

**Original Article**

**ACHIEVING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS THROUGH INCORPORATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION INTO NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS CURRICULUM: (A STUDY OF ENUGU STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examines how entrepreneurship education enhances employability skills among graduates in Nigeria. The design for the study was a descriptive survey. Four research questions guided this study. The population for the study comprises of 28, 000 students and 7,000 Senior Lecturers totaling 35,000 respondents. A simple and proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed in drawing 10% of the sample size. The sample size comprises of 200 students and 15 Senior Lecturers from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu. 28 itemed questionnaires was structured and validated for this study. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions. The results showed that incorporating entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum will minimize unemployment among graduates in Enugu State among others. Through entrepreneurial education, graduates of Enugu State University will learn how to acquire employable skills which will help them in establishing themselves and equally create jobs for others. Recommendations were made based on the findings which among others were that entrepreneurship education should be injected into Nigeria tertiary institutions curriculum to teach the youth how to relate theoretical training to real use of hand (practical) skills to broaden tertiary institution curriculums to include Knowledge of business environment and their mode of operation. In conclusion the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria and its attendant negative consequences calls for reflections because it is an evil wind that spares no one in our society any good today.

Nigeria. It was suggested, among other things, that the government should acknowledge the utility value of non-formal system of education also by putting in place some active labour policies to promote employment through subsidized placement, employment assistance and vocational trainings should also be encourage, self-employment, such as training and facilitating access to credit/grants and other business requirement.

**Keywords:** Employability, Skills, Entrepreneurship, Tertiary Institutions, Curriculum.

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### **Introduction**

A dynamic education that can enhance employability skill development is that type of education that encourages creativity, innovation, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. A functional education today goes beyond the traditional goal of literacy and numeracy. It is the type of education that is able to liberate stimulate and inform the youth and teaches him how and why to made demands upon himself. Our society (Nigeria) today is filled with youths who are uninformed and lack the employability skill to get started and sustain a living. The kind of education they received was geared towards wage employment which is void of entrepreneurship development component. They were not trained to identify and exploit venture opportunities. Most of these youths are not talented; they lack the employability and competence skills.

Employability skill is a set of achievement, understanding and personal attributes that makes an individual more likely to gain employment and be successful in his/her chosen occupations, for the benefits of the individual, the workforce, the economy and the society (Yorke, 2006). Employability skill are generally a skill that horizontally cats across all industries and vertically across all jobs from entry level to Chief executive officers (Moreland, 2006). From the employers perspective "employability skill seems to refer to "work readiness" that is, possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable one to make productive contribution to organizational objectives soon after the commencement of employment (Manson, Willams and Crammer, 2006). Employability skills implies knowledge, skills, competences and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being.

The need for survival in a complex environment and the growing evidences that youths are the real force behind every nation's economic growth and development established the need for this study. It is believed that when the employability skills of our youths are developed and enhanced. Nigeria's

goal and objectives in all the sectors will be effectively achieved.

The focus of this paper is on enhancing this employability skills development. As mentioned earlier, education is the critical factor in employability skill development. The question is what type of education will give us the needed employability skills? This is where entrepreneurship education comes in. It is through this kind of education that the right type of training, skills, attitudes and aptitude are acquired.

One of the greatest social problems in Nigeria today is large scale unemployment. Daily experience shows that a god percentage of graduates of our tertiary institutions are unemployed. This according to Arikewufo (2000) is traceable not so much to population as to the type of education students receive in schools, but the nature of education which is operated in Nigeria from both pre and post colonial Nigeria which never accorded the individuals any employability skills for self-reliance. Students generally receive little or no training in employability skills useful for employment in the country's labour market. They are generally educated in areas like arts and sometimes the sciences which gave rise to what have been described as "White-collar syndrome", that is, attitude of workers who shun exertion or physical energy and prefer to work in comfortable and air-conditioned offices funded by government. It is obvious that "clerical mentality" or "White-collar job syndrome" cannot last long because the population of graduates contesting for clerical positions far outnumbered the available opportunities. To solve the problem of unemployment, there is need for employability skill oriented education.

### **The Interface between Entrepreneurship Education and Employability Skills**

Entrepreneurship Education deals with the acquisition of right habits, attitudes and skills as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment. Entrepreneurship education aims at helping the learners acquire salable skills (employability skills) which can help them become job "creators" or

providers and not job seekers, (Nnadi 2010). Entrepreneurship education could be said to include acquisition of right habits, attitudes, saleable skills as well as entrepreneurial skills. Through the teaching of entrepreneurship skills, our tertiary institutions would assume more responsibilities in job creation and this will give the graduates on their graduation a sharp focus on the field.

