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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION AMONG UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN BENUE STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out on entrepreneurship education and job creation among university graduates in Benue state. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 22773 graduates. The sample of the study was 1139 graduates. A questionnaire titled “EEJCUGQ” was the instrument used for the collection of data which was subjected to validity and reliability test. Percentages and mean scores statistical tools were used to analyse bio-data and research questions respectively. Chi-square and t-tests were used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study reviewed that there is a relationship between entrepreneurship education among university graduates, university graduates rely on entrepreneurship education to improve job creation, and that there is a significant relationship between gender of graduates on job creation due to entrepreneurship education. It was concluded that entrepreneurship education is the key to unlocking unemployment and as such graduates from tertiary institutions should be encouraged to establish small-scale businesses and be self-employed. Finally, implications and recommendations for school managers were pointed out that Managers need to play the role of reorientation, attitude adjustment, and disposition of prospective graduates from complete dependence on government for the job but should rather sort for alternative means from the ample opportunities provided to them by knowledge of entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, job creation, school, Management,

1. INTRODUCTION

University education across the globe is targeted at the production of graduates who will become useful agents of economic and social transformation. The knowledge, skills and disposition of university graduates is expected to enable them attain self-reliance and sustainability. To this end the importance of entrepreneurship education cannot be over emphasized.

National Policy of Education (2014:54) emphasizes that university education should make optimum contribution to national development by “making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement of all Nigeria universities”. It is on this note, NUC (2007) embarked on the promotion of the entrepreneurship programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria with the following objectives:

- *Empowerment of the people (graduates)*
- *Creation of employment*
- *Diversification in business and*
- *Individual confidence*

Entrepreneurship education therefore seeks to provide graduates with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings, Wikipedia (2009). In other words, it is a competency-based education that focuses on knowledge and skills. Bolarin (2012) further described entrepreneurship education as the one that transverse the length of business formation, management, diversification and growth and ongoing process that equip entrepreneurs(graduates) with entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship education deals with the acquisition of right habits, attitude and skills as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment and underemployment. Anyaoha (1993) stressed that entrepreneurship education aims at helping students to acquire saleable and managerial skills, which can assist them in becoming self-employed and self-reliant. Esomonu (1997) defined entrepreneurship education as education that is geared towards producing self-employed or self-reliant persons for societal growth.

Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling through university programme to enable graduates create jobs. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to survey into entrepreneurship education and creation among university graduates in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment is one of the most disturbing problems faced by university graduates. They roam the streets with their faces showing dependence at its peak. University entrepreneurship education programmes was meant to cushion the unemployment problems, but the effect is still being seriously felt. The federal, state and the local governments have not been able to do much to bridge this gap. The reason relates to maladministration among others. Most Nigeria graduates have entrepreneurship training but lack access to equipment and the capital requirement to overcome this challenge. Entrepreneurial learning environment and support tools are not adequately available in our schools. Adequate teachers to provide the needed appropriate skills and attitude are not available and where available they are in short fall. The situation has been exacerbated by mass production of graduates from universities without any commensurate arrangement for their gainful employment. The ugly situation has resulted in joblessness among graduates thus, requiring a way-out through entrepreneurship education transformation in Nigerian universities. The question here is, can exposure

of university graduates to entrepreneurship education alleviate the plight of unemployment prevalent among university graduates in Benue State by such graduate with job creativity? It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to examine entrepreneurship education and job creation among university graduates in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurship education improve job creation among university graduates in Benue State?
2. To what extent do graduates rely on entrepreneurship education for job creation.
3. To what extent is the relationship between male and female university graduates of entrepreneurship education for job creation?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship of entrepreneurship education among university graduates to improve job creation in Benue State.
2. There is no significant reliance of graduates on entrepreneurship education to improve job creation in Benue State.
3. There is no significant relationship between gender of graduates of entrepreneurship education to improve job creation in Benue State.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design because the investigation is carried out in a natural setting and on a large population. Hence, the descriptive design is most suitable. Emaikwu, (2011) survey design is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail as well as points of view and attitudes that are being felt. In other words, the design is focused on bringing out the picture of what has taken place or is taking place using description and/or interpretation.

