

ISSN 3005 - 7256

AJeIN

African Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation



FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions in Edo State

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Abstract

The tragedy of Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment exercise in 2014 raises doubt about the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship education earmarked to abate the graduates' unemployment challenges in Nigeria. This study therefore, investigated the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education earmarked for self-employment generation among tertiary school graduates in Edo State. It determined the extent to which graduates acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills necessary for self-employment and how the skills facilitate their self-employment. Two research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was formulated. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study population comprised all the 40,333 graduates (2009/2010-2012/2013 Academic Sessions) from the target institutions (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) and 450 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique. A 20-item structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by 4 experts from entrepreneurship, measurement and evaluation. It was equally tested for its reliability using the Cronbach Alpha and a reliability value of 0.89 was realized. The data collected were analysed using frequency count and descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of respondents' opinions while the formulated hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that most of the graduates are still unemployed although they claimed to have acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills from the school training experiences. It equally revealed that among those employed, only few are self-employed as against the expected. Against this backdrop it was recommended among others that entrepreneurial training should be practically oriented and more emphasis should be laid on students' entrepreneurial intentions.

Key Words: Assessment, Effectiveness, Entrepreneurship Education, Tertiary Institutions, Edo State

Introduction

The protracted problem of unemployment facing young tertiary school graduates which seem intractable called for stakeholders concern and as a result entrepreneurship education was introduced into the tertiary school curriculum. The consequences of unemployment are enormous and could adversely affect the socio-economic growth and development of any nation including Nigeria and Edo State in particular. Notable scholars like Asaju, Arome & Anyio posited that if unemployment is not controlled it may result to apathy, cynicism and revolution. Through effective entrepreneurship education graduates could assume their effective roles in the world of work as entrepreneurs and demonstrate the application of practical knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship development by way of establishing cottage, small, medium or large scale business which cuts across all spheres. Entrepreneurship development is regarded as a tool for job creation and economic growth even

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advance countries such as USA, Canada and others attained high economic status through the process (Akintoye, 2008, Wale 2011).

Entrepreneurship education is the training given to individuals or groups to develop their innate entrepreneurial tendencies to acquire self-reliant skills in order to be inspired to look inwards in their immediate environment and make a sustainable living through business ventures. Some of the entrepreneurial skills that could be acquired through the training include insightful skill, risk-taking skill, inventive skill, creative skill, saleable skill, communicative skill, interpersonal relationship skill among others. Entrepreneurship education cum business education aim at preparing graduates to be self-reliant or gainful employed. Ademiluyi (2007) posited that entrepreneurship education and business education perform the same functions.

Entrepreneurship could as well be describe as the ingenious process of assuming risk of uncertainty to identifying, investing and managing lucrative business opportunity successfully to satisfy customers and earn profit. It was first defined by Richard Cantillon in the 1730s and was further popularized by Jean Baptiste in the early 1800s. It has no universally acceptable definition but most scholars' definitions such as Gana (2001), Uko-Aviomoh (2006), Ezewanfor (2010) and Esene (2011) have common elements of the presence of lucrative business opportunities in the immediate environment and enterprising individuals. It is noteworthy that entrepreneurship development is the pivot in which other sectors of the economy revolve; Agriculture, Engineering (Construction and Production, Petroleum), Education, Medicine, Legal, among others. An Entrepreneur is a person who takes the risk of uncertainty in business venture by combining other factors of production to create utility and earn profit. Graduates of entrepreneurship education could assume roles in entrepreneurship ventures such as business, contracts, politics, social, entertainment among others to enable them contribute their invaluable quotas to the economic growth and development of the nation.