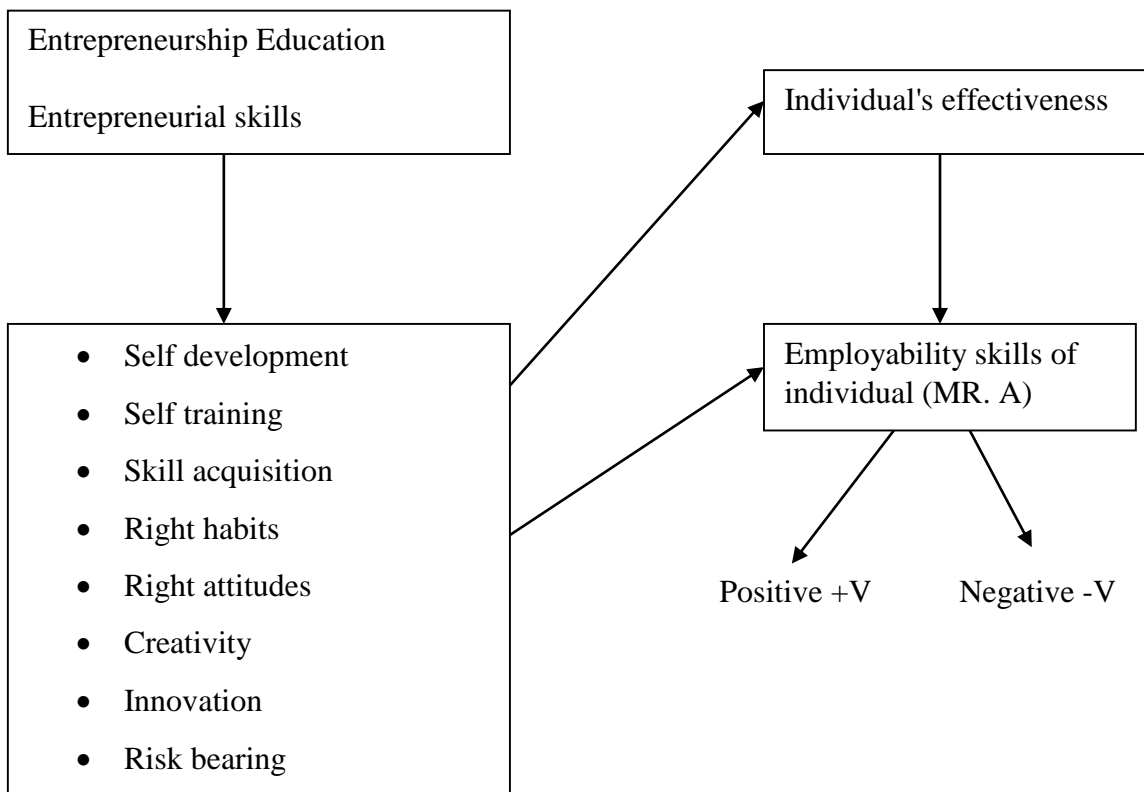
Entrepreneurship education is essential for developing the human resource necessary for society of the future it is not enough to add entrepreneurship on the perimeter; it needs to be central to the way education operates. Educational institution particularly at higher education need to adopt 21<sup>st</sup> century methods tools to develop the appropriate learning environment for encouraging creativity, innovation and the ability to "think requires a metal rethinking of educational system, both formal and informal. Also in need of rethinking are the ways teachers or educators are trained. Academia needs to work with ministries, the private sector and other stakeholders to rethink the educational systems in

their countries to develop entrepreneurial societies (Nnadi, 2012).

Embedding entrepreneurship and innovation, cross disciplinary approaches and interactive teaching method all require new model, frameworks, and paradigms. It is time to rethink the old systems and have a fundamentals "rebooting" of the educational process. Incremental change in education is not adequate in today's rapidly changing society. We need school, colleges and universities that are entrepreneurial in their approach to prepare individuals for the fire. Entrepreneurship education is needed to build entrepreneurial employability skills for the citizens and for the future development of our society. We need to encourage a mote entrepreneurial culture and develop the necessary skills, attitude and behaviours to prepare young people and others to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Nnadi, 2012).

#### **Employability Skills**

An employability skill is referred to as the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them employable. This is illustrated below;



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Fig 1. Conceptual framework showing how entrepreneurship education promotes employability skills/status

**Source:** (Nnadi, 2012).

### Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, the human capital theory advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, simulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe (Robert, 1991). Human capital theory encourage investment in nation's workforce (people working with public and private sector organizations) because expenditure on training and development is a productive investment like investment on physical assets (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). Besides, human capital enhancement through quality education is critical factor that propels economic growth and sustainable development in East Africa, Hongkong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan among others (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008).

