
THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT.

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Abstract

The paper examines the role of guidance and counselling in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education which will help in the eradication of graduate unemployment. The inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of tertiary institutions by the Federal Ministry of Education was intended to make graduates to be self-employed and job creators thereby reducing unemployment in Nigeria. Despite this introduction for all these years, unemployment seems to be on the increase. The value of entrepreneurship education does not seem to have sufficiently impacted on them. Based on this, the question arises: why the entrepreneurship education given to our students is not yielding the required result which is job creation? This work is based on cognitive counselling theory. The data was collected through literature review and it was found out that there is a strong positive relationship between career counselling and entrepreneurial development skills which reduce unemployment. It was concluded that for graduate unemployment to be eradicated in Nigeria, the counsellors must ensure that effective entrepreneurship education is put in place. The paper finally recommends the introduction of a course on entrepreneurship education counselling which should precede the main general course on entrepreneurship education in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Graduate unemployment, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and guidance and counselling*

Introduction

One of the major problems facing Nigeria today is that of graduate unemployment which has given rise to poverty, crime, and other social vices. Unemployment is a recurrent problem in Nigeria. However, it should be clearly understood that no government of any nation would be able to wipe out unemployment, since there are limited resources. This situation therefore requires that the citizens acquire and develop requisite skills for more fulfilled living. The quest in most developing countries like Nigeria is to have self-sustaining growth which can only be acquired through functional education and skills. It is not an overstatement to say that majority of our graduates are not sufficiently employable. In other words, most products of our Nigerian educational system are merely graduates who showcase various colours of certificate with little practical or functional education. According to Onuoha (2011) in Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013), the Nigerian education especially university system produces graduates that do not meet the need of the labour market, there is obvious disconnect and mismatch between the expectations of the industry and products of the nation's higher institutions. Corroborating this fact, Okoh (2014) points out that the training and education which the students of higher institutions in Nigeria are exposed to do not fit into the demands of the labour market and as such these students are not employable at graduation. The inherited colonial educational policy and subsequent reforms after independence had not been able to equip most of our school products to become self-employed or employable (Oguntimehin and Nwosu 2014). Put in another way this structural imbalance rendered many graduates of Nigerian higher institutions unemployable and hopeless. It is believed that only practical and functional education will solve the problem of unemployment. Education is seen by many as an agent of human development, social

mobility and socio-economic development of any society. It is a process of training designed to give knowledge, develop abilities and skills that could lead to the development of mental alertness and the right attitude to life. The type of education that leads to vocational and skill acquisition, self-reliance, industrial and technological development has been the ideal if not the only tool needed for the eradication of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The researcher perceives this type of education as entrepreneurship education.

Based on the structural and functional flaws found in the nation's developmental blueprint, it dawned on government that the proper thing to do is to review the nation's education curriculum by embedding entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course to be taken by all undergraduate students. Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education be included as part of the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective from the 2007/2008 academic session (ILO, 2010; Gabadeen and Raimi, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education is a type of training given to students to acquire the skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities to be self-employed. This type of education helps students to get an opportunity to analyse rapid changes taking place around them and they are encouraged to consider self-employment and enterprise creation as a career choice.

Brown (2000) in Akpan, Effiong and Ele (2012) pointed out that entrepreneurship education is designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills, knowledge, and values needed to recognize business opportunities, organize and start new business ventures. It is about transforming an idea into reality, instead of theorizing about the idea only.

Statement of Problem

The inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of tertiary institutions by the Federal Ministry of Education goes to show its importance. This was intended to make graduates not to be dependent on white collar jobs rather to be self-employed and job creators thereby reducing if not eradicating unemployment in Nigeria. The burden of this paper, therefore is, that despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for all these years, unemployment seems to be on the increase. There is nothing to show that these graduates received any form of entrepreneurship education. The value of entrepreneurship education does not seem to have sufficiently impacted on them to spur them to imbibe entrepreneurial spirit and be motivated to create or wish to create their own employment after graduation. Based on this then one begins to wonder why the entrepreneurship education given to our students is not yielding the required result which is job creation. Could it be that there is no one ensuring the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in our tertiary institutions? Could the intervention of guidance counsellors produce the desired effects? This paper therefore examines the role of guidance and counselling in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education for the eradication of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. In doing this, the paper will explore the nature and concept of unemployment, the meaning of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, its relevance, challenges and the role of guidance and counselling in ensuring functional and effective entrepreneurship education which will help in the eradication of graduate unemployment.