Despite the relevance accorded to the course and its training in the various tertiary institutions, yet graduates who have compulsorily taken the course prior to their graduation still roam about the street seeking for white collar jobs. Report from the National Bureau of Statistics indicated a continuous increase in unemployment rate in 2009, 2010, 2011 and first quarter of 2015 which stood at 19.7%, 21.1%, 23.9% and 24.2% respectively. The fact remains that graduates are expected to exhibit the application of practical knowledge and skills they acquired from the training to become self employed

in a situation whereby paid employment is unavailable or less lucrative. Anyakhola (1997 in Njoku (2011) posited that entrepreneurship programme is to train graduates of secondary and higher institutions to take up self-employment. The irony is that they are still perpetual job seekers even sometimes at the expense of their lives. The case of the tragedy of the Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment exercise on 15th March 2014 which was reported by almost all the mass media was typical evidence (Vanguard, Punch, Tribune and others 16th March, 2014). The mass media report indicated that the tragic incident recorded 6.5 Million applicants for only 4,000 vacant positions. It also reported that, out of the 6.5 Million applicants; about 23 died including a pregnant woman from Benin-City while so many others sustained various degrees of injuries.

More ironical is the fact that Nigeria intends to eradicate extreme poverty by 2015 in attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to equally be in the league of 20 largest economies of the world by 2020, yet about 80% of her youths are unemployed. The year 2015 was the set target to achieve the MDGs of extreme poverty eradication. Currently, poverty has taken toll on Nigerians due to the economic down-turn recently experienced in Nigeria which has heighten the incidence of unemployment to the extent that most organizations are downsizing. Apparently, the attainment of this set goal seems futile since majority of the youths who form the bulk of the working population are unemployed. The attainment of the target seems to be more of myth than reality. It is like pursuing a shadow or building castle in the air since human capital production vis-a-vis job creation and opportunities are at par with sharp contrast of non-equivalence.

Basically, youths form the active segment of the working population whose contribution to national economic growth and development cannot be gloss over. The fact remains that virtually almost all the graduates (youths) from the tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Edo State in particular have compulsorily taken the Course as GST course prior to graduation, yet majority of them still roam about the street searching for scarce white collar jobs. Therefore, it becomes worrisome whether the Entrepreneurship Education earmarked to proffer lasting solution to the perennial unemployment challenges facing young tertiary school graduates is making the desirable impact, hence the study. In other words, it therefore becomes imperative to investigate the effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education relative to solving the unemployment problem facing young tertiary school graduates in Nigeria and Edo state in particular.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education relative to solving unemployment challenges facing young tertiary school graduates in Edo State. Specifically the study ascertained the following;

1. The extent to which graduates acquire the relevant entrepreneurial skills from school training prior to graduation to facilitate their employment generation.
2. Whether the entrepreneurial skills they acquired facilitate self-employment generation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- 1 To what extent did graduates acquired the relevant entrepreneurial skills from school training to facilitate their employment generation?
- 2 How do the entrepreneurial skills they acquired facilitate their self-employment generation?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of both the employed and the unemployed graduates regarding the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge they acquired from entrepreneurship education to facilitate their employment generation.

Literature Reviewed

Unemployment is a situation whereby people who are qualified, able and willing are unable to get a job. The unemployment situation is critical incidence in Nigeria. It is a cankerworm which has eaten deep into the fabric of the nation's economy. Anyaele (2003) defined unemployment as the proportion of percentage of the labour force or working population which is not employed at any given point in time. The consequences of unemployment which include the brain drain of the labour force, heinous crimes such as armed robbery, advance fee fraud (419), kidnapping, political thuggery, internet fraud, prostitutions, stealing, human trafficking among others are inimical to socio-economic development and could jeopardize the entire national economic process if not properly checked.

The current population of Nigeria as at 2014 runs at about 178.5Million and the poverty headcount ratio at national lines stood at \$1.25 per day and Nigeria ranks 6th among countries in the world whose large population of about 70% live below poverty line (2010 est) (National Bureau of Statistics 2015).

There is no clear indication that since then the trend has had a remarkable change rather it grew from worse to worst. The statistical report from the National Bureau of Statistics indicates the increasing trend which stood at 19.7%, 21.1% , 23.9%, for 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively, the increase even right from 2006 and 2007 stood at 12.3% and 12.7% respectively and currently 24.2% as the first quarter of 2015 (National Bureau of Statistics 2015). The prevailing rate of unemployment is still on the increase today. The case of the tragic Nigeria Immigration Service recruitment exercise on 15th March 2014 was a clear evidence. According to the mass media report out of about 6.5 Million applicants who applied for 4,000 vacant positions about 23 died including a pregnant woman in Benin while so many sustained various degrees of injuries.

