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## ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR CRIME REDUCTION AMONG YOUTHS IN NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

*Youths constitute the most vibrant group in every society. The prospect of national economy and the standard of living of a people could be linked to the availability of gainful employment for youths. With the recent fall in the price of crude oil in the international market, and the resultant economic recession witnessed in Nigeria; the need for entrenchment of Entrepreneurship education among youth became more urgent and necessary. This paper therefore examines Entrepreneurship Education, its importance, challenges and roles in generating employment opportunities and reducing crime in Nigeria.*

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**Keywords:** *Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship education, and Youth unemployment*

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### INTRODUCTION

The spate of criminal perpetration across the globe has become worrisome to international community at large. In virtually every society world over, crime is imminent. Whether in developed, developing or less developed societies, crime is being perpetrated, although its gravity and intensity vary across the societies. Importantly, the recent statistics on crime report explained the various types of crime manifested in various countries based on the continent they belong. In America, crime rate in 2015 reveals a 3.9% increase in the estimated number of violent crimes and a 2.6% decrease in the estimated number of property crime. There were estimated 1,197,704 violent crimes committed around the

nation. ([www.fbi.gov/latest](http://www.fbi.gov/latest) crime statistics). In United Kingdom, the reported case of robbery, vehicle crime and violent crime in November, 2016 were 37,396; 37,516 and 104,420 respectively ([www.ukcrimestats.com](http://www.ukcrimestats.com)). In Malaysia, the crime index recorded a 4.6% increase between January and April, 2016 while 38,877 crimes involving properties were recorded in the first quarter of the year. ([www.osac.gov/pages](http://www.osac.gov/pages)).

Specifically in Nigeria, issues that are crime-related occur almost every day ranging from theft, kidnapping, armed robbery, pipe vandalism, insurgencies, to mention but a few. The manifestation of this reflects in daily report of crime perpetration by virtually all national dailies in the country. One of the factors that has necessitated for such increase in criminal behaviour is high rate of unemployment especially among youths in the country. As at third quarter of 2019, the unemployment rate stood at 23.1% (nbs report, 2019). This figure is a pointer to the prevalence of unemployment in Nigeria. Unfortunately, government at both federal, state and local government have been making frantic efforts towards generating employment for its teeming population especially youths but the available jobs seem to be insufficient in comparison to the rising number of youths especially graduates in the country (Adebisi, 2012). Consequent upon this, various administrations at federal and State level have proposed and implemented various policies and programmes targeted towards economic emancipation, zero hunger and job availability for the youths (Ademiluyi, 2007). Unfortunately, corruption, nepotism and other cultural factors have not made those programmes to be sustainable and effective and as such, the economic status quo of the youths remains stagnant (Babalofa, 2007).

It is imperative to state that the Nigeria educational system over the years have completely left out entrepreneurship from the curriculum. This is evident in the attitude and behavioural disposition of an average Nigerian graduate whose mentality is geared towards white collar jobs rather than involving in skill acquisition that will empower them economically (Adeola & Bolarinwa, 2010).

As the problem of youth unemployment keep aggravating, Federal Government of Nigeria in a bid to address the challenge introduced entrepreneurship education into the curricula of Tertiary Education through the various regulatory agencies like the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). It also introduced a similar scheme through the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). This is with a view to providing and empowering students in Tertiary Institutions and youths generally with requisite knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage success in various ventures (Ekpo, 2010).

This paper thus examines entrepreneurship education and crime reduction in Nigeria.

## **The Concept of Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship Education**

The term Entrepreneur was originally a loanword from French language and was first defined by the Irish-French economist Richard in 1755 (Agu et al, 2016). An entrepreneur is a person who has possession of a new enterprise, venture or idea and is accountable for the inherent risks and the outcome of a product (Sullivan, 2003). Entrepreneurship education has been defined by several authors, such as, a teaching of knowledge and a skill that enables the students to plan, start and run their own business; a dynamic process of creating wealth through the process of creating something new and in the process assumes both attendant risks and rewards; a willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities; and tool that enables youths to seek for success in ventures through one's effort (Ebele, 2008, Abefe-Balogun 2012; Fashua, 2006; Ememe, 2010).