Objective of the Study

The major objective of this paper was to x-ray the role of guidance and counselling in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education for the eradication of graduate unemployment. It explores the concepts of unemployment, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, their relevance in the context of guidance and counselling and challenges.

The Concept of Unemployment

From the researcher's point of view, unemployment means a condition of not having any work yet or looking for work. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),

unemployment occurs when people above a specified age are not in paid employment or self-employment but are currently available for work during the reference period. (en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/unemployment). Graduate unemployment therefore is the sum of all graduates in the country who are without work but are available and seeking for work.

In Nigeria today, if one pays a visit to centres where interviews or recruitment exams are being conducted, one will be shocked to see the number of graduates scrambling for a few slots of available jobs advertised. It is no longer unusual to see university graduates getting involved in all sorts of despicable social vices in order to keep body and soul together in our great country.

Graduate unemployment which is caused by inadequate training mainly lack of functional entrepreneurship education, is potentially harmful. According to Ajufo (2013) schools in Nigeria provide training programmes that are generally failure towards preparing young people for formal sector jobs, and since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seeker and the available jobs

The effects of unemployment are many and varied. Unemployment is dangerous as it sends disturbing signal to all segments of the Nigerian society. This has resulted in a lot of vices that have negatively affected economic activities in Nigeria such as stealing and vandalism of public properties, kidnapping, banditry, prostitution, cultism, cybercrimes, and armed robbery, ritual killings, trafficking in persons, terrorism and a host of other social vices. Other effects of unemployment include but not limited to brain drain, psychological trauma and loneliness, loss of economic power and drive, apathy towards work, loss of self-worth, self-respect and self-esteem and prestige.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a type or form of training and education. It is an attempt towards self-reliance which is a reasonable move that will offer immense help in eradicating unemployment problems. This is because entrepreneurship emphasizes the acquisition of skills and capacities to be self-employed. Entrepreneurship activities are vital processes of creating incremental wealth. Entrepreneurship involves undertaking tasks with attendant risks and gains. The essential objective of entrepreneurship is to make profit and not to incur losses (Ezeribe 2020).

Emenyeonu and Ogunsola (2012) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of a person to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise. Furthermore, it is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's self and also for others. According to Agbionu (2008) in Ezeribe (2020) entrepreneurship is defined as a process that has to do with creating wealth for the purpose of growth and development of the environment and eradication of unemployment for national sustainability. On his own, Okebukola (2021) in Ezeribe (2020) referred to entrepreneurship as the sum total of the activities which make for entrepreneurial mind-sets, attitudes and skills and it encompasses generation of ideas, start-ups, growth and innovation.

Some of the characteristics of entrepreneurship include- ability to take a risk, innovation, curiosity, visionary and leadership quality, persistence, hardwork, self-confidence, and flexibility.

Oguntimehin and Nwosu (2014) opined that any society that desires sustainable development cannot do away with entrepreneurship because it creates new technologies, production and services, encourages improved productivity and rapid economic growth.

Ezeribe (2020) asserts that anyone who maximizes profit through innovative strategies, new products or services is therefore considered to be an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is creative cognitively and physically. Entrepreneurs are goal-setters and are resolute in their endeavours. They are the organizers, innovators, and risks bearers in any business undertaking.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is very important especially at the higher institutions to equip the young ones with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed after school either in their workplace or personal businesses. Entrepreneurship education is a viable tool in the industrial and commercial development of the nation. It prepares people to be responsible and enterprising individuals. It helps people have knowledge, develop the required attitudes and skills needed to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Entrepreneurship education has been variously defined. For instance Entrepreneurial education is one that “seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them to start and manage a business. It aims at developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, competencies, and disposition that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing a business (Agu (2006) in Olorundare and Kayode (2014).