The graph below shows a range of unemployment rate from 2006-2015



Figure 2: Unemployment Rate Graph Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2014)

In the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eradication of extreme poverty is No 1 goal. The objective purported to eradicate extreme poverty is more of myrrh than a reality. The level of unemployment is one of the major indices for measuring poverty. Although government put many programmes in place to generate employment for the teeming youths and alleviate extreme poverty, yet the unemployment rate is still on the increase. The most recent programme is the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (U-WIN); aimed at developing Nigerian youths entrepreneurial ideas and

plans and graduate intensive programme; a component of the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) of the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, former president of Nigeria. Mr Victor Eburajolo, a renowned human resource practitioner and group managing director of Kewalram Chanral Group, in his interview with Labour Vanguard described the unemployment situation in Nigeria as sitting on a keg of gunpowder and regarded the economic growth as jobless growth which does not align with manpower production as reported by Ahiuma-Young and Azubuike (2015). Nigeria unemployment rate and Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate as at the first quarter of 2015 is high compared to that of some other countries as at April-June 2015. The table below shows the comparison.

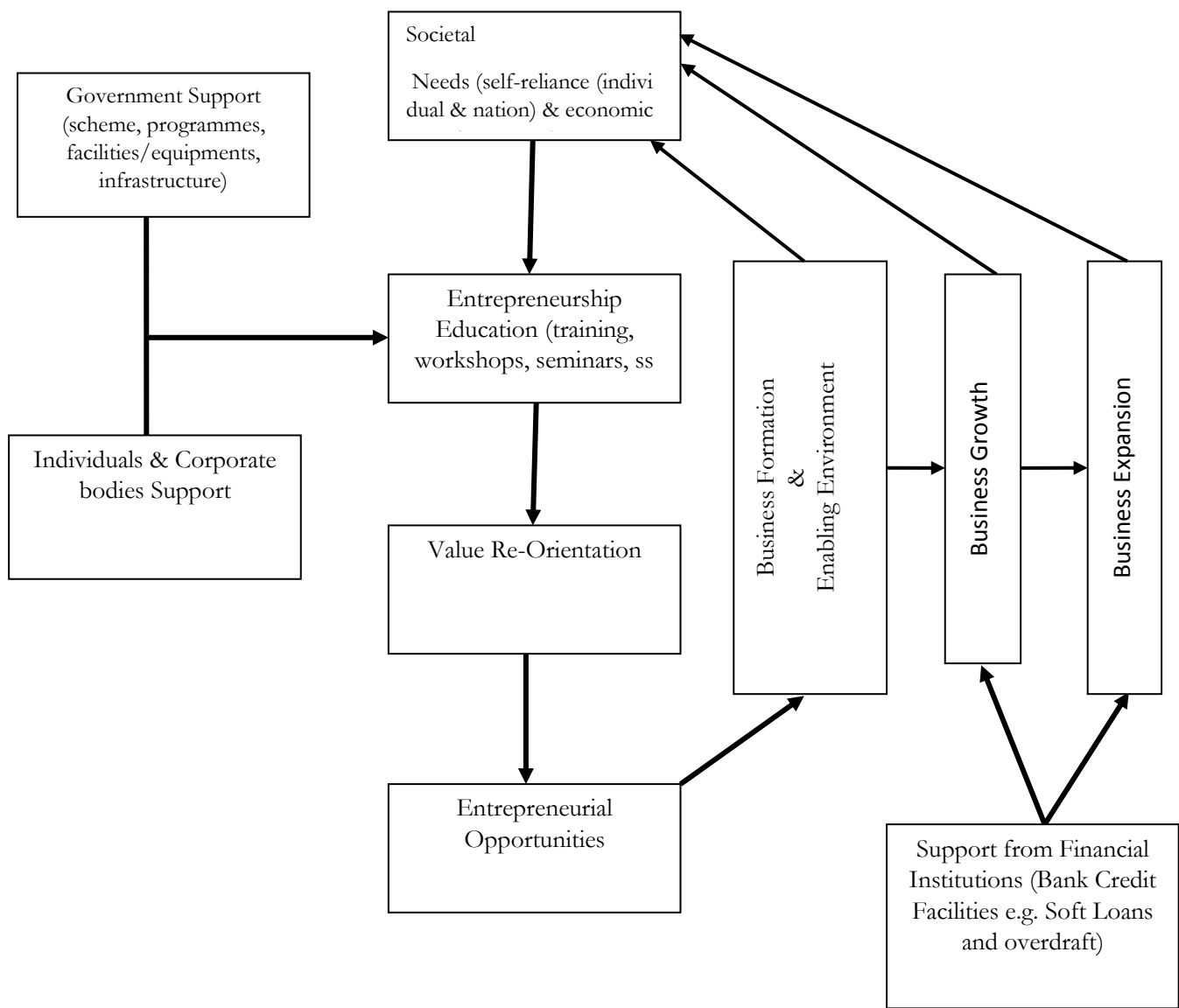
Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Unemployment Growth Rate between Nigeria and some other countries