Another theory that supports entrepreneurship education is the risk taking theory of Richard Cantillon and John Stuart Mill of 1975. The theory perceives entrepreneurship as a mental education that stimulates individuals to calculated risk for which future steam of benefits are guaranteed and people taking big risk have to contend with a great responsibility (Alan and Hossan, 2003). The summary of the theory is that entrepreneurship education improves the ability, capability and potentials of individuals to undertake risks for which economic benefits are ensured.

### Statement of the Problem

There is increasing level of unemployment in Nigeria. Nigeria educational system as conceived in the past are white-collar job oriented. Our educational curriculum does not balance theoretical training with entrepreneurial employability skills acquisition for self-reliant. Educators and policy formulators must ensure that the general course contents and curriculum especially at the tertiary level of education are structured to meet our needs as a developing country. Thus, tertiary institutions in the context of current

social and economic reform should provide learners with employability skills for productive life and for contributing to societal development. The task at hand bacons to all to see the need for revising the current tertiary institution curriculum responsive to the new direction and focus of education in Nigeria.

### Purpose of the Study

This study set out to investigate how incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institutions curriculum can enhance job creation. Specifically the effects of this, is an issue for employability skills which is a template for human capital development and sustainable development goals.

### Research Questions

Five research questions guided this study. They include:

1. What are the strategies for achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education?
2. How can incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum minimize unemployment in Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of unemployment in Nigeria?
4. What are the barriers to effective entrepreneurship education delivery in Nigeria?

### Method

The design was a descriptive survey that elicited information from the respondents. The area of the study is Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu Nigeria. The population for the study comprises of 28, 000 students and 7,000 Senior Lecturers totaling 35,000 respondents from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani, Enugu. The sample size for this study comprises of 200 students and 16 Senior Lecturers totaling 216 respondents drawn using simple and proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

## Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A contained the personal data of the correspondents while Section B contained the 28 questionnaire items derived from the content of the four research questions with the responses format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

In order to establish the face validity of the instrument, copies of the structured questionnaire were given to three experts. Two experts from Adult And Continuing Education department and one expert from Mathematics and Computer department all from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores to

answer the research questions. The decision rule for answering the research questions were arrived at by finding the average of the four point scale thus:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

Thus, any item with mean of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agreed while mean below 2.50 was interpreted as rejected.

## Results

### Research Question 1:

1. What are the strategies for achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education?

Table 1: Responses on the strategies for achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education

**n = 215**

S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	X(Mean)	Decision
	Achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education involves						
1	Creating awareness of the importance	110	15	30	60	2.81	Agree
2	Inculcating entrepreneurship competence	110	20	25	60	2.83	Agree
3	Developing business plan	120	10	25	60	2.88	Agree
4	Organizing training programme for all	110	30	15	60	2.88	Agree
5	Conducting feasibility studies	120	5	10	80	2.77	Agree
6	Perceiving new ideas about business	110	10	20	75	2.72	Agree
7	Holding workshops and seminars	105	15	20	75	2.70	Agree
8	Encouraging development of new business teaching ideas	103	15	22	75	2.68	Agree
9	Noting changes both societal and environmental	102	15	22	76	2.67	Agree
10	Having the ability to think of possible barrier	110	30	15	60	2.88	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.78</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 1 shows that high mean scores of 2.81, 2.83, 2.88, 2.88, 2.77, 2.72, 2.70, 2.68, 2.67 and 2.88 for items 1,2,3,4,5. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 which indicates that the respondents agrees with the ten (10) items as

strategies for achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education. A grand mean of 2.78 obtained for the ten items indicates that the respondents generally agreed with all the strategic

intervention adopted for achieving employability skills through entrepreneurship education.

### Research Question 2

How can incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum minimize unemployment among graduates in Nigeria?

**Table 2: Responses on how incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum minimizes unemployment in Nigeria.**

n = 215							
S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	X(Mean)	Decision
	Incorporating entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum minimize unemployment by:						
11	Producing graduates who are job creator and not job seekers.	101	15	22	77	2.65	Agree
12	Encouraging the spirit of self-reliant	99	17	22	77	2.64	Agree
13	Promoting productive life	98	18	22	77	2.65	Agree
14	Reducing over dependence on white-collar jobs.	101	15	20	79	2.64	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.65</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 2, shows that high mean scores of 2.65, 2.64, 2.65 and 2.64 were obtained for items 11, 12, 13 and 14 which indicate that all respondents agreement on all items relating to incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institution curriculum as a step forward for breaking away from the vicious cycle of unemployment. A grand mean of 2.65 was obtained for the four items, indicating that the respondents

generally agreed with all the aspects of incorporating skill acquisition (employability skill) in tertiary institution curriculum as a panacea for minimizing unemployment in Nigeria.

### Research Question 3

What are the effects of unemployment in Nigeria?