Okereke and Okorofor (2011), asserted that entrepreneurship education has been acknowledged world wide as a potent and viable tool for self-empowerment, job and wealth creation. Hence, the overall purpose of entrepreneurship education is to develop expertise as an entrepreneur. In Nigeria this has also been embraced through The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) who has identified thirty-four (34) Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects which include the following; Auto body repair and spray painting, Auto electrical work, Auto mechanical work, Auto parts merchandising, Air conditioning and refrigeration, Electrical installation and maintenance work, Radio, TV and electronic servicing, Welding and fabrication engineering craft practice, Block laying, brick laying and concrete work, Painting and decorating, Plumbing and pipe lifting, Machine wood working, Carpentry and joinery, Furniture making, Upholstery, Catering craft practice, Garment making, Clothing and textile, Dyeing and bleaching, Printing craft practice, Cosmetology, Photography, Mining, Tourism, Leather Goods Manufacturing and Repair, Stenography, Data Processing, Store Keeping, Book Keeping, GSM Maintenance and Repairs, Animal Husbandry, Fishery, Marketing and Salesmanship (FGN, 2013). These among others are catered for in entrepreneurship education for youths.

## **Goals and Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide youths with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. The major goal of entrepreneurship education is for learners to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that will lead to self-employment. According to Paul (2005) entrepreneurship education is structured to achieve the following objectives:

1. To offer functional education that will enable graduates and youths to be self-employed and self-reliant.

2. To provide the graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunity.
3. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development
4. To offer graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearing feasible.
5. To reduce high rate of poverty
6. To create employment generation most especially among youths
7. To reduce rural-urban migration
8. Provide young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium scale business
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in graduates which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
10. To create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

In addition, Osuala (2010) highlighted the following objectives of entrepreneurship education:

1. To provide meaningful education for youths which could make them self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self-independent.
2. To provide graduate with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.
3. To provide graduates with employable skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
4. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
5. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.
6. To provide graduate with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
7. To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to management of the business centre.

It is evident from the objectives listed above that youths unemployment will be reduced to the barest minimum if the policy on entrepreneurship education is properly implemented.

### **Importance and Roles of Entrepreneurship Education**

The importance and roles of entrepreneurship education in youth employment cannot be over emphasized. Entrepreneurship education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their own development in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world. Entrepreneurship is a key driver of the economy. Many of the big businesses started as small businesses created by entrepreneurially minded individuals. There is more creative freedom for people exposed to entrepreneurship education. There is high esteem and an overall greater sense of control over their lives (Ademiluyi, 2007).

Okon and Firday (2015) posited that entrepreneurship education equipped people, most especially, youths with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and foresight or promoting local technology. Entrepreneurship activities are real-life vehicle for developing academic skills, hence, trained entrepreneurs are always empowered to tap form local resources in their immediate environment. Entrepreneurship education inculcates in learners the mentality of hard work, one of the keys to unlock poverty doors in developing areas. Entrepreneurs are trained to work hard to be able to run businesses profitably and successfully. Entrepreneurship stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. Through entrepreneurship education, utilization of local resources is made possible (ibid). It is the believe of many experienced business people, political leaders, economists and educators that fostering a robust entrepreneurial culture will maximize individual and collective economic and social success on a local, national and global scale. It is with this in mind that the National Standard for entrepreneurship education was developed to prepare youth and adults to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy (Paul, 2005).

The resultant financial gains from entrepreneurial venture are always of benefit to a country. The economic importance of the entrepreneur has been recognized for several decades. Schumpeter (1934) attributed innovation to the entrepreneur and described entrepreneurship as the engine of economic development. He argued that "to study entrepreneur is to study the central figure in modern history". Unlike the capitalist, the entrepreneur directs the application of acquired knowledge to the production of goods for human consumption. . In the same vein, Emeruwa (2005) asserted that the entrepreneur does not only identifies but mobilizes and organizes the resources to tap the opportunities by assisting men, materials, money and machines to explore the opportunity. According to Olorunmolu (2008), entrepreneurship education helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in Nigeria, such as crime. The entrepreneur does not only provide jobs/employment for himself alone, but provides for others too. This in turn helps the individual to increase per capital income hence improve standard living. From the foregoing benefits, Entrepreneurship education is indeed a panacea for youth unemployment, and should be taught to youths generally with a view to curb the incidence of youth unemployment in Nigeria and reduce crime rate.

