ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND SKILL ACQUISITION OF GRADUATES AS PERCEIVED BY SELECTED CORPS MEMBERS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates as perceived by corps members in Nigeria. The instrument used for the study was questionnaire titled "Perception of Corps Members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (PCMIEESA)". A total of 300 respondents were selected for the study using a random sampling technique in selecting 6 local governments in Osun State. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using simple percentages and t-test statistical analysis. One research question was raised to guide the study. The three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the findings revealed that entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with the knowledge and skill required to set up a medium enterprise. Findings of the study shows that there is a significant difference in the perception of corps members from different educational background on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition of graduates, while gender and age differences have no significant influence on the perception of corps members on the impact of entrepreneurial education on skill acquisition of graduates. It was therefore recommended that entrepreneurship programme in tertiary institutions should be designed to equip students with skills, create awareness and willingness among students to embark on economic venture on their own. School managements of universities should ensure that students are given intensive practical training on entrepreneurship education.

Key words: Impact, Entrepreneurship, Skill acquisition, Graduates, Corps Members
Introduction

Emphasis is often placed on the need to produce globally competitive graduates that will be employable, creative and self-reliant through skill acquisition. This is in line with Bloom taxonomy objective of education. Bloom claimed that the domains of educational objectives are cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Educational philosophy and methodology in Nigeria were adjusted to match the ideals and challenges of changing economic and social structure of modern society that will increase the graduates opportunity for employment. The adjustment led to the introduction of the entrepreneurship education in Nigeria higher institutions. It is aimed at reducing the rate of unemployment among youth. According to Adekoya (1999) for the Nigerian youth to be empowered economically they should be given the necessary skill acquisition. Oli (2000) in his own views believed that to ensure a positive future for Nigeria, the youth who are believed to be the future leaders of tomorrow of this country ought to be well equipped with basic skills to drive the economy and propel career success. While Omotosho, Idowu, Esere and Arewah (2009) posited that one of the developmental tasks of the youth is the attainment of economic independence which invariably arises from the youth becoming gainfully employed.

The question one might raise is why majority of Nigerian youth idle while some are involved in various vices due to unemployment and vast majority of graduates are all over the streets in search of white collar job. This could be because they are not equipped with the requisite skills for self or paid employment (Igwe 2007). That is the reason why entrepreneurial education is important in tertiary education. Therefore, in order to reduce unemployment rate in Nigeria, there is need to stimulate the entrepreneurial mindsets of young people, encourage innovative business start-ups, and foster a culture that is friendlier to entrepreneurship and growth of small and medium-sized businesses. This is the reason why entrepreneurial education is important in tertiary education.

According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) entrepreneurship is a key driver of the economy. It is the driving element behind organization. Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Atoyebi (2011) is of the opinion that entrepreneurship is more than the mere creation of business. Although that is certainly as important facet, it's not the complete picture. The characteristics of seeking opportunities; taking risks beyond security; and having the tenacity to push an idea through to reality; and combine into a special perspective that permeates entrepreneurs. An "entrepreneurial perspective" can be developed in individuals. This perspective can be exhibited inside or outside an organization, in profit or not-for-profit enterprises, and in business or non-business activities for the purpose of bringing forth creative ideas. Thus, entrepreneurship is an integrated concept that permeates an individual's business in an innovative manner. It is this perspective that has revolutionized the way business is conducted at every level and in every country.
The revolution has begun in an economic sense, and the entrepreneurial perspective is the dominant force.

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning process. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Entrepreneurship can provide new economic divisions and make good students for the world. Entrepreneurship education should not be confused with general business and economic studies its goal is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment, and may include the following elements:

- Developing personal attributes and skills that form the basis of an entrepreneurial mindset and behavior (creativity, sense of initiative, risk-taking, autonomy, self-confidence, leadership, team spirit, etc.).
- Raising the awareness of students about self-employment and entrepreneurship as possible career options:
- Working on concrete enterprise projects, activities and career development;
- Providing specific business skills and knowledge of how to start a company and run it successfully.

Entrepreneurial programmes and modules offer students the tools to think creatively, be an effective problem solver, analyze a business idea objectively, and communicate, network, lead, and evaluate any given project. Students feel more confident about setting up their own business as they can now test their own business ideas in an educational, supportive environment.

However, the benefits of entrepreneurship education are not limited to boosting start-ups, innovative ventures and new jobs. Entrepreneurship is a competence for all, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake. Entrepreneurship is a combination of mindsets, knowledge and skills. As mindsets take shape at an early age, entrepreneurship is something that should be fostered already at school (Atoyebi, 2011).

At higher education level, the primary purpose of entrepreneurship education should be to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets. Historically, entrepreneurship has been associated with small businesses and hence viewed as a less attractive career option for dynamic university graduates. A shift in attitudes among students can be fostered by introducing and promoting the dynamic, innovative and ambitious face of entrepreneurship.