In the view of Enu (2012), Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. As such, it goes beyond business creation. From researcher’s experiences and observation, entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary schools) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting.

From the above definitions entrepreneurship education provides students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to excel in life and business pursuits. With entrepreneurship education, an individual acquires the required knowledge and skills for production of goods and services, it gives one an enabling ability to recognize business opportunities. It provides individuals with the attitude and insight to go into investment.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this paper, Technical and vocational education (TVE) is seen as being concerned with the acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood while entrepreneurship goes a step further to encompass both TVE and generation of ideas, start-ups, growth and innovation. In this paper therefore both Technical and vocational education and entrepreneurship are seen as two sides of the same coin. While TVE ends with acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood, entrepreneurship encompasses generation of ideas, start-ups, growth and innovation

According to George-Izunwa (2022), the objectives of Entrepreneurship education are:

- to offer functional education for self-reliance and self-employability;
- to enhance creativity and innovation and confidence in identifying novel business opportunities;
- to function as a catalyst for economic growth and development and reduce high rate of poverty;
- To instil the spirit of resilience in the students which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on;
- To encourage evolution from traditional to modern technology which supports economy and sustainability.

Relevance or Importance of Entrepreneurship Education

The importance or relevance of entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized.

It is believed that the introduction of entrepreneurship education into university education will help produce self-reliant graduates with effective entrepreneurial skills for job creation and poverty eradication. Adinoyi (2012) sees entrepreneurship education as the most reliable vehicle to economic prosperity. According to him, it has the inherent characteristics of fuelling the efficient use of human and material resources.

Entrepreneurship education helps to impart skills such as opportunity recognition, problem identification and solving, critical thinking, and innovation. These skills are very essential because as society is changing constantly, there is a need to equip one's self for any eventuality in the future. Entrepreneurship education also provides its learners with the skills to improve their employability and life chances.

Other benefits accruing from entrepreneurship education are:

- Development of new skills

Entrepreneurship studies will help the students develop most vital skills like self- confidence, leadership, originality, risk-taking, task-result orientation among others.

- Prepare for self- reliance/ self-employment

Offering entrepreneurship education in higher institutions prepares you to be self- reliant after school. In today's world, jobs are no longer guaranteed for graduates — it is no longer "go to school, study hard, get good grade, and get a good job." Unemployment and underemployment are on the rise astronomically. The future of work is being threatened by technology. Graduates are therefore faced with challenges of self-employment.

- To have knowledge of business aspect of every given discipline

Every discipline has business aspect, you need to learn the business of your discipline. For instance, entrepreneurship education will empower a musician to understand the business aspect of music.

- Versatility

Acquiring entrepreneurship education broadens the knowledge and skills of students thereby making them to be versatile

- Critical and in-depth knowledge produces stability

It had been established that one of the major reasons businesses fail is management incompetence. It is therefore important to inculcate the managerial skills right from schools. Whether you're going to set up your own business or work for another in the private or public sectors, you need to have entrepreneurial skills.

- Develop one's talent and become creative.
- Entrepreneurship Education helps one become a job creator instead of a job seeker

(<https://www.businesscompilerng.com/2021/07/importance-of-offering-entrepreneurship.html>)

Challenges in Entrepreneurship Education

The importance of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. Unfortunately, Nigerian universities in their bid to properly entrench entrepreneurship education as an important curriculum issue across all disciplines are faced with the following challenges. According to Amoor (2008) in Olorundare and Kayode (2014), these challenges include:

- Lack of lecturers with practical entrepreneurial training and consciousness. Although lecturers' awareness of entrepreneurship education has grown in the last few years and attitudes towards the new curriculum have become more positive, majority of lecturers still do not know enough the aims, contents and work method of entrepreneurship education. Consequently, they may be unable to effectively impart the desired knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to their students.
- The task of drawing up course content to be included in the curriculum of entrepreneurship-related education programme in Nigerian universities will require a very long educational process.
- Entrepreneurship education is capital intensive and both lecturers and students need money to practice the theory of initiating, establishing and running enterprises. This undoubtedly constitutes constraints which subsequently frustrate the integration of the entrepreneurship in academic programmes in Nigerian universities.