The propensity to behave entrepreneurially is not exclusive to certain individuals; different individuals have diverse mix of capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial behaviour, skill and attributes. These behaviours can be practiced developed and learned. Hence it is important to expose all students to entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurial skills and attributes provide benefits to society, even beyond their application to business activities. Obviously, personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship such as creativity and a spirit of initiative can be useful to everyone in their day to day existence.

### **Causes of Crime in Nigeria**

Umar (2015) identified six major causes of crime in relation to armed robbery. In Nigeria today, the economy is in shambles, the nation is infested with perpetual corruption. Nigeria is one country in the world which government agencies and parastatals constitute a conduit pipe through which public funds, a means for the provisions of social infrastructures, are grossly siphoned into the private pocket of top bourgeois politicians (Otu, 2012). Due to this callous ineptitude, most industries and factories have closed down thereby escalating the problem of unemployment and poverty in the country. To compound the problem, inflation rate has since reached double digit and is on the increase impacting negatively on business as small traders are closing shops daily (Arinze, 2011). The resultant effect is the manifestation of ravaging poverty and unemployment in the country. In a research by UNDP (2012), it was reported that 65% of Nigerians live below the poverty line without any access to basic goods, services and commodities. Most households in Nigeria are more concerned with the provision of daily bread needed for the survival of family members (Umar, 2009). Further, the current Nigeria unemployment status even in the official quarters is embarrassing, (Arinze, 2011). This might have worsened over the years by the large population of young people graduating out of the many educational institutions. Umar (2012) argued that the wave of crime in Nigeria can be blamed on high unemployment among the nation's youth. Many are graduates from the country's more than fifty universities who cannot find jobs. Thus, there is no doubt that armed robbery in Nigeria today is an outcome of the interplay between the two factors of ravaging poverty and unemployment. Faced by the twin problem of unemployment and poverty which are threatening to their need for survival some of the citizens have therefore turn to armed robbery as a means. For example, with failed business and no other means of livelihood, some Nigerians might have turn to armed robbery. This explains the rising wave of the problem in the country.

Further, the criminal neglect of the people in terms of development by various Nigerian governments resulted in the problem of persistent rise in the rate and wave of crime such as armed robbery. Apart from series of communal clashes, many groups emerged in their struggle for social justice and emancipation and varied methods were adopted and used (Umar, 2012). Some groups resorted to the use of armed robbery

especially for the purpose of money generation for arms purchase to protect their community from incessant attacks. This has been more prevalent in some parts of northern Nigeria where an ethno-religious conflict is rampant in recent years, as well as, some few communities in the south east and south west. According to Onoge (2003), the criminal neglect of the Niger Delta by various Nigerian governments led to series of communal clashes and high rate of crime in the area. As a result of this, dangerous arms that were proliferated during such conflicts may have gone to wrong hands who in turn utilize it for the perpetration of armed robbery. In fact, some young unemployed members of the communities used as foot soldiers for the war will now turn to hit back at the communities and their innocent victims by using the arms at their disposal to commit armed robbery. This may also be the case with some political thugs who were consequently abandoned by their masters after elections.

Education is one of the most powerful weapons against crime. With good education the individual acquires the needed skills and capacity for legitimate employment to earn a living and conquer poverty. Poor early childhood education on the other hand multiplies the risk of criminal behavior at adulthood. Thus, there is a great relationship between education and criminality in the society (Brown 2002). The Nigeria situation of today is that a chunk of Nigerians are grossly uneducated, the number of youth dropping out of school is proportionally high and the graduates turn out annually from various higher institutions of learning are poor in terms of desired quality to be engaged for either white-collar or self-employment. This is worsened by perpetual decline in Nigeria's educational standards (UNESCO, 2012). Worse still, the system has over the years been grossly underfunded by government (Garba, 2006). However, given these circumstances, some young Nigerians have become an army reserve of recruits for criminal activities (Onoge, 2003).