Table 3 Responses on the effects of unemployment in Nigeria.

n= 215							
S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	X(Mean)	Decision
	Unemployment in Nigeria leads to:						
15	Prostitution among youths	101	16	19	79	2.65	Agree
16	Kidnapping of man beings for ransom	101	17	18	79	2.65	Agree
17	Armed robbery	101	18	17	79	2.66	Agree
18	Social evils	103	15	22	75	2.68	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.66</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 4, shows that high mean scores of 2.65, 2.65, 2.66 and 2.68 were obtained for items 15, 16, 17 and 18 respectively showing a holistic agreement among the respondents that all social ills are rooted in unemployment. A grand mean of 2.66 was obtained for the four items indicating that the respondents generally agreed with all the aspects of social ills in our society is having their root in unemployment.

### Research Question 4

What are the barriers to effective entrepreneurship education delivery in Nigeria?

Table 4: Responses on the barriers to effective entrepreneurship education delivery in Nigeria tertiary institution.



S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	X(Mean)	Decision
	Barriers to effective entrepreneurship education delivery in Nigeria tertiary institution is due to:						
19	Inadequate awareness of the need	105	30	15	60	2.88	Agree
20	Inability to change and to write	103	15	20	75	2.70	Agree
21	Lack of adequate infrastructure	101	15	22	75	2.68	Agree
22	Lack sustained funding	99	15	22	77	2.65	Agree
23	Lack of technological skills	101	17	22	77	2.64	Agree
24	Lack of business skill	101	18	17	79	2.66	Agree
25	Lack of National policy on coordination	102	15	22	76	2.67	Disagree
26	Lack of entrepreneurial competence	110	10	20	75	2.72	Agree
27	Lack of interest	110	30	15	60	2.88	Agree
28	Programmes not been embedded in baseline budget for education	110	15	30	60	2.81	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.65</b>	<b>Agree</b>

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1  
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Table 4 above shows that nine out of the ten items were seen as barriers to effective entrepreneurship education as the recorded mean scores are above 2.50. The respondents agree in all but one item as being barriers to effective entrepreneurship delivery in Nigeria.

### Discussion

The finding in table one (1) revealed that the respondents agreed that creating awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education, inculcating entrepreneurial competence on our citizens among other enhances the chance of achieving employability skills among Nigeria graduates. The findings in table two (2) indicated that entrepreneurship education if well incorporated into tertiary institutions curriculum will promote employability skills acquisition and reduce unemployment, which is a social thalice facing our youths today. These findings collaborate with Uzokwe (2008) who posited that unemployment is becoming an embarrassment to Nigeria Nation and called for urgent measure to checkmate this ugly trend. Nnadi (2010), observed that in the face of very high unemployment and retrenchment of workers in

Nigeria, entrepreneurship education is a rescue mission should be incorporated and taught in tertiary institutions, Nnadi (2010) argued that entrepreneurship education help the graduates to form a base of knowledge about the function and operation of business environment as well as equipping them with the skill in running their own business. Such graduates he concluded will not be looking for the jobs that are not there; rather they become employer of labour.

The findings in table three indicated that all social ills are rooted in unemployment. Gumbari (2011). RC (3) declared that skills acquisition is the key in the fight for the elimination of hunger and poverty, reduction of crime through effective engagement of youths. The finding is an indication that only effective incorporation of entrepreneurship education into tertiary institutions curriculum in Nigeria, will reduce unemployment and eliminate crime in our society.

The finding in table four (4) indicates that nine (9) out of ten (10) items are barriers to effective entrepreneurship education delivery in Nigeria.

### **Implication of this Study**

The findings of this study suggest that for any meaningful human capital development to be re-attained we have to go down to the grassroots and lay a solid foundation for the future. It is only so doing that we can boast of a strong technological base which is capable of addressing unemployment, retrenchment of workers, youth restiveness, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping and other societal ills. Tertiary institutions curriculum should be restructured to entrepreneurship education so that upon graduation they will have an option of setting up their own business, become self-employed and even provide job for others due to employability skills acquired.

### **Conclusion**

Education system that prepares learners for white-collar jobs only has lost touch with reality. There is need to equip people with the type of education that will balance theoretical training with practical skills (employability skill) and this can only be midwifed through entrepreneurship education. It is only when this is done, that the dream of human capital development and being producer nation becomes real.

### **Recommendations**

1. For tertiary education curriculum to meet the challenge of preparing youths and adults for self employment and self-reliance, there is need to adequately infuse entrepreneurship education into all programmes of tertiary education
2. Instructors and Lecturers competences should be fully developed in the necessary entrepreneurial knowledge, skill and attitudes they are expected to teach or impact on the learners.
3. Tertiary institutions curriculum should be broad based to include knowledge of business environment and their mode of operation
4. The curriculum should be so structured to blend theoretical training with practical experience (employability skills) to checkmate unemployment in our society.

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