Brown (2012) highlighted some basic factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in our universities in Nigeria. These are

- poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition;
- poor enterprising culture;
- lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment;
- unavailability of relevant funds;
- poor societal attitude to technical and vocational education development;
- inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses;
- insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy; and
- poor planning and execution of processes of action.

It is important to note however that several of these factors are gradually being tackled by the Federal Government of Nigeria under its relevant agencies.

Guidance and Counselling

From the researcher's perception, guidance is an assistance given by adequately trained and qualified men or women to a group or an individual of any age to help them manage their own life activities, develop their own points of view, make their own decisions, and take care of their own circumstances.

Counselling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. (<https://www.visioncounselling.com.au/what-is-counselling/>)

Counselling is defined by Egbe-Okpenge and Orhungur (2012) as a helping relationship which assists individuals to change their perspective or attitude for better achievements. Counselling is a guidance service. Guidance and counselling is a compound word which refers to the services that promote personal, social, educational, and career development. It attends to the needs of all including students, parents, professional colleagues and the entire community. According to Ezeribe (2012), Guidance and Counselling is defined as 'a service that helps an individual to have adequate understanding of himself, his environment, and adequate clarification of goals and values which in turn assists him to make realistic decisions, choices and plans for future behaviours'. Guidance and counselling can also be defined as a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world (Eyo, 2010; Lunenburg 2010).

According to Uba (2010) in Ezeribe (2020) counselling will intensively equip students and youths for sound public relations, self-understanding and better management skills which will facilitate entrepreneurship development. Given the foregoing, Counselling therefore, means a help given to an individual or group of individuals who are in temporary distress by professionally trained personnel in order to overcome distress. Essuman (2010) maintains that guidance and counselling should form an essential part of educational system. Lack of counselling has made the young people unable to identify the relationship between various subjects, choices and occupations in entrepreneurship education. This has led to production of graduates without entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

The guidance and counselling relationship can be given either in a group or as individuals. There are three broad areas of guidance and counselling namely- academic, career and personal social counselling. In this paper, the major focus is on vocational or career counselling. Career counselling is the aspect of counselling that is focused on how the individuals manage their journey through life, learning and work. This includes career exploration, making career choices, managing career changes, lifelong career development and dealing with other career related issues. Career guidance performs a crucial function in helping the labour market, work and education systems meet their goals.

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework of this paper is based on the cognitive counselling theory. Cognitive counselling theory involves therapists working collaboratively with clients to develop skills for identifying and replacing distorted thoughts and beliefs, ultimately changing the associated habitual behaviour towards them. It is usually focused on the present and is a problem-solving orientated

treatment. This counselling theory focuses on how people's thinking can change feelings and behaviors. Therapy based on cognitive theory is brief in nature and oriented toward problem solving. Cognitive therapists focus more on their client's present situation and distorted thinking than on their past. The role of counsellors on the paper is hinged on this theory.

The role of Guidance and Counselling in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education for the eradication of graduate unemployment.

Having gone through the concept of guidance and counselling, we now consider some of the roles of guidance counsellors in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education for the eradication of graduate unemployment.

