

# **Challenges in Implementing Entrepreneurship Education For Youth's Empowerment At Colleges Of Education Level In Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*Presently in Nigeria, many youths seems to wallow in abject poverty with no skills despite the quality curriculum designed to be implemented under entrepreneurship education at the post-basic education level in Nigeria. This study specifically reviewed the importance of entrepreneurship education for youth's empowerment; it also examined the challenges teachers face in implementing EE curriculum in Nigeria. Findings from literature revealed that entrepreneurship education helps to equip learners with knowledge, skills, and attitude which will enable youths discover their talents in order to plan and create business ventures for economic development. It also revealed that empowering youths needs the competence of teachers in effective implementation of EE as reflected in the Nigeria national policy on education at the colleges of education level. However, several challenges have been identified such as: from poor training, lack of competence in various skill-based areas of entrepreneurship education, lack of facilities and equipment, poor attitude to teaching and learning the skills, poor orientation by parents and teachers, lack of cooperation between the school and the indigenous technologies among others. Findings from this study have implications towards the eradication of poverty and also the high crime rates among youths in Nigeria. This invariably would lead to national development. Based on these findings, it is recommended that human and material resources need to be channeled towards fortifying entrepreneurship education for sustainable economic growth of a nation like Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Implementing entrepreneurship education; National development; Nigeria; Youth empowerment.*

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## **Introduction**

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria has over the years been consistently observed among Nigerian youths. This invariably could constitute a major harm not only on the individual themselves but also to the nation. According to Emejo (2023), the current rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been consistently high over the years. This is supported

by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (2018) whose publication shows that the rate of general unemployment in Nigeria and even among post-basic secondary school students over the years has been on upward rate from 5.60 in 2010 to 23.10 in 2018. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) finding shows that youth (18-30) make up nearly half (47per cent) of the world unemployed. The estimation of poverty in 2018 halving the youth globally indicates that unemployment among youth would increase if adequate measures are not put in place to tackle the menace and this situation poses a key challenge to the vocational education and training system (Nwoye, 2019). The Nigerian technical vocational education and training system is thus expected to device appropriate strategies for equipping individual with skills to cope with the situations

This increasing rate of unemployment has resulted to poverty, terrorism, kidnappings, prostitution and other vices (Adegoke, 2015). Entrepreneurial curricular acquisition at the colleges of education level is an important move to achieving economic development towards poverty reduction among youths in Nigeria. Colleges of education is the type of education where learners are trained as professional teachers and also learner that could be self reliant to work on their own and with both government and private organisations (NCCE, 2020). This education exposes youths with so many business ventures for job creation and self- reliance thereby promoting private sector and leading to economic development of any nation (Usman & Tasmin, 2015). However, many youths after graduation especially at the post-basic education level, found it difficult opening up enterprises of their own or securing any job for their sustainability. This tends to be attributed to lack of awareness or non- acquisition of vital entrepreneurial curricular skills while in the school.

It is expected that with change in knowledge economy, skill acquisition among Nigerian youths from primary school level is required. According to national policy on

education in Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013), pre-vocational subjects are included to be taught right from the middle to upper basic education level in Nigeria; while entrepreneurship education comprising thirty-four skill areas have also been included to be taught at the post basic education level. With these effectively put in place, unemployment is expected would decrease and the nation's knowledge economy would increase. Knowledge economy demands skills of creativity, innovation, collaboration and critical thinking from effective teaching and learning to empower youths in Nigeria. A fundamental characteristic of entrepreneurship is the capacity to generate employment, and increase wealth.

This study is specifically important because of the high rate of unemployment among youths today in Nigeria. If youths are not effectively handled from the cradle, the tendency of losing them to evil groups becomes very high. At the adolescent stage, youths if not properly guided with lucrative entrepreneurial skills, could remain very idle and thereby become a target for recruitment into various dangerous organizations such as boko haram and other militant groups that are very rampant in Nigerian society today. An idle mind is usually the devil's workshop. If youths are acquainted with various entrepreneurial skills, as stipulated in the national policy FRN (2013), with thirty-four entrepreneurial skills, they would be able to acquire some economic skills that would not only sustain them but also the nation. Some of these skills are integrated at the post basic education level which ranges from auto body repair and spray painting, auto electrical work, auto mechanical work, auto parts merchandising, air conditioning and refrigeration, among others are specified under: Mechanical, agricultural, catering, tailoring, electrical, and a host of others (FRN, pp. 20-21). The question is how aware are the youths about the importance of entrepreneurial skills? What challenges could hamper the implementation and learning of

entrepreneurship curriculum in Nigeria? These among concepts such as entrepreneurship education, youth empowerment and curriculum implementation would be discussed.