Countries	Unemployment rates	GDP Growth Rate
Nigeria	24.2%	-11.57%
United States	5.5%	-0.2%
China	4.1%	1.3%
United Kingdom	5.5%	0.4%
Euro Area	11.1%	0.4%
Japan	3.3%	01%
Australia	06%	0.9%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2015)

There are different types of unemployment which are conventional and they include structural, frictional, cyclical, seasonal, search, residual, voluntary, technological unemployment and under-employment. The irony is that the unemployment situation in Nigeria is neither of the conventional unemployment problems aforementioned rather it is self-caused. This could be traceable to the over-dependence on oil-reliant economy and the theoretical nature of our educational system arising from the misconceptions imposed by liberal education and the over production of graduates from the tertiary institutions. Other causes include corruption, avarice of most of our political leaders among others. The structural change desirable in the Nigeria economy is yearning for a paradigm shift from the oil-reliant economy to a self-reliant economy and from theory-based to practical oriented education which aimed at reducing the unemployment challenges facing young tertiary school

graduates. This can best be provided through a functional vocational and technical education in which entrepreneurship education forms a component part and a complement. It is expected that the unemployment rate should be reduced through graduates' acquisition and application of appropriate entrepreneurial skills to facilitate successful business operation for self-reliant. Nwankwo, Nwachukwu and Chinedu (2010) posited that entrepreneurship education as a renewed process of achieving self-reliance is centrally focused on the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies. Figure I describes a successful entrepreneurship education that can equip recipients with self reliant skills to meet societal society.



The illustration could be viewed from the generic approach to teaching/learning which emphasizes the formation of optimal entrepreneurial actions based on existing market forces. The objective of entrepreneurship education in any institution is geared towards proffering solution to societal needs, yearnings and aspiration. The government, individuals and corporate bodies' supportive services are crucial for it to thrive and attain the set objective. Through entrepreneurship education graduates could acquire entrepreneurial competencies and skills to have value re-orientation and take advantage of the numerous business opportunities in their immediate environment; able to identify viable and lucrative business opportunity, establish the business in an enabling environment and manage it successfully. They could be able to apply the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat (SWOTH) analysis to identify viable business opportunities and make appropriate choice. The analysis will acquaint them with the appropriate knowledge to assume risk within their level of capabilities. The business can grow and expand with the supporting services of financial institutions and provide ultimate satisfaction to the society's needs.

A functional entrepreneurship education would equip graduates with relevant entrepreneurial skill that could enable them look inward to the available opportunities in their immediate environment and earn a sustainable living. This could go a long way to checkmate the prevailing unemployment challenges and economic quagmire in the society. The effectiveness of a programme is determined by the graduates' ability to apply the skills acquired from the training during the programme. Okoye (2007) posited that entrepreneurship education can fail among graduates if the educational system fails to turn out graduates that are trained on the basis of the prevailing circumstances on the environment.

