

# TACKLING THE UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES IN ENUGU STATE THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

---

*Dr. Leo C. Chukwu*

*Department of Educational Management,  
Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agbani,  
Enugu State.*

## **Abstract**

*The study examined; tackling the unemployment challenges in Enugu State through entrepreneurship education. Survey research design was adopted for the study using a researcher developed instrument tagged; tackling the challenges of unemployment in Enugu State questionnaire (TCUESQ). 450 randomly drawn final year students of ESUT were used for the study. Of the 450 questionnaire distributed, 421 were successfully retrieved, making a retrieval rate of 94%. The instrument was validated by 3 experts, 2 in Educational Management and the remaining 1 in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are of the Faculty of Education, ESUT, Agbani. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Alpha value (cluster by cluster), yielded .73 and .69 for clusters 1 and 2 respectively. The overall reliability index was found to be .71, indicating a high reliability of the instrument for the study. Findings indicate that; entrepreneurship education is very useful in tackling the problem of unemployment in Enugu State especially in the areas of agriculture and manufacturing. Recommendations were put forward including; organizing constant seminars, workshops and conferences for both entrepreneurial teachers and students to constantly bring them up to date with latest developments in the entrepreneurship programme.*

**Key words:** Education, entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, entrepreneurship education.

Various scholars have defined the concept of education from varying perspectives. Okonkwo (2012) posits that education is a social process in capacity building and maintenance of society for decades. It remains a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving in a world that is dynamic. Offor (2013), points out that education is a veritable instrument in the development of

human persons. When individuals are empowered through functional education, they are better equipped to:

- Live ordered life;
- Understand their interests and vocation(s),
- Have the zeal to succeed amidst odds,
- Have better focus and desire to put into profitable ventures the skills and knowledge acquired, Offer concluded.

Education is the process of transmitting societal love, values and desirable attitude from one generation to another. It seeks to socialize individuals so as to equip them with the desired mode of behavior that is conforming with the way of life of the society in which they live. It is the sum total of all the processes in which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to society (Obunadike, 2013). Throughout the ages, education (whether formal or informal) has been recognized as an instrument for individual and societal transformations. This remains the major reason why every society continuously strive to bequeath upon its successive generations education that is not only qualitative but functional (Chukwu, Eze and Agada, 2016). Madu (2010) avers that education is a vehicle that lifts someone above conditions unacceptable to him/her. Contributing, Offer (2014), maintains that education is that which helps students to develop their inherent potentials to become productive and useful citizens of their society. It is a major factor in skills, development, it dispels ignorance and lays a foundation for development and prosperity.

The forgoing, exposes the indispensable place of education in the lives of individual and nations or societies. It is important as well to define the kind of education which a given society bequeaths to its citizens. For any educational system to be competitive and result oriented, it must be ready to bequeath to the citizenly qualitative functional entrepreneurship based and technology driven education. Anything less is day dreaming. Such qualitative and entrepreneurship based educational system, churns out year in year out self-reliant graduates who are employers of labor as against perennial job seekers. These job seekers definitely continues to worsen the challenges of unemployment that is presently ravaging the Nigerian society in general and Enugu State in particular.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

It is the aim of the Nigerian educational system that the products should be able to make new impacts and blaze new trails in different aspects of life for the development of the society. The objectives include, self-reliance, self-development and self-realization (FRN, 2013). The introduction of entrepreneurship studies in the Nigerian educational system was to re-emphasize and give new impetus to the objectives in the light of the current unemployment challenges facing the country. The poor attitude to work of some school leavers makes it imperative that they should

be reminded that whoever wants happiness, fame and affluence must create them through honest labor (Okonkwo, 2012).