Some families in Nigeria are agents of destruction rather than preservation of traditional moral values due to the various unholy activities going on there. Some family members act as accomplices thereby do encourage their wards to perpetrate criminal activities such as armed robbery due to the material benefits they may enjoy as a result.

The role of some global mass media in the emergence and perpetuation of the problem is alarming. (Barret, 2004) argued that very powerful media conglomerates like the BBC, CNN, MTV and SKY through their powerful cable satellites transmit Euro-American popular culture that impact negatively on other societies in the world. Through local and foreign films and other communication materials Nigerians get to know about drug peddling, armed robbery, rape, money laundering and indeed kidnapping. In fact, most young armed robbers may likely have acquired the methods and skills from the foreign media. No wonder, armed robbery keeps occurring in the country despite existing control mechanisms.

The life style of the elites contributes a lot to the perpetuation of the problem. Wealth is always been thrown around lavishly unmindful of the socioeconomic plight of the

poor masses who are wallowing in poverty. This breeds more frustrations amongst the poor who constitute the majority in the society. In Nigeria, senior public officials especially politicians not only live above their means but wealth is fragrantly displayed with flamboyant recklessness.

The poor socioeconomic condition of security agents especially police officers in the country today could also contribute a lot to the persistent armed robbery occurrences. Apart from very poor condition of living which most of the rank and file live owing to poor condition of service, the force has no any meaningful life insurance package for officers who die in active service. Nigeria's security personnel remain one of the most poorly paid they were expected to take care of other basic needs of themselves, wards and their dependents from it. This is at a time when the cost of things such as education, food, medicine etc, is astronomically high. Given this battered situation, some security officers may no doubt be tempted to join force with armed robbers in order to salvage their condition. In fact, this will explain why arms belonging to the force found their ways to armed robbers. Besides, in most cases the arms that are used by officers in charge of combating armed robbery are far less, in terms of supply and sophistication, than that of armed robbers. Most times the fund meant for the welfare of officers and purchase of good weapons disappears due to corruption at the top of the structure. Thus, these were among many other factors that is seriously killing morale in the force and as a result making it nearly impossible for armed robbery prevention and control in the country.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted documentary method. In the words of Ugwuoke, Ameh and Ogbonna (2017), documentary research is the use of documents to support the view point or argument of an academic work. In this research method, data were collected through reading existing documents such as: newspapers, textbooks, government publications, internet materials among others.

### **Theoretical Orientations**

This study is hinged on two sociological theories which are Anomie theory and entrepreneurship theory.

As regards Anomie theory, Robert K. Merton who pioneered the sociology of deviance is considered as the proponent of this theory. The Merton's structural strain theory states that when society does not provide the necessary legitimate and legal means for the people to achieve culturally valued goals, the people will seek for alternative means that may break away or violate the laws, values and norms. Relating this to our present study, the inability on the part of our society to provide jobs and means of livelihood makes many youths to indulge in criminal behaviours and other acts such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, suicide bombing to mention but a few, which are detrimental to societal orderliness. In a bid to avert this therefore, members of the society should think



beyond white collar jobs by acquiring requisite skills that will engage them and provide means of livelihood for them in turn. Hence, entrepreneurship education.

The sociological theory is the entrepreneurship theory. Sociological enterprise focuses on the social context. Reynolds (1991) has identified four social contexts that relates to entrepreneurial opportunity. The first one is social networks. Here, the focus is on building social relationships and bonds that promote trust and not opportunism. In other words, the entrepreneur should not take undue advantage of people to be successful; rather success comes as a result of keeping faith with the people. The second he called the life course stage context which involves analyzing the life situations and characteristic of individuals who have decided to become entrepreneurs. The experiences of people could influence their thought and action so they want to do something meaningful with their lives. The third context is ethnic identification. One's sociological background is one of the decisive "push" factors to become an entrepreneur. For example, the social background of a person determines how far he/she can go. Marginalized groups may violate all obstacles and strive for success, spurred on by their disadvantaged background to make life better. The fourth social context is called population ecology. The idea is that environmental factors play an important role in the survival of businesses. The political system, government legislation, customers, employees and competition are some of the environmental factors that may have an impact on survival of new venture or the success of the entrepreneur.