Skill is thought of as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. Although skill depends essentially on learning, it also includes the concepts of efficiency and economy in performance. Modern concepts of skill stress the flexibility with which a skilled operator reaches a given end on different occasions according to precise circumstances. However, it must be reiterated that even though basic human capacities are not sufficient to produce skills, they form the necessary basis of their development; skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demands, with
human being and external situation together forming a functional system. Based on these facts for any graduate to be useful to himself and country he/she needs to possess adequate entrepreneurship skills to make him/herself reliant.

**Statement of the Problem**

Youth unemployment is a menace and constitutes a real danger and a threat to Nigeria's socio-economic growth. As often said "an idle hand is the devil's workshop" the joblessness of the Nigerian youth today seems to stems from their non-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This has further aggravated the youth negative behavior in the society as most antisocial acts including thuggery, arm robbery, militancy, terrorism, restiveness, ethnic-political clashes and other social vices in Nigeria could be traced to the high rate of unemployment (Okafar, 2011). A number of studies have been carried out on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. For instance, Olaleye (2010) surveyed the implication of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution for millennium development goals; Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2010) evaluated managing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria universities; Okpara (2011) evaluated entrepreneurial education in Nigeria's tertiary educational institutions.

Considering the aforementioned, impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition of graduates and the gaps created by the previous researchers in the area of study, the researcher resolved to conduct a study on the impact of perception of corps members on entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition of graduates. In addition, corps members formed the participants for this study because they have just graduated from tertiary institution where they were exposed to entrepreneurship education. Based on this reason, the graduates will be in best position to understand the importance of the study and respond accurately to the items in the questionnaire. In the study comparisons were made on basis of gender, academic qualification and age.

**Research Question**

The research question below was raised to guide the study:

What are the impacts of entrepreneurship education on the skill acquisition among graduates?

**Hypotheses**

The under listed hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference on the perception of corps members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference on the perception of corps members of different academic qualification on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates.
3. There is no significant difference on the perception of corps members from different age group on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates.
Methodology
Research design
The research design for this study is a descriptive survey design. The reason for adopting descriptive survey design is to find out the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates in Nigeria.

Population
The target population for this study comprises of all Batch A 2013 Corps Members serving in Osun state. The reason for choosing Corps Member is because they are just coming out from higher institution of learning. And it is assumed that they must have been exposed to entrepreneurship education in their various schools.

Sample and sampling techniques
The researcher employed simple random sampling in selecting 6 Local Governments out of 30 Local Governments in Osun state that is one local government from each Senatorial district in Osun state. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 50 Corps Members serving in each of the Local Government. Strata of gender (male and female), age (19-24 years; 24-29 years) and Academic Qualification (Universities and Polytechnics Graduates) were used. 300 corps members that were randomly selected from the six local governments formed the participants for the study.

Instrumentation
The instrument that was used in collecting data for this study is researcher self-developed questionnaire titled Perception of Corps Members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (PCMIEESA). The instrument is a four Likert scale type of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire is made up of two sections. The first section elicits information on Corps Members demographical data: age, gender and academic qualification. The second section comprises of the items on Perception of corps members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition.

Validity of instruments: The instrument was given to lecturers in the department of Arts and Social Science for their comments and corrections in order to ensure face and content validity of the instrument.

Reliability of instruments: The test-re test method was employed to determine the consistency of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered twice to the same set of 20 Corps Members who were not part of the participant for the study within an interval of 4 weeks. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used in computing the correlation coefficient of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained; hence the instrument was statistically adjudged to be reliable and considered suitable for research use.
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Procedure Data collection

The researcher administered the questionnaire "Perception of Corps Members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition" (PCMIEESA) to 300 Corps Members randomly selected for the study. The researcher used two research assistants in administering the questionnaire for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistics for the data analysis. Frequency count and simply percentage were used to answer the main research question, while, the t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the impacts of entrepreneurship education on the skill acquisition among graduates?

Table 1: Percentages of Impacts of Entrepreneurship Education on the Skill Acquisition among Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Accept</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Reject</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with the knowledge.</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with Skills required to set up a medium enterprise.</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education contributes positively to the economy of Nigeria.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education reduces unemployment drastically.</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial education assist student to develop positive attitude for self-reliance rather than depending on government for employment.</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education produces graduates with the knowledge of recognizing business opportunities.</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with the knowledge to recognize business opportunities.</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial education offer undergraduates the tools to think creatively.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial education offer undergraduates the tools to be effective problem solver.</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Entrepreneurship Education Perceived by Selected Corps Members in Osun State, Nigeria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education offers undergraduates the tools to evaluate any given project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education develops entrepreneural mindset in undergraduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education provides undergraduates with the motivation to encourage entrepreneural success in a variety of sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education challenges graduates intellectual ability to bring about innovation in different situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education promotes self-employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education on skill acquisition among undergraduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education assists students to develop positive attitude for self-reliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education does not influence skills development among undergraduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education produces graduates with self-confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education produces graduates with capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education alleviates poverty among graduates by making employment easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education develops the requisite entrepreneural skills that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education develops the requisite attitude that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education develops the requisite entrepreneural skills competencies that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education develops the requisite dispositions that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education deals with those attitudes that are necessary for the individual in a business enterprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Entrepreneural education deals with those skills that are necessary for the individual in a business enterprise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Entrepreneurship Education and Skill Acquisition of Graduates as perceived by selected Corps Members in Ogun State, Nigeria

Table 1 revealed that 91.4% of respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with the knowledge and skill required to set up a medium enterprise. 90.6% of respondents also agreed that entrepreneurship education reduces unemployment drastically, while, 37.6% of respondents agrees with the statement that entrepreneurship education does not influence skill acquisition among graduates.