Entrepreneurship is a direct willingness and ability to seek out investment opportunities and run it as an enterprise for profit making. Entrepreneurship as a term, has French origin. It is the capacity to perceive and undertake business opportunities by taking advantage of scarce resources through optimal utilization (Onyene, 2014). Nwangwu (2006), asserts that entrepreneurship is the process of bringing land, labor and capital together and bearing the risk involved in producing goods and services with the aim of making profit. Entrepreneurship is the attempt to create value by an individual or individuals;

- *through the recognition of significant (generally innovative) business opportunity.*
- *through the desire to manage risk taking appropriate to that project.*
- *through the exercise of communicative and management skills necessary to mobilize rapidly the human, material and financial resources that will bring the project to fruition (Udochukwu in Nwangwu, 2006:15).*

Whenever the concept of entrepreneurship is mentioned, what calls to mind are the professional business practices that make one a successful entrepreneur amidst challenges. An entrepreneur is an individual who undertakes business risks. Entrepreneurs are those who search and discover economic opportunities, evaluate alternatives available in the immediate environment, allocate resources to the most profitable option(s), take the ultimate managerial responsibility, and carry out successful execution of the minimal beneficial opportunities (Onyene, 2014). Continuing she avers that:

*A graduate entrepreneur is one who ought to have been exposed to creative value while in the classroom learning one whose knowledge is not tied to some bookish recipe, one who can link theories to practice, and or one with demonstrable intellectual capacity to think and get out of the box in order to find solution to life needs, human needs and national concerns (Onyene 2014:674).*

It is clear from literature that the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship remain germane to the growth and development of any economy. Entrepreneurship education therefore becomes very imperative in order to ensure the robustness and relevance of any educational system.

Osolor (2011) and Nwana (2012), agree that the entrepreneur is a person who is in possession of goods and services that the community has need of, and who has the emotional and psychological drive to be a master of these goods and services as well as the means of making them available to members of the community to which he belongs. Entrepreneurs possess many pleasant attributes to their credit. They have sense of purpose, strive to be excellent in all they do. They are action oriented,

disciplined and have self-confidence. Entrepreneurs are known to leave their customers better than they met them. To the community, they are well known as employers, managers of resources and leaders of their time. They stand out in the herd.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare students to cultivate the “I can” philosophy in order to be able to conquer their limitations and setbacks and direct their energies to a definite goal. The idea of entrepreneurship education is such that the graduate should be able to easily locate their way into the employment market (Offor, 2013).

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education is a conscious effort directed at inculcating transformative skills in those who become committed to it and who would utilize the knowledge gained to create new powerful survival strategies (Onyene, 2014). Entrepreneurship education is an educational programme geared towards employment generation and economic sufficiency. This is in keeping with the tenets of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are meant to address the problem of poverty, sustainable development, disease and health among others.

### **Importance of Entrepreneurship**

1. It is purpose laden and intended to expose students to the activities of entrepreneurship
2. The best practices, checks and balance for successful entrepreneurship are imparted to students to enable them take control of their future and become self-employed.
3. Through entrepreneurship education, students become team players and engage in problem solving through critical thinking and informed decision (Offor, 2013).
4. Entrepreneurship education is imperative to creating varied opportunities that will stimulate economic growth.
5. It trains, educates and produces graduates who possess specific knowledge in their various disciplines and as well develop right thinking necessary to initiate, start and grow successful businesses with reduced risks and/or failures.
6. Entrepreneurship education increase chances of enterprise profitability.
7. It instils the “can do spirit” on the beneficiary. This spirit propels one to ignore the hazards associated with little beginnings. It is a spirit laden with values, virtues and vibrant endeavor (Onyene, 2014).
8. Beneficiaries of entrepreneurship education, learn to communicate ideas and influence others through development of self-advocacy and conflict resolution skills.

9. Organizational skills including time management, leadership ability and interpersonal skills are developed through entrepreneurship education. Such competences are needed to employ or be employed (Offor and Acolonu, 2012).

