualized as the discovery of opportunities and the subsequent creation of new economic activity, often via the creation of a new business organization (Reynolds, 2005). In view of the fact that, there is no market where opportunities are sold, the entrepreneur must exploit business opportunities. Meaning that, he or she must develop his or her capacities to obtain resources, as well as organize and exploit opportunities to utilize these resources. The downside to the market of "ideas" or "opportunities" lies in the difficulty involved in protecting ownership rights of ideas. Education therefore must stimulate the development of business ideas in Nigerian youths.

Entrepreneurs are not "born" rather they become one through the experience of their lives. Effective entrepreneurship education help the youth to access the skills and knowledge needed to start and grow up a new business. Peter Drucker, one of the leading management thinkers of the last century, questioned: Is entrepreneurial mystique? His answer is that it is not magic, it is not mysterious

and it has nothing to do with genes. It is discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned (Drucker, 2008). According to Kuratko and Hodgets (2004), entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy towards the creation and implementation of new ideas. In this light, entrepreneurship is more than the simple business' creation. It involves the utilization of educational potentials for business creation.

Adeoye (2015) observed that entrepreneurship is often discussed under the title of the entrepreneurial factor, entrepreneurial function, entrepreneurial initiative, entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurial spirit. The entrepreneurial factor is understood to be a new factor in production that is different to the classic ideas of earth, work and capital, which must be explained via remuneration through income for the entrepreneur subsumed in the shortage of people with entrepreneurial capacities (Adeoye, 2015). It is reported that entrepreneurial function refers to the discovery and exploitation of opportunities as the creation of enterprise. Entrepreneurial behavior is seen as behavior that manages to combine innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness (Miller, 2013). All these factors must be transmitted to the youths through education. Miller (2013) understanding therefore, combines the classic theories of Schumpeter's innovation entrepreneur (1934, 1942), the risk-taking entrepreneur that occupies a position of uncertainty as proposed by Knight (1921), and his entrepreneur with initiative and imagination who creates new opportunities. Reference to entrepreneurial initiative underlines the reasons for correctly anticipating market imperfections or the capacity to innovate in order to create new combination of goods and services. Entrepreneurial initiative covers the concepts of business creation, risk-taking, renewal or innovation inside or outside an existing organization. Lastly, the entrepreneurial spirit emphasizes exploration, search and innovation, as opposed to the exploitation of business opportunities pertaining to managers. All these explain entrepreneurship possesses different applications, which education must bring to bear in Nigerian youths as drivers of tomorrow's economy.

There are two schools of thought regarding entrepreneurship education. One is the "new venture creation" and the other is known as "innovation" (Saks and Gannglion, 2002). Entrepreneurship education therefore develops in the participants the intention to exhibit entrepreneurial behaviours, knowledge and desirability of the entrepreneurial activity (Linan, 2004). Entrepreneurship education could be said to involve any pedagogical programme or process of education for the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills which involves developing certain personal qualities. It is therefore, not exclusively focused on the immediate creation of new business (Fayolle, 2006). Linan (2004) further explained that there are four different kinds of entrepreneurship education programmes. The first, "Entrepreneurial Awareness Education" that aims at increasing knowledge about entrepreneurship and to influence attitudes that may impact intentions. The second category is described as "Education for start-up". These programmes are geared toward people who already have an entrepreneurial idea and need to solve practical problems about becoming self-employed. The third category, 'Education for Entrepreneurial Dynamism' which focuses on people who are already entrepreneurs and want to promote dynamic behaviours after the start-up phase. The last category, Continuing Education for Entrepreneurs which describes lifelong learning programmes and focuses on experienced building for entrepreneurs. Nigerian youths should possess these knowledge based skills through scaling up intervention.

Charney (2010) maintained that entrepreneurship education has a broad definition, which includes economic, social and cultural factors. Hence entrepreneurship education dynamic and social process in which individuals (youths) in collaboration with others, identify opportunities for innovation and act upon these by transforming ideas into practical and targeted activities, whether in social, cultural or economic context. Peterman and Kennedy (2013) observed that entrepreneurship education involves developing behaviours, skills and attributes applied individually and/or collectively to help individuals (youths) create, cope with, and enjoy change and innovation through gainful or self-employment.