**Concept of Entrepreneurship Education (EE)**

Entrepreneurship is a process of creating or developing a new business venture or maintaining an existing one in order to make a profit (Amitabh, 2017). The term entrepreneurship is derived from a French word “entrepreneur” meaning one who undertakes tasks in a production process (Ngerem, & Ezikpe, 2016). It could also be defined in terms of specific functions which the entrepreneur performs or in terms of characteristics or activities generally associated with the entrepreneur. An entrepreneur could also be defined as a person or persons who possesses the ability and innovation towards the development of a business where none exists. Similarly, as a process, Allawadi (2017) defined entrepreneurship as that which involves evaluating business opportunities, development of a business plan, and determination of the required resources as well as management of resulting enterprise. It is the practice of consistently converting goods and ideas into profitable commercial ventures. It is a continually pursuit of opportunities through innovations leverage of resource that are for the most part not controlled internally. Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. According to the European Commission (2019), entrepreneurial programmes and modules offer the beneficiaries the ability to think creatively and become an effective problem solver.

Entrepreneurship is the process of joining and organizing a small business venture, the marshalling of people and resources to meet peoples needs (Allawadi 2017). However, it is important to note that although entrepreneurship was initially linked mainly to business, its scope is broadened to include manufacturing, distribution, transportation and indeed most activities relating to products, services and processes (Ogbu, 2022). Similarly, through the definition of what constitutes a small business defies precision, as what is considered a small business in one economy, may be regarded as a medium or large-scale business in another,

this study adapted the definition of small business by Ogbu, (2022). According to Ogbu a small business is mini business that is owned, managed and controlled by a sole owner or partners of about two persons, has total assets less than four million naira, relatively small share of the market, and does not have more than 50 employees. In the context of this study, therefore, entrepreneurship was used to refer to the process of planning, organizing and managing of a business or self-employment venture, irrespective of whether is a one-man operation or those that employ scores of individuals. Entrepreneurship is a concept that is attracting a lot of attention presently in the country. This has obvious implications for electronics education, whose central term is to helping individual to attain a useful and satisfying life and be self-reliant.

Entrepreneurs are people who constantly discover new markets and try to figure out how to supply those markets efficiently to make a profit. The entrepreneur could therefore be considered as an innovator. Thus, the entrepreneur here is seen as initiating change or innovation by actively creating new opportunities for job creation and eradication of unemployment among Nigerian youths. Entrepreneurship therefore, serves as a platform for youths to transform opportunities to business ventures towards job creation and poverty eradication (Okehi, 2019). This serves as a tool for developing the nation in the 21st century education towards sustainable living. Entrepreneurship education according to Gautam and Singh (2015) is the process of application of knowledge, attitude, skills and competences that involve creativity, innovation and risk taking into business. Research has shown that entrepreneurship education prepares the youths for sustainable responsible and transformative living (Okon & Friday, 2015). Entrepreneurship education as a form of education which prepares individuals or youths for acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences needed for a specified work that could yield to employability and higher job mobility.

### **Concept of Youth Empowerment (YE)**

Youths are regarded as people whose ages range from 15 years to 35 years. It is a stage of life between childhood and adulthood as socially determined. It is a period when one is at the apex of one's physical strength, undergoing significant changes in physical, emotional and social make up (Egbefo, &Abe, 2017). Egbefo and Abe added that it is a period in life characterized by excesses in behaviour and can be associated with feelings of rebellion, anxiety, confusion and naivety. At this stage, youths take part in helping out in their family's tasks with one trade or another.

Youth empowerment means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others (Okoli &Okoli, 2023). Youth empowerment in the context of this study means implementing the entrepreneurship curriculum to enable youths acquire the needed skills for self-reliance and for national development in order to reduce unemployment. The success of entrepreneurship education in any developing country depends on youth's empowerment. However, national development could be considered a key indicator of the country's advancement in sustainable growth. Entrepreneurship education most probably is what the present and future youths need to be self-reliant and to be job providers instead of job seekers.