10. Entrepreneurship education is an indispensable tool for achieving not only the national goals but the MDGs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education is beset with its own problems just like any other programme within the larger Nigerian educational system. These challenges include:

i. Inadequate funding: This is a fallout of the poor funding of education in Nigeria generally.

ii. Poor and inadequate facilities: The facilities for entrepreneurship education which are practical based are not just there. This has resulted to the students being exposed largely to the theoretical perspective as against the more and all important practical aspect.

iii. Lack of entrepreneurship teachers: Specialist entrepreneurship teachers are grossly inadequate or may not even be available at all. This has resulted in the programme being handled by the conventional teachers who know next to nothing about entrepreneurship. The cycle of our institutions' continuously churning out job seekers instead of entrepreneur (job creator) remain unending.

iv. Lack of interest of the learners: Most of the students show very little or no interest in entrepreneurship education. Much of their interest are in paid employment in mostly air conditioned offices.

Unemployment is a major challenge confronting not just Enugu State, but the Nigerian nation as a whole. Kidnapping, child trafficking, armed robbery and other violent crimes are fallouts of unemployment. This is not good for societal growth and development.

The present study is on tackling the challenges of unemployment in Enugu State through functional entrepreneurship education. The focus is on tertiary education with specifics on university education.

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013:54), university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by:

a. Intensifying and diversifying its programme for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation.

b. Making entrepreneurship skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities among others. According to Chuwku, Agada and Eze (2016:1-2);

*Universities are legitimate centres for the simultaneous pursuit of the goals of teachings research, manpower development and community service. They are centres for high level knowledge and skills dissemination. It is clear that as hotbeds of high caliber intellectualism and value laden research, universities must be in the vanguard of driving the nation's economy. Life changing and life sustaining sectors of the*

*economy including; agriculture, health systems, industries, general infrastructure and overall industrialization should continuously engage the attention of universities.*

In order to achieve its mandate, universities in Enugu State have no choice but to embrace functional entrepreneurship education. The problem of the study is therefore put in question form thus: How can the challenges of unemployment in Enugu State be tackled using entrepreneurship education as a tool?

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

The present study is hinged on Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship (1961) as outlined in Nwangwu (2006). The theory postulates that an entrepreneur is considered as an innovator, a dynamic agent as well as the nerve center of the capitalist economy. Schumpeter maintains that the development of capitalist economy is jerky rather than steady due to the erratic interaction of the entrepreneur, the planned or unplanned innovations and questionable availability of credit. Schumpeter believes that entrepreneurial actions result to the ultimate cause of business cycles and economic development. Schumpeter avers that the development of the entrepreneur is characterized by a combination of internal changes, including:

1. The introduction of new product (goods) which the customers are not yet familiar with or of a new-quality of goods
2. The introduction of a new method of production
3. The opening of a new or existing market into which business organizations have not previously entered.
4. The conquest of a new or existing source of supply of raw materials or semi-manufactured goods.
5. The re-organization of a business organization of a business such as the creation of a monopoly position or breaking up of an existing monopoly.

The above thesis lays bay the strategic place of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in breaking new grounds towards creating new opportunities and innovations. The entrepreneur is infact a job creator and an employer of labour. The above explains the relationship between the present study and Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. How can the unemployment challenge in Enugu State be tackled using entrepreneurship education in the area of agriculture?
2. How can the unemployment challenge in Enugu State be tackled using entrepreneurship education in the area of manufacturing?

### **Methodology**

Survey research was adopted for the study using a researcher developed instrument tagged, tackling the challenges of unemployment in Enugu State

questionnaire (TCUESQ). The study was conducted using randomly drawn 450 final year students of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Agabni, Enugu. 50 students were drawn from each of the 9 facilities of the institution, making 450 students. The choice of ESUT was informed by the fact that the school produces up the 70% of the state’s high level manpower. Most of the state’s top bureaucrats are alumni of the university. Of the 450 questionnaire distributed, 421 were retrieved, making a retrieval rate of 94%. It is imperative to state that of the 421 retrieved questionnaire, 151 were female, while 270 were male.