### **Scaling up of Educational Intervention in Entrepreneurship Development for Youth Employment**

Gregory (2017) maintained that education is a basic principle in establishing an enterprise. This is because, it is expected that, knowledge acquisition and transfer enhanced development of entrepreneurial skills; leading to increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the potential entrepreneur. In the light of this, Gautam and Singh (2015) described entrepreneurial education as the process of professional application of knowledge, attitude, skills and competences that result in creativity, innovation and risk taking. These authors further maintained that entrepreneurship education prepares the youths to be responsible and enterprising. In similar vein, UNESCO (2008) viewed educational

based entrepreneurship as all kinds of experiences that gives youths ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities to business venture and to manage those ventures to become a medium for job creation for themselves and employers of labour.

Eyoh (2016) explains that education helps in the development of human resources, which is very crucial in entrepreneurship and maximization of productivity, which ensure achievement of organizational goals. Education therefore, makes it possible to provide an extensive opportunity or structure for developing behavioural and technical skills within the human resources, which helps an entrepreneur achieve a certain level of growth. Up scaling education intervention help entrepreneur enhance the individuals' functional knowledge and skills at any level, and lead to expansion of their business personality and expansion of mental horizons.

Ekan (2012) argues that the ultimate goal of scaling up educational entrepreneurship is about increasing the youths' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. In other words, through educational entrepreneurship, students are equipped to deploy their creativities for their good and for the benefit of the larger society. Youths are also empowered to take initiatives, responsibilities and risks. Frank (2015) explained that education strengthens the entrepreneurs' capacity to create ideas and innovation; accelerate business application of these ideas and innovations while extending business capacities.

Scaling education places emphasis on entrepreneurs' imagination, reflective thinking, creativity, and risk acceptance in business. On the contrary, traditional entrepreneurship views put more emphasis on quantitative business techniques than development of creative skills (Porter, 2014). Roach (2009) earlier maintain that scaling up education promotes an individual entrepreneur's personal knowledge and ability to distinguish different business opportunities; enhancing main knowledge and skills in order to create an effective and flexible programme for a risky business. It provides the ability to identify types of business within the available business complex, and create understanding for required skills and current methods and strategies needed for the marketing of new business products. Other aspects of scaling up education for entrepreneurship development include: communication, problem-solving skills development, team work, interpersonal relationship, management, and planning (Fones, 2014).

Peters (2013) stated that entrepreneurship is not a congenital matter, but it is acquirable and trainable potentials, therefore, the environment, institutes, and all educational levels play an important role in this regard. The author further stated that entrepreneurs have characteristics such as risk-taking, obtaining wealth, having different experiences in the market and economic situation, business smartness, moderated family background in business activities, physical and educational characteristics. Peters also considered education as one of the main determinants in creating entrepreneurship spirit.

The 21st Century has been described as the age of entrepreneur, and this description seems appropriate considering the state of unemployment, poverty, and lack of skills and near hopelessness facing a large number of youths. Thus, efforts have been made to address these challenges through scaling up of entrepreneurship education. It has been observed that young men and women are unable to secure formal employment opportunities; and it is believe that encouraging scaling up of entrepreneurship through education intervention may be an ever more important way of harnessing their enthusiasm, energy and ambition to gain self-employment and contribute to economic development. Scaling up education has always been canvassed for as one of the most visible ways out of poverty but this assertion is becoming invalid with the increasing number of unemployed university graduates in Nigeria. It is now obvious that except the citizenry is exposed to the right education, unemployment would remain unabated. One of the ways of ensuring that education assists in addressing national and global unemployment is by incorporating education in entrepreneurship. Thus, this paper proposes scaling up of education intervention in entrepreneurship development for youth employment in Nigeria.

### **Conclusions**

It is evident from the discussions presented in this paper that, education occupies a significant place in entrepreneurship development. Also, there exists a positive correlation between education and entrepreneurship. This evidence provides reasons to support opportunities for people of all ages particularly youths in taking active part in education efforts that would ensure entrepreneurship development. Additionally, education and training seems to centre itself much more in changing personal attitudes than knowledge, because the effect of change attitudes could be more significant to the process of business creation thereby overcoming the perceived barriers to entrepreneurship development for youth employment in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

In views of the discussions outlined herein, the following recommendations are envisaged and made accordingly.

1. The educational systems need to be scaled up by teachers to emphasize the value for entrepreneurship in order to promote enterprise culture in Nigeria.
2. Entrepreneurship skills should be reactivated among youths at all levels of education by teachers and trainers in both formal and informal settings through up scaling of education so as to make the youths psychologically ready for business ventures in the world of work.
3. The government through the National University Commission (NUC) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education at the federal, state and local government levels should ensure that entrepreneurship education is made a compulsory subject before individuals graduate from a school system.

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