The population of this study consisted of 22,773 graduates from seven faculties. These faculties are: management sciences (1785), Arts (3575), social science (10404) and education (3250), Environmental Sciences (705), Health Sciences (448), Sciences (1647) and Law (959) (Academic Office, 2022). The sample size for the study 1139 representing 5% of the population. This is because the population is relatively large (Emaikwu,2011). The researcher adopted the proportionate stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques in sampling individual faculty sampled thus: management sciences (89), Arts (180), social science (520) and education (163), Environmental Sciences (35), Health Sciences (22), Sciences (82) and Law (48). The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, titled “Entrepreneurship Education for Job Creation among University Graduates Questionnaire (EEJCUGQ)” The questionnaire items were structured in such a way as to elicit responses in accordance with the objectives of the study. The

questionnaire had two sections; A and B. Section “A” sought to obtain information on the bio-data of respondents while section “B” elicited responses for the study’s questions and hypotheses. To this end a four point Likert scale was used to rate the response thus; Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D)=2, Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The questionnaire was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and also in the area of educational management from the faculty of education Benue state university, Makurdi for content, construct and face validity. This was to ensure that items that were not clear enough were restructured while those that were not relevant were removed.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument for the study, the researcher administered the questionnaire to fifteen (15) respondents comprising 7 faculties from University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The faculties were not part of the sample of the main study but were chosen because they have similar characteristics with the faculties’ area of study. The completed questionnaires were analysed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The essence was to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. The test yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.97 on the whole instrument. This is justified in accordance with the recommendations of Cronbach (1971) in Amin (2005) who states that a questionnaire should be considered reliable if the coefficient yielded were above 0.50 which is the least recommended CVI in survey studies. The research questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher personally on a hand to hand basis. After completion the researcher retrieved them from respondents to ensure it 100% retrieval. Percentages and mean scores statistical tools were used to analyse bio-data and research questions respectively. Chi-square and t-test were used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where $P > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted and where $P < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected

Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents is done according to gender, faculties, and entrepreneurship experience.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent. (%)
Male	824	72.3
Female	315	27.7
Total	1139	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 72.3% were male and 27.7% were female. This result implies that male respondents were more than their female counterpart.

Table 2: Faculties Demographic of Respondents

S/no	Faculties	Frequency	Percent. (%)
1	Education	163	14.3
2	Sciences	82	7.2
3	Health Sciences	22	1.9
4	Management Sciences	89	7.8
5	Social Sciences	520	45.7
6	Environmental Sciences	35	3.1
7	Law	48	4.2
8	Arts	180	15.8
	Total	1139	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 14.3% respondents were from faculty of Education, 7.2% represents Sciences, 1.9% were from faculty of Health Sciences, 7.9% were from Management Sciences, 45.7% from Social Sciences, 3.1% from Environmental Sciences, 4.2% from Law and 15.8% were from Arts. This result show that most of the respondents were from Faculty of Social Sciences.

Table 3: Entrepreneurship Experience of Respondents

Entrepreneurship Experience	Frequency	Percent. (%)
below 1 year	480	42.1
Above 1year	96	8.4
None of the Above	563	49.4
Total	1139	100.0

Table 3 reveals that 42.1% respondents were from entrepreneurship experience of below 1 year, 8.4% said they have entrepreneurship experience of 1 year while 49.4% said they have none of the above entrepreneurship experience.

Analyses of Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent does entrepreneurship education improve job creation among university graduates in Benue State?

Table 4: Mean Scores of the extend Entrepreneurship Education improve job creation among university graduates in Benue State

S/no	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	Due to entrepreneurship education, I am able to identify business opportunities	1139	3.61	Strongly Agreed
2	Due to entrepreneurship education, I can create products and services that satisfy customers	1139	3.40	Agreed
3	Due to entrepreneurship education I can successfully develop business plans	1139	3.48	Agreed
4	Due to entrepreneurship education, I now have skills to create a new business	1139	3.32	Agreed
5	I can now anticipate, tolerate and manage unexpected market changes, setbacks and risks that may affect my business	1139	3.52	Strongly Agreed
	Clusters	1139	3.47	Agreed

Table 4 above shows item 1-5 which have mean scores of 3.61, 3.40, 3.48, 3.32, 3.52 and cluster of 3.47 indicating strongly agreed and agreed respectively.

Item by item shows that respondents opined that due to entrepreneurship education they are able to identify business opportunities, respondents suggest that due to entrepreneurship education, they can create products and services that can satisfy customers, respondents reiterated that due to entrepreneurship education they can successfully develop business plans, they also responded that due to entrepreneurship education, they now have skills to create a new business, respondent suggests that due to entrepreneurship education, they can anticipate, tolerate and manage unexpected market changes, setbacks and risks that may affect their business.

Research Question Two: To what extent do graduates rely on entrepreneurship education for job creation.