Methods

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and the study population comprised all the 40,333 graduates (2009/2010-2012/2013 Academic Sessions) from the target public tertiary institutions in Edo State (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (Academic planning (2014), Convocation Brochures and Registry). 450 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique. Two research questions guided the study and one hypothesis was formulated. A 20-item structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by 4 experts from Entrepreneurship education, Measurement and Evaluation. It was equally tested for its reliability using the Cronbach Alpha and a reliability value of 0.89 was realized. The instrument was rated on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2)

and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The data collected were analysed using frequency count and descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity of respondents' opinions. The t-test inferential statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The average mean score was 2.5.

Results

Table 1: The extent graduates acquired the relevant entrepreneurial skills for employment generation

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Acquisition of insightful skill	2.92	.92	High Extent (HE)
2	Acquisition of risk-taking skill	2.67	1.00	“
3	Acquisition of creative skill	2.98	.92	“
4	Acquisition of inventive skill	2.65	.96	“
5	Acquisition of Legal and regulatory skills	2.73	.91	“
6	Acquisition of Interpersonal relationship skill	3.04	.90	“
7	Acquisition of Communicative skill	3.11	.83	“
8	Acquisition of Informative skill	2.91	.88	“
9	Acquisition of Decision-making skill	3.03	.85	“
10	Acquisition of Marketing skill	2.81	.92	“
11	Acquisition of Management skill	2.93	.87	“
12	Acquisition of Accounting skill	2.80	.88	“
13	Acquisition of Innovative skill	2.77	.89	“
14	Acquisition of Technological skill	2.68	.94	“
15	Acquisition of Leadership skill	2.94	.93	“
16	Acquisition of Adaptive skill	2.93	.91	“
17	Acquisition of Risk management skill	2.79	.95	“
18	Acquisition of Personality traits skills	2.88	.87	“
19	Acquisition of Saleable skill	2.77	.91	“
20	Acquisition of Record keeping skill	2.92	.88	“
	Average mean	2.86	.90	

In table 1, items 1-20 met the standard mean score with an average mean of 2.86 which indicates that graduates acquired the required entrepreneurial skills for self-reliant and employment generations.

Table 2: level of employment of Respondents

Are you employed		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	185	54.4	54.4
	No	155	45.6	100.0
	Total	340	100.0	

Table 2 shows that among the respondents, 185 graduates were employed while 155 graduates were unemployed indicating a percentage of 54.4 and 45.6 respectively.

Table 3: Type of Employment secured by Respondents

Type of Employed		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	self employed	86	46.5	46.5
	paid employment	99	53.5	100.0
	Total	185	100.0	

Table 3 shows that out of the 185 employed graduates who were respondents, 86 were self-employed while 99 were employees on paid employment. This is an indication that many of the graduates are not self-employed as against the expected of the aim of entrepreneurship education.

Table 4: Relationship in the opinions of the employed and unemployed respondents on the entrepreneurial skills they acquired during the training for employment generation

Variable	Employment Status	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	p-value	Decision
Acquired Skills	Entrepreneurial Employed	185	57.55	11.543	.507	338	.612	NS
	Unemployed	155	56.76	11.407				

NS means not significant. $P > 0.05$

The $Cal-t = 0.612$ while $Crit-t = 0.507$ at Df of -2, so, the null hypothesis is accepted, therefore there is no significant difference in the opinions of the respondents on the entrepreneurial skills acquired by both the employed and the unemployed graduates that would facilitate their employment generation.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the respondents acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills to make them gainfully employed either by self or others as indicated in items 1-20 with an average mean score of 2.86. Although the findings revealed that graduates have the required competent entrepreneurial skills but reports from several areas such as the World Bank (2015) revealed that Nigeria still soar in unemployment and poverty. Job creation in Nigeria has been inadequate to keep pace with the expanding working age population as reported in Punch Newspaper July, 13th 2013. The young tertiary school graduates form bulk of the working age population. The issue of graduates' unemployment is not a novelty because as far back as 1986 the World Bank and International Monetary Fund advised the Nigerian Military Government on Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) during President Ibrahim Babagida's regime. The nomenclatures of SAP include devaluation of currency, downsizing of the workforce, privatization and commercialization of government enterprises to enable them access loans and grants. The federal government in her effort set up schemes and programmes to proffer solution to unemployment challenges of young school graduates. In 1986, the federal government set up the National Directorate of Employment under the auspices of Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity to combat the envisaged danger of unemployment arising from increase in school enrolment and corresponding mass production of young school leavers. The most recent is the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (U-WIN), aimed at developing Nigerian youths entrepreneurial ideas and plans and Graduate Intensive Programme; a component of the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) of the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, former president of Nigeria. The unending problem of unemployment is critical and needs to be tackled.