The instrument for data collection was face validated by the three experts, two in Educational Management and the remaining one in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are from the Faculty of Education, ESUT, Agbani, Enugu. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Alpha values (cluster by cluster), yielded 0.73 and 0.69 for clusters I and 2 respectively. The overall reliability index yielded 0.73, indicating a high reliability of the instrument for the study. For data analysis, any mean of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree, while less than 2.50 was regarded as disagree. For the hypothesis, when t-calculated was equal to or more than the critical value, the hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, when t-cal is less than the critical value, the hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 1: Mean Ratings, Grandmean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Tackling the Challenges of Unemployment in Enugu Sate through Entrepreneurship Education in the Area of Agriculture**

S/ N	Items	N = 2370 Male Students							N = 151 Female Students						
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	S 1	X	SD	Deci .	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	X	SD	Deci .
	<b>Through entrepreneurship education, beneficiaries become self-reliant through:</b>														
1	Fish farming	161	78	30	01	3.48	0.70	A	63	28	26	34	2.79	1.21	A
2	Bee farming	147	62	26	35	3.19	1.06	A	68	44	31	08	3.14	0.92	A
3	Snail farming	131	59	50	30	3.08	1.05	A	59	41	26	25	2.89	1.10	A
4	Animal husbandry	122	48	64	36	2.95	1.11	A	60	40	30	21	2.92	1.07	A
5	Rice farming	134	55	51	30	3.09	1.06	A	49	49	40	13	2.89	0.96	A
6	Vegetable farming	119	61	60	30	3.00	1.05	A	57	53	39	02	3.09	0.83	A
7	Horticulture	109	63	66	32	2.92	1.06	A	54	48	37	12	2.95	0.96	A
	<b>Grandmean and SD</b>					<b>3.10</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>A</b>					<b>2.95</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 1 above shows a unanimous agreement by the respondents that through entrepreneurship education, beneficiaries become self reliant and employers of labour through various forms of agricultural activities. This was confirmed by grandmeans of 3.10 and 2.95 for both male and female final year students respectively.

**Table 2: Mean Ratings, Grandmean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Tackling the Challenges of Unemployment in Enugu Sate through Entrepreneurship Education in the Area of Manufacturing**

S/N	Items	N = 2370 Male Students							N = 151 Female Students						
		SA 4	A 3	D 2	S D 1	X	SD	Deci.	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	X	SD	Deci.
	<b>Through entrepreneurship education, beneficiaries become self-reliant through:</b>														
8	Soap manufacturing	151	70	16	33	3.26	1.02	A	54	51	40	06	3.01	0.81	A
9	Detergent manufacturing	120	61	53	36	2.98	1.09	A	62	42	33	14	3.01	1.00	A
10	Deodorant manufacturing	133	52	46	39	3.03	1.12	A	50	47	30	24	2.81	1.07	A
11	Wine making	144	39	38	49	3.03	1.19	A	56	44	32	19	2.91	1.04	A
12	Fruit juice manufacturing	119	68	46	37	3.00	1.08	A	61	49	21	20	3.00	1.04	A
13	Water packaging	127	48	42	53	2.92	1.19	A	48	45	36	22	2.79	1.05	A
14	Tooth paste manufacturing	118	66	48	38	2.98	1.09	A	60	41	32	18	2.95	1.04	A
15	Tomato puree manufacturing	109	69	53	39	2.92	1.08		51	39	37	24	2.77	1.08	
	<b>Grandmean and SD</b>					<b>3.02</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>A</b>					<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>A</b>

Table 2 above reveals that both groups of respondents unanimously agree that through entrepreneurship education, beneficiaries become self-reliant and employers of labour through manufacturing. This was confirmed by grand means of 3.02 and 2.91 for male and female students respectively.