### **Importance of Entrepreneurship Education in empowering youths in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship education provides a wide ground for new inexperienced adventurers in every economy to enhance standard of living of people in a country. It is the field where a person can start his or her idea of venture, which may end up in a giant enterprise. Entrepreneurship provides enormous kinds of products which increases the income of youths who are employed in the entrepreneurial enterprises.

The importance of entrepreneurial curriculum at this stage is vital in order to eradicate idleness and occupy the youths with hands on task skills and activities. Findings by Ngerem, and Ezikpe, (2016) revealed that entrepreneurship education is a viable medium of steering the wheels of economic development for secondary school graduates in Imo State of Nigeria. The researchers also found that financial management skill, risk taking skill, communication skill, and human relations skill among others are entrepreneurial skills required for economic development and empowering of youths.

Entrepreneurial education equips individuals for productive activities and employment opportunities which could attract wage employment, self-employment and income generation activities (Egbefo, & Abe, 2017). With a better funding, management and supervision, youths at this level could be engaged to acquire all the necessary skills needed for self-employment, job creation, and for sustainable living.

Similarly, Osakwe, (2015) identified some importance of entrepreneurship education generally as an innovative venture for job creation in small enterprises; provision of new ideas, ventures, quality product, technology, and market, to increase the Gross Domestic Products and standard of living of the people towards community development. EE is also believed to promote abundant retail facilities, a higher level of home ownership business, sanitation standards and higher expenditure on education, recreation, and religious activities. Thus, entrepreneurship leads to more stability and a higher quality of community life.

In Nigeria, Mazumber and Ahmed (2015) outlined some importance of entrepreneurial skills peculiar to rural women as:

1. Creating the spirit of self-confidence to establish business of their own to earn income;

2. Engaging women in small scale business programs with the help of self-help activities which empower them economically to participate in family and community economic affairs;
3. Bringing about savings, education, health, family welfare, social life, cleanliness etc.;
4. Help women improve family income, and as such provide family members with better life styles including good nutrition and clothing to improve children education and family health;
5. That which helps in household decision-making;
6. Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to eradicate poverty in developing economies.

Emphasis here was mainly on developing only rural women. This could be an indication of high unemployment level among rural women in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment and a powerful weapon of fighting poverty in the country. Entrepreneurship education is said to be crucial in boosting productivity, increasing completion and innovation, creating employment prospect and revitalizing economies (Ndubuisi- Okolo, Anigbuogu, & Onwuzuligbo, 2014). When Nigerians especially unemployed youths are mentored and provided with the needed resources and enabling environment for business startups, they would be economically engaged thereby shunning the illegal acts of hostage-taking, kidnapping, bombing, vandalism and homelessness according to the researchers.

### **Concepts of Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum is the roadmap to the attainment of educational goals through best practices. Curriculum is derived from Latin word “currere” meaning “to run”, “a track” or a ‘racecourse’ with literary meaning as a ‘runway’ or a course which one runs to reach a goal (Ogwu, 2019). Curriculum according to Jackson (2022) is all the learning experiences which



is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, inside or outside of school. According to Rufai (2018), curriculum consists of the diverse parts of the education process that participants need to go through in order to attain the objectives of education set. Research has also shown that curricular are those subjects that are most useful for contemporary living which embody essential knowledge (Ogwu 2019). One of the ways of ensuring that education assists in addressing national and global unemployment is by incorporating entrepreneurship education as an essential knowledge into the school curriculum from the cradle. Such curriculum is needed in order to have a functional society.

This curriculum prepares Nigerian youths with knowledge, attitude and skills to be self-reliant towards sustainable living through effective implementation (Umunadi, 2023). According to Azubuike *et al.* (2019), it is the process by which planned curriculum is transformed into the classroom to achieve its objectives by bringing positive change in the life of the learner. This actually involves the learner, instructor and instructional resources. However, the actor in implementation task is the teacher who sees that the planned curriculum is effectively executed (Azubuike, *et al.*, 2019). Putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study is also known as curriculum implementation or practices, where the learner is the central figure (Nwafor & Okoi, 2018). This practice is a process of putting the vital curriculum components such as content, learning experiences, educational resources, delivery methods, and evaluation into action according to Ogwu (2019), in order to achieve the goal set. This according to Chukwudebelu (2019) is not limited to such components but also inspection and supervision of what is being implemented in order to realize the goal set out to be achieved. Implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum has been to a low extent leading to students ignorance or lack of needed skills that were

supposed to be acquire while in school at a very early stage (Ogwu, Ukwueze, & Ukoha, 2017).