- It is the role of the guidance counsellors to make students understand and appreciate the essence of having 'entrepreneurship' as one of general courses for all students.
- Helping the students to know and imbibe the objectives of Entrepreneurship education as stipulated by George-Izunwa (2022). This will help them take the course seriously
- Offering group career guidance and counselling services to the students, making them understand that the compulsory entrepreneurship education imbedded in their different disciplines is not just another general course but one that is designed to equip them for the world of work after graduation.
- It is the counsellor's role to build capacities to make sure that undergraduates imbibe intrinsic attitudes about the importance of entrepreneurship education thereby boosting their ego through the use of effective counselling interventions.
- The counsellors need to inculcate in students the workplace basic and thinking skills that will enable them to fit properly in the world of work, arouse their interest and encourage both male and female students' participation in entrepreneurship education.
- It is the role of guidance counsellors to render information services to ensure effective entrepreneurship education'
- Another role of counsellors is to provide value clarification and re-orientation towards negative mind-set of Nigerians concerning entrepreneurship for both students and lecturers through psychological behaviour modification principles.
- It is the counsellor's role as experts in the helping profession to go on advocacy to the Federal government, NUC and university management on the need for functional and practical entrepreneurship education using group counselling services bearing in mind that counselling is for everyone and not restricted to any age. Through this, the importance of employment of more qualified lecturers will be emphasized, training and retraining of the existing lecturers will also be reiterated. The counsellors should discuss the challenges of entrepreneurship education and bring to their remembrance that functional entrepreneurship education will help in the reduction of unemployment.
- Counsellors should also play the role of providing services for harnessing ideas, skills and hidden potentials for entrepreneurship development of the students using effective counselling strategies.
- Provision of individual career counselling services for effective entrepreneurship development to students.
- Referral Services: Through this the guidance counsellor will be able to refer students who desire deeper knowledge on entrepreneurship to the appropriate quarters for the acquisition of better entrepreneurial skills.
- Follow-up Service: Through this the counsellor will be able to monitor the career progress of the graduates. This service will enable counsellors to provide feedback to the institution which will in turn help in evaluating the entrepreneurship education given to students.

Methods

This paper relied on information from secondary sources. The sources are published and unpublished and the authors are dully referenced. Sources of such information include books, journals, newsletters, etc. In this direction, relevant literature were reviewed and relevant information collected for the present study.

Findings and Discussions

From literature, there are several findings on works concerning counselling, entrepreneurship and unemployment. For instance, Egbe-Okpenge, and Igbo (2013) carried out a work on the availability of career counselling services among university students and its relationship to their acquisition of entrepreneurship skills to curb graduate unemployment. Three research questions and hypotheses guided the study in three universities in Nigeria. A survey design was used. A sample of 400 final year students in each of the institutions was used. Relevant statistical tools t-Test and Correlation test were used to analyse the data. The results revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between career counselling and entrepreneurial development skills of final year undergraduates in Nigeria.

Another study by Kheiravar and Qazvini (2012) attempted to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship-with the concept of creating a new business- in the industry of Azarbayjan-e-Shargi and unemployment rate in this province. Vector auto-regression (VAR) econometrics was employed in examining this relationship. The findings indicated that, in industrial sector of Azarbayjan-e-Shargi, an inverse relationship existed between entrepreneurship and unemployment rate.

The above findings revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between career counselling and entrepreneurial development skills and unemployment rate. This means that when counselling is given to students on entrepreneurship education, there will be positive cognitive restructuring to imbibe entrepreneurial development skills which will in turn help them to be self-dependent thereby reducing if not eradicating graduate unemployment.

Conclusion

The role of Guidance and Counselling in ensuring effective entrepreneurship education for the eradication of graduate unemployment cannot be over-emphasized. It is enormous and should not be overlooked if the much desired reduction if not eradication of graduate unemployment is to be achieved especially this period that graduate unemployment in Nigeria has reached its crescendo.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be introduction of a course on entrepreneurship education counselling which should precede the main course on entrepreneurship education. That means counselling undergraduates should precede entrepreneurship education in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria so as to prepare their minds before taking the course on entrepreneurship education.
- More qualified lecturers in entrepreneurship education should be employed to ensure effectiveness in teaching entrepreneurship in the universities.
- Adequate facilities should be provided to help students to gain practical entrepreneurship education.

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