**Hypotheses One:** There is no significant difference on the perception of male and female corps members on impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates.

**Table 2:** Results of t-test Analysis on Perception of Male and Female Corps Members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition among Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>40.87</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>-6.45</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>42.01</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of -6.45 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (-6.45) is less than the critical t-value (1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of gender.

**Hypotheses Two:** There is no significant difference on perception of corps members on impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates based on academic qualification.
Table 3: Results of t-test Analysis on Perception of Corps Members on Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition among Graduates Based on Academic Qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Qualification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSc.B.Ed</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>62.29</td>
<td>11.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11ND</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>62.94</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2.10*</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance at P<0.05

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.10 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (2.10) is greater than the critical t-value (1.96), the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of academic qualification.

Hypotheses Three: There is no significant difference in the perception of corps members of different age group on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates.

Table 4: Results of t-test Analysis on Perception of Corps Members on the Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Skill Acquisition among Graduates Based on Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-25 years</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
<td>-3.24</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of -3.24 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (-3.24) is less than the critical t-value (1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of age.

Discussion of Findings
The findings in Table 1 revealed that item 1, 3, 4 and 13, which have the highest percentage of acceptance as 91.4%, 90.6%, 89.3%, 88.7% respectively, shows that entrepreneurship education provides undergraduates with the knowledge and skills required to set up a medium enterprise, it reduces unemployment drastically, and assists students to develop positive attitude and skill for self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education promotes self-employment. This may be due to the fact that there is existing department (SAED, Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development at National Youth Service Corps saddled with the responsibility of helping corps members to acquire vocational skill during service year, in which the corps members were exposed to extensive one week training during camp on different vocations, such as furniture, tailoring, food.
processing, bee production e.t.c and the corps members were also encouraged for post camp training on different vocations. The results of this study also supported the findings out by Olaleye (2009) in which the outcome of his studies in three universities in South-West Nigeria on entrepreneurship education, revealed that 92.2% of the students were aware of the programme in their universities and ready to set up their own business.

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of gender. The results of the findings may be due to the facts that both male and female Corps Members were exposed to the same entrepreneurial training on NYSC camp. The results of the study also corroborates the observations of Hinteleski and Corbet (2005) and Okedi (2012) that both male and female perception on impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition does not have a wide gap since thorough teaching of skills have no gender biasness.

Table 3 revealed that there is significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of academic qualification. The findings of this study may be an indication that polytechnics students were more exposed to practical works that is more vocational inclines more than the university students. The findings of the study also supported the observation of Sexton and Bowman (1987), that entrepreneurship students prefer independent efforts, individual activities and individual analysis of situations. He suggested that individual may be more effective than the group activities used in university. The findings of the study also supported the findings of Yahaya (2007) that the type of education offered to our students in university has constrained their entrepreneurial capability and are unable to equip them for success in the world of business, unlike their polytechnic counterpart. The results of this study also collaborate the opinion of Okebukola (2006) that most Nigerian university graduates are deficient in self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills.

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference in the perception of Corps Members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition among graduates on the basis of age. The results of the findings supported the assertion of Ajoye (2000) that all graduates who go to entrepreneurial education in school have almost the same perception on the impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition since it was taught like every other course, age however have no impact in graduate perception, the knowledge of what it takes to manage a business effectively is a comprehensive part of entrepreneurship education and it is not age dependence.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurship education have positive impact on skill acquisition of graduate the results of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference on the perception of corps members on the
impact of entrepreneurship education on skill acquisition on the basis of gender and age, while there is significant difference on the perception of corps members on the impact of entrepreneurship education on the basis of academic qualification.

Based on the findings of this study the under listed recommendations were made:

> The entrepreneurship programme in tertiary institutions should be improved so as to equip students with more skills, and motivate them to embark on economic venture on their own. In designing the programme the philosophy of self-reliance should be given more prominent position.
> There should be seminars, workshops and conferences to strengthen and improve Entrepreneurship Education in tertiary institutions of learning.
> The government should provide better infrastructural facilities in higher institutions of learning to facilitate effective learning in all areas.
> The government should finance micro credit programmes in tertiary institutions.
> The government should provide industrial development centers for the provision of extension services for students of tertiary institutions.
> The government should make provision of small scale enterprises programmes in higher institution of learning such as tailoring centres, barbing salon, hair dressing salon, beekeeping farms.
> The management of the universities should be given intensive practical training to students on entrepreneurship education.

References


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