### **Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education at the Colleges of Education Level in Nigeria**

There are many challenges towards the actualization of entrepreneurship education implementation for youth empowerment in Nigerian institutions. These challenges range from personal attitude to material and human support. Many a time, most beautiful curriculum plans tend to fail at the implementation stage due to poor policies, human and material resources. In Nigeria, unemployment rate according to Muogbo, and John-Akamelu, (2018), has been found to be highly based on lack of entrepreneurial development due to so many setbacks

Challenges teachers face as a result of entrepreneurship failure according to Obizue *et al* (2017) includes:

1. Lack of planning,
2. Lack of experience,
3. Poor financial management,
4. Poor location,
5. Bad attitude,
6. Uncontrolled expansion and Poor management.

Researchers like Oluyemi, *et al.* (2018) have also shown that challenges of EE include:

1. Inadequacy of finance;
2. Inadequacy infrastructure base,
3. Low entrepreneurship skills, and
4. Multiplicity of policies/regulatory measures was also responsible for low turnout in the implementation of the curriculum.

Other Challenges facing entrepreneurship education according to Osakwe (2015, p.185) include:

1. Lack of manpower and infrastructure/instructional facilities,
2. Inadequate provision of funds by the government,
3. Lack of awareness, counseling and orientation on entrepreneurship education and
4. Lack of systematic plans to address the existing gap of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions.

Many researchers have also attributed barriers to ineffective entrepreneurial skill acquisition to: poor training leading to lack of competence in various skill-based areas of the curriculum; lack of facilities and equipment; poor attitude to learning skills; poor orientation by parents and teachers; lack of cooperation between the school and the indigenous technologists; poor environment; poor attitude and poor policy implementation (Egbefo, &Abe, 2017). All these challenges justify the need to increase entrepreneurial activities in order to reduce high rate of unemployment and its negative effects among youths.

## **Conclusion**

Unemployment especially among the youths has become a global challenge and this influences many nations directly or indirectly. Empowerment of youths using EE is needed to promote self-employment, industrial and national development. Self-employment is one of the main national objectives to Nigeria developmental plan and endorsement is a necessary foundation for National development. Empowering youths using EE would assist in developing their brains and hands to acquire suitable, skills and attitude, to design, produce, and use methods and processes that will enable them make maximum use of the abundant nation's resources for their benefit and that of the

society. However, challenges bound to the realization of these potentials, such as human and material resources, enabling environment, poor attitude among others. Therefore, there is an urgent need to direct the consciousness and awareness of Nigerian youths towards being empowered with the technological and managerial skills that are there in the school curriculum. The study has implications for policy implementation in Nigeria, by making sure that the recommended entrepreneurship curriculum in the policy book is implemented as stipulated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013). The study also has implications for students' awareness of the importance of the entrepreneurial skills that is expected to be learnt while in school. It also has implications for teacher supervision and monitoring by Ministry of Education, to ensure that the planned curriculum is implemented as should be.

### **Recommendations**

It is based on challenges envisaged that recommendations are suggested as follows:

1. Monitoring team from the Ministry of Education should be put in place to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.
2. Technology as a way of innovation and creativity should be integrated into the teaching and learning of vital areas of EE to empower the students.
3. Collaboration with the indigenous private sector, need to be integrated into the pay roll of institutions for efficiency based on experience on the practical aspect.
4. Capacity building workshop by Ministry of Education should be reinforced on teaching the entrepreneurial skills.
5. Teachers should be sensitized to have attitudinal change towards implementing innovative creative skills.

6. Government of Nigeria should be sensitized sponsorship of schools by providing necessary facilities and technologies to make sure that the innovative curriculum is realized towards individual and national development.
7. Students' should be made aware about the entrepreneurial skills early enough to enable them gain experience and build competence through mastery of the topics, and ultimately take entrepreneurial action. They gain the experiences through theoretical and practical activities, with emphasis on the latter.
8. An enabling environment should be provided by the government for easy interaction in business. This should be in terms of security and amenities such as electricity, water and good roads.

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