Table 5: Mean Scores of Reliance Graduates have on Entrepreneurship Education for Job creation

S/no	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	I wanted to work for myself after completing school	1139	3.21	Agreed
2	The idea of working for myself is very appealing to me	1139	3.27	Agreed
3	I consider self-employment as very important concept	1139	3.27	Agreed
4	The university entrepreneurship education effectively prepared me for an entrepreneurial career	1139	3.56	Strongly Agreed
5	My personal satisfaction in self-employment is very high	1139	2.96	Agreed
	Clusters	1139	3.25	Agreed

Table 5 reveals mean scores of 3.21, 3.27, 3.27, 3.56, 2.96 and cluster of 3.25 showing agreed and strongly agreed on reliance graduates have in entrepreneurship education. Item by item analysis reviewed, respondents said they wanted to work for themselves after completing school, also said, the idea of working for themselves is very appealing to them. Respondents suggest that they consider self-employment as very important concept. The university entrepreneurship education effectively prepared them for an entrepreneurial career, and that their personal satisfaction with self-employment is very high.

Research Question Three: To what extent is the relationship between male and female university graduates of entrepreneurship education for job creation?

Table 6: Mean Scores of Relationships Between Male and Female University Graduates of Entrepreneurship Education for Job Creation

S/no	Items	N	Mean	Decision
1	Female graduates have more opportunities of entrepreneurship skills such as business network than male graduates this help them to create any kind of enterprise they want.	1139	3.05	Agreed
2	Female graduates know how to set business goals same as male graduates that help them to run a small-scale business enterprise	1139	2.55	Agreed

3	Male graduates take more business risk as compare to female graduates who are more conservative when it comes to Financial Risk that help them in managing their business effectively	1139	3.43	Agreed
4	Male graduates have more chances of managing their business enterprise such as motivating their customers than female graduates	1139	3.06	Agreed
5	Male graduates sometimes focus on business manufacturing and construction while female graduates take small retail and service orientation business that also help them to create business of their own.	1139	3.29	Agreed
Clusters		1139	3.08	Agreed

Table 6 reveals mean scores of 3.05, 2.55, 3.43, 3.06, 3.29 and cluster of 3.08 showing agreed respectively. This result implies that there is a relationship between male and female university graduates of entrepreneurship education for job creation due to the nature of gender difference.

Item by item analysis reviewed that respondents suggested that female graduates have more opportunities of entrepreneurship skills such as business network than male graduates that help them to create any kind of enterprise they want, also, female graduates know how to set business goals same as male graduates that help them to run a small scale business enterprise, similarly, male graduates take more business risk as compare to female graduates who are more conservative when it comes to financial risk this help them in managing their business effectively, respondent opined that male graduates have more chances of managing their business enterprise such as motivating their customers than female graduates, male graduates sometimes focus on business of manufacturing and construction while female graduates take small retail and service orientation business that also help them to create business of their own.

Test of Hypotheses

Test of hypotheses is done in line with the hypotheses formulated using chi-square (χ^2) for hypotheses 1-2 and t-test for hypotheses 3 at 0.05 level of significance. Where $P > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted but where $P < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship of entrepreneurship education among university graduates to improve job creation in Benue State.

Table 7: Chi-Square Analysis of the Relationship Entrepreneurship Education have among University Graduates in Benue State to Create Jobs

SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	χ^2	P-value	Decision
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Observed	859	147	105	28	1139				
						3	1569.688 ^a	.000	Sig.
Expected	319.8	319.8	319.8	319.8					

Table 7 shows chi-square value of (3df) = 1569.688^a, P<0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This result shows there is a relationship entrepreneurship education have among university graduates in Benue State to create jobs. This means that entrepreneurship education exposes business opportunities to graduates to become self-reliant by creation of jobs.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant reliance of graduates on entrepreneurship education to improve job creation in Benue State.

Table 8: Chi-square Analysis of the Reliance of Graduates on Entrepreneurship Education to Improve Job Creation in Benue State

	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Df	X ²	P-value	Decision
Observed	369	679	56	35	1139				
						3	973.601 ^a	.000	Sig.
Expected	319.8	319.8	319.8	319.8					

Table 8 shows chi-square value of (3df) = 1569.688^a, P<0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This result shows university graduates have reliance on entrepreneurship education to create job. This reliance implies that students learn the theoretical and practical aspects of different skills as well as development of business plan and feasibility study which enlightens them and inform them of business strategies and business report.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between gender of graduates of entrepreneurship education to improve job creation in Benue State.