It therefore implies that taking cognizance of these aforementioned four contexts such as social network, experiences, social background and environment will go a long way in enhancing an enabling entrepreneurship opportunity that will improve both social, economic and psychological well-being of the people.

### **Entrepreneurship Education, Employment Opportunities and Crime Reduction: A Nexus**

From the aforementioned section, it is crystal clear that unemployment, especially among youths is one of the major problems which plague the country at present. It is worrisome when high rate of youths in a particular society are idle and less occupied. However, in order to assuage the intensity of this menace of unemployment, entrepreneurship education will be a great assistance. The generally-upheld mentality especially among graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria towards white-collar jobs in both public and private section has contributed to upsurge in rate of unemployment across the nation. With the inculcation of entrepreneurship education into university curriculum, students, while in school, will be able to learn and acquire certain skills in form of vocation which will enable them to sustain themselves even after graduation. Although, some universities have taken pragmatic steps towards embracing entrepreneurial education, it should cut across all tertiary institutions including polytechnics and colleges of education, thereby enabling youths to have a reorientation of employment and employment opportunities in Nigeria (Nwolodo and Dele, 2010).

Flowing in this direction, the aftermath effect of such moves will be availability of employment opportunity because individual who kickstart his/her business may also employ at least two persons to work with him/her. It is believed therefore that through this, unemployment will drop drastically in Nigeria and standard of living will increase and in turn bring about sustainable development across every sector of the society (Babalola, 2007).

Furthermore, Adejumola and Tayo-Olajubulu (2009) contended that unemployment has been identified as the major cause of social vices like armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, political thuggery, kidnapping and many more. What holds true for Nigeria and most other nations of equivalent human development indicators is the fact that crime is often a means of survival (Adebayo, 2013). The youths are one of the greatest assets a nation could possibly possess. The National Youth Development Policy (2001) asserts that the youths are the foundation of a society; their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides. The youths are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, active and the most productive phase of life of citizens. The youths are also the most volatile when their energies are misdirected or channeled into wrong endeavours. Consequently, youth unemployment poses a great threat to the country's stability and development, and if not checkmated on time, it may lead to disastrous consequences for the nation. Desperation can drive the unemployed youths into living outside the law in order to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction. For instance, as noted by Ukoji and Okote-Osemene (2015), in January 2014, for instance, more than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped from 2006-2016. In September 21 2015, a former finance minister Olu-Falae was kidnapped by six Fulani herdsmen in Akure, Ondo State (The Nation Newspaper, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015). Moreso, on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, Princess Toyin Omosowon a regent of Akungba was kidnapped (The Nation Newspaper, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2015).

Therefore, through entrepreneurship education, it is expected that youths will be well equipped with necessary vocational skill acquisition while in school which will serve as a form of economic empowerment and source of employment opportunities for them which in turn will discourage them from involving in criminal related activities that will threaten the social order in the country.

### **Recommendations for effective Entrepreneurship education as a panacea to Youth Unemployment**

In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will enhance sustainable development and curb the alarming rate of youth unemployment, the following recommendation were made.

1. Genuine and practical based entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory for youths across board.

2. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) should be encouraged to participate in entrepreneurship education through funding or contributions in kind as an aspect of their corporate social responsibility to the nation.
3. Funds should be pooled to create a small venture capital for Youths.
4. Institution based enterprises where undergraduates plan, create, register and operate small business using the school as mini incubators should be encouraged.
5. Entrepreneurship internship programmes for youths outside the four walls of Tertiary institutions should be created.
6. The Government should make provision for minimal taxation and economic friendly political environment.
7. Competent Lecturers in the field of entrepreneurship education should be employed to make the course practically interesting.
8. There should be national re-orientation of youths towards entrepreneurial intention, learning and employment generation.
9. Adequate incentives should be provided for youths that excel in entrepreneurship ventures.

It is hoped that Administrators of Entrepreneurship education, as well as Policy makers would take due cognizance of the recommendations provided above with a view of reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria.

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