**Table 3: t-test of Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on Entrepreneurship Education as a Means of Tackling Unemployment through Manufacturing**

Respondents	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male student	270	3.02	1.11				
				449	1.00	1.96	Do not rejected
Female students	151	2.91	1.03				



The result in table 3 reveals that t-calculated of 1.00 is less than t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. There was therefore no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on entrepreneurship education as a means of tackling unemployment in Enugu State in the area of manufacturing.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The study found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on entrepreneurship education as a means tackling unemployment in Enugu State in the area of manufacturing. The similar characteristics of the respondents as students could be part of the reasons.

It was equally found in the present study that entrepreneurship education promotes self-reliance and as well create employment opportunities for the beneficiaries. This is good news as the spiraling unemployment is one of the major challenges confronting the present society and Enugu State in particular. Onyene (2014), Offor (2013) and Osalor (2011) agree that entrepreneurship makes beneficiaries not just self-reliant, but job creators and employers of labour. This is very good for the economy of Enugu State and beyond. The saying which maintains that an idle mind is the devils workshop hold true. From the forgoing it is very clear that entrepreneurship education is a major tool for tackling the spiraling and debilitating unemployment challenges presently confronting Enugu State and Nigeria as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship education is an educational programme geared towards employment generation, self-sufficiency and economic growth. It is a conscious effort directed towards inculcating transformative skills to the beneficiaries. The present study through its findings confirms that it is a veritable tool for combating the enormous unemployment challenge facing Enugu State. It becomes imperative therefore that a lot of effort should be channeled towards promoting entrepreneurship education.

### **Recommendations**

The following were recommended:

1. Adequate funding of entrepreneurship education programme is important. This ensures that needed equipment are provided and functional training given to specialist entrepreneurial teachers, to make the programme result oriented.
2. The lack of interest of the learners could be solved through provision of needed equipment thereby making the programme fully functional.

3. Constant seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for both entrepreneurial teachers and students to constantly bring them up to date with latest developments in the programme.
4. Constant electricity should be provided because it is electricity that powers most of the equipment that are utilized in entrepreneurship training.

### References

- Chukwu, L.C., Eze, T.A.Y. & Agada, F.C. (2016). Availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 7(12) 7-10.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Abuja: NERDC press.
- Madu, L.U. (2010, June, 13). Achieving independence through dependable education. *Leader Newspapers* pp.7.
- Nwana, O.C. (2012). Entrepreneurship education and the challenges of national transformation. *International journal of Education and management*. 1(2) 19-38.
- Nwangwu, I.O. (2006). *Fundamentals of entrepreneurship in educational management*. Enugu: Chester Agency ltd.
- Obunadike, J.C. (2013). Educational reforms in Nigeria. In E.Kpangban, P.E. Eya. & P.C. Igbojinwaekwu (Eds) *Reforms and innovation in Nigerian education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon publishing coy ltd.
- Offor, E.I.D. & Acholonu, V.N. (2012). Appraisal of entrepreneurship education towards national development. *Journal of Education and Management Sciences*.1(2) 101-121.
- Offor, E.I.D. (2013). Enhancing entrepreneurship programme for solving unemployment problems. In E. Kpangban, P.E. Eya and P.C. Igbojinwaekwu (Eds) *reforms and innovation in Nigerian education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon publishing coy Ltd.
- Okonkwo, J.I. (2012). Challenges of self-reliance among the religions. In I.M. Onyeocha, M.C. Obiagwu & G. Abiogu (Eds). *Between grace and gratitude*. Owerri: Claretian publications.

- Okonkwo, N. C. (2012). Universal basic education (UBE). The concept and challenges for effective implementation. *Journal of Qualitative Education* 8 (1) 50-57.
- Onyene, V. (2014). Prospecting entrepreneurship skills for Nigerian tertiary education learners. In G.O Unachukwu and P.N. Okorji (Eds) *Educational Management: A skill building approach*. Nimo: Rex and Patrick Limited.
- Osolor, P. (2011). *Why and how to start your own business. A simple guide to business startups*. London: Posag international.