Table 9: t-test Analysis of relationship between Gender of Graduates of Entrepreneurship Education to Improve Job Creation in Benue State.

Variables	Group	n	X	SD	t	df	Sign.	Dec.
Job creation due to entrepreneurship education.	Male	824	3.06	.958				
					.686	1137	.004	Sign.
	Female	315	3.02	.959				

Table 9 shows t-test value of $(1137df) = .686, P < 0.05$. It was observed that male students scored ($x = 3.06, SD = .958$) greater than female graduates scored value ($x = 3.02, SD = .959$). With this result, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This result implies that there is significant mean scores relationship between male and female graduates on job creation due to entrepreneurship education. It showed that male graduates take more business risk as compare to female graduates who are more conservative when it comes to financial risk, male graduates sometimes focus on business manufacturing and construction while female graduates take small retail and service orientation business that also help them to create business of their own and gender different is also a factor to consider.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Based on the result of the analysis of chi-square and t-test on the test of hypotheses, it was found that; First and foremost there is a relationship entrepreneurship education have among university graduates in Benue State to create jobs. This finding agreed with Mohammad, Abul and Rosni (2014) who found innovation, entrepreneurship training and education, family background, government support program, social entrepreneurship, women participation, individual entrepreneurial characteristics, participation of micro, small and medium enterprises, youth empowerment, collaboration of government-university-industry is the key tool for entrepreneurship development which is stimulating employment are eventually alleviating poverty. Coulter (2007) see entrepreneurship as a process whereby an individual or a group of individuals use organized efforts and means to pursue opportunities to create value and grow by fulfilling wants and needs through innovation and uniqueness, no matter what resources are currently controlled, so, entrepreneurship has been considered as self-employment.

Secondly, finding revealed university graduates rely on entrepreneurship education to improve job creation. This finding supports the view of *Mbiowa (2011) who stated* that Nigeria will implement entrepreneurship education in her education institutions of learning with the hope that, students will be helped to graduate with good handiworks for self-employment and for employment of other people. Entrepreneurship Education will thereby, confront unemployment, reduce poverty, create wealth, develop self-reliance and create employment.

Lastly, finding revealed that there is significant relationship between gender of graduates on job creation due to entrepreneurship education. This finding confirmed with Norman, Sivotwa, Takaruzo and Mutsau (2016) that most graduates have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and would prefer to be entrepreneurs at the end of their studies, challenges that may affect students' interest in entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship as a career include difficulty in accessing funding, lack of technical support at start-up, and inadequate business opportunities.

CONCLUSION

In this era of increasing level of unemployment, prospective undergraduates are keen of finding an alternative while the expected white-collar jobs are yet to come. The knowledge and skills acquired

from entrepreneurship education is the best option to be utilised to create job and even become employers of labour. Entrepreneurship education will help young graduates to use their skills, knowledge and other potentials to form co-operative groups and start or set-up business that will serve them throughout their life.

Implications for School Managers and Recommendations

The findings of the study have provided useful data for school managers to use as a yardstick for policy formulation especially in matters concerning entrepreneurship. Managers need to play the role of job reorientation, attitude adjustment and disposition of prospective graduates from complete dependence on government for job but should rather sort for alternative means from the ample of opportunities provided by knowledge of entrepreneurship.

Universities in collaboration with National University Commission (NUC) should make more robust efforts to implement entrepreneurship as strategic attempt to address graduate unemployment. This could be done by cultivating entrepreneurship culture through practical with undergraduates as a remedy to escalating unemployment challenges among graduates.

There should be the application of different pedagogy in entrepreneurial educational studies for teaching and learning in the universities. The approach should emphasize simulation and role play experimentation that will expose students to grasp close to reality experiences. The University should partner with Industry/Guest Lecturers in excursions. This opportunity will not only avail but expose students to successful practicing business people who would share their experiences on regular basis and at the same time serve as ideal breeding ground for planting entrepreneurial seed for post graduate job creation ability.

Government through her financial agents should create an avenue where soft loans can be granted to prospective undergraduate to execute their business ideas. A flexible university syllabi should be adapted to include newest technologies and business practices to enable students grasp business trends, principles and to enhance functional knowledge of job creation ability. Business tycoons in the private sector such as Dangote should be involved in entrepreneurial education in training university graduates to set up business through soft loan from their companies. All industrial establishments in Nigeria should set up satellite institutions or schools of entrepreneurial studies to inculcate their skills of production of their goods in young graduates. This should also include all foreign firms operating in Nigeria, in line with the Nigerian indigenization decree.

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