The findings equally revealed that only few of the graduates are employed and among the employed respondents few are self-employed as against the expected. According to the responses from focus group discussion with the respondents, they are constrained to set up businesses because of take-off capital and difficulties in accessing soft loans at low interest rate. More also the high cost of renting a

shop or business premises as well as multiple taxation and poor enabling environment. It was also gathered that the activities of touts popularly known as ‘Agberos’ could be embarrassing, frustrating and scaring to most of the graduate entrepreneurs. Although government have made frantic efforts in recent times to keep graduates off the street by introducing the Subsidy Re-Investment Programme popularly known as Sure-P, it is to ameliorate their plight in the midst of nothing. It equally revealed that most of them do menial jobs and they earn meagre amount as low as N10,000 as monthly emolument without incentives and allowances like health, transport, utility, housing and leave bonus; a typical example is Edo Youth Empowerment Scheme, (‘EDO YES’). The unemployment rate as at the first quarter of 2015 was 24.2% from a population of 178.52 Million as revealed by Trading Economy of Nigeria (2015). This could be affirmed with the Militancy in the Niger Delta Region and the recent insurgency by the Boko Haram Sect in the northern part of Nigeria; the idle mind is the devil’s workshop. Although the case of Boko Haram could be seemed to be terrorism, since majority of the sects are illiterates.

The findings revealed that most of the graduate respondents were unemployed and among the employed only few of them were self-employed as against the expected. In addition, respondents did not differ in their opinions on the entrepreneurial skills they acquired to facilitate employment generation as revealed in the study.

The acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurial skills will enable graduates thrive in either paid or self-employment. They have the advantage of optimum performance in business ventures than mere owner-managers in identification, setting up and effective management of businesses to give customers ultimate satisfaction and maximize profit. This conforms with Abdulahi (2009) who posited that entrepreneurship exposes people to greater opportunities to exercise creative freedom, higher esteem and greater sense of control over their lives.

Although the entrepreneurial intentions of the students and the quality of training they received were not sort in the study, it would be implied that students’ entrepreneurial intentions prior to graduation and the quality of training could impel their self-employment motive upon graduation.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that

1. Respondents from the three levels of tertiary institutions acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills for self-reliant and employment generation prior to graduation.
2. The entrepreneurial skills respondents acquired were found to be relevant to their self-employment and job performances.
3. The employed and the unemployed respondents did not differ in their opinions on the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge graduates acquired from entrepreneurial training to facilitate employment generations.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education was introduced into the tertiary school curriculum to address the protracted unemployment challenges facing young graduates which has been on-going. Since its introduction the problem still seems intractable with particular reference to the March 2014 Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment exercise tragedy. There arose the need to assess the programme to determine its effectiveness. The assessment study revealed among others that, though respondents (graduates) claimed to have acquired appropriate entrepreneurial skills, yet majority of them are unemployed. Only few are self-employed among the few employed respondents as against the expected. It was not certain if the students were made to run and manage any small scale business prior to graduation as a way of exposing them to the practical training and intricacies of setting up and running their small scale business upon graduation which would have been a motivating factor. Against this background, more emphasis should be laid on practical training and students' entrepreneurial intentions in the school training programme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion the following recommendations were made; that

- a) Entrepreneurship training should also focus on and encourage students' entrepreneurial intentions to set up business upon graduation.
- b) Theoretical training should be highly deemphasize and more emphasis should be laid on students' effective practical training in order to teach them the intricacies of setting up businesses upon graduation.

- c) Entrepreneurship should be a core course in tertiary school curriculum in all the disciplines to prepare students adequately to set up business in their areas of studies upon graduation.

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