

# ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN PROMOTING PEACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*This paper is aimed at examining the role of Entrepreneurship Education in promoting Peace and Economic Development. The concept of Peace was briefly examined in relation to Economic Development. Economic Development was described as the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy. The conceptual framework developed by Shapero and Sokol in 1982 was used in illustrating the series of stages and processes that eventually give birth to the formation of a business venture and three (3) stages were identified in the model. The authors briefly examined the concept of Entrepreneurship Education including its goals and objectives. A section was devoted to examining the roles of Entrepreneurship Education in promoting Peace and National Development in Nigeria. One of the major recommendations advanced in this paper was that there should be massive enlightenment on the evils and setbacks that results from a violent and chaos economy.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education and economic development

The teaching and learning of Entrepreneurship Education in tertiary institution is of paramount interest to all stakeholders. The National Policy on

Education describes Education as an instrument ‘par excellence’ for effecting national development (FRN, 2004). It is conceived that Education is capable of bringing about the desired socio-economic and political changes in the country. The recent call for the inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria is an indication of its importance to employment creation as Nigeria continues to churn out graduates from various institutions that are hardly self-reliant but solely dependent on white collar jobs for sustenance because they lack adequate skills that will make them function effectively and efficiently toward the development of the economy.

As a nation, Nigeria has been working tirelessly since the collapse of oil boom to achieve youth independence, poverty eradication and improved economic status through several reforms and programs. Initiatives such as the operation Feed the Nation (OFN), National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) among others has been introduced at one time or another. Regrettably, these program initiatives aimed at capacity building and utilization seem not to have helped in any way to equip young school leavers (youths) with appropriate skills that will empower them after graduation from school (Okolocha & Okolocha, 2012).

It is in a bid to bridge the gap between youth unemployment and job creation that the Federal Ministry of Education made Entrepreneurship Education one of the compulsory courses in general studies for students in tertiary institutions across the country to inculcate in the youths the spirit of self-reliance which has become essential for national economic growth and development. The essence of entrepreneurship education is to build in the students, entrepreneurship spirit and culture (Akpomi, 2009; Adejimola and Olufunmilayo, 2009). Entrepreneurship education has emphasis on “education for self-employment” rather than “education for paid employment”. This kind of education has become so important in Nigeria owing to the high level of unemployment coupled with its accompanying social vices, insecurity and unrest. It is believed that this kind of education is capable of meaningfully engaging the individuals and making them more productive and useful to themselves and the country at large.

There is not gainsaying the fact that for any economy to grow and develop, the graduates that are churned out from these institutions must be equipped with the relevant skills needed to function effectively and efficiently either as a paid worker or self-employed person. Mbionwu (2008) noted that when youths are given adequate training in skills, they can be self-employed after schooling; hence they become active partners in both community and national development. The possession of skill as a result of Entrepreneurship training is important in preventing youths from becoming social misfits.

Okolocha and Okolochah (2012) described Entrepreneurship skills as business skills which one acquires to function effectively in the turbulent business environment as independent or self-employed persons in order to improve one's economic status and the society at large. The result of the study carried out by Okebukola (2005) confirmed that most Nigerian graduates are deficient in self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills. In a similar vein, Anyakoha (1997) as cited by Olumese & Clark (2010) stressed that training for entrepreneurship skill development is not currently being well articulated by Nigerian universities. The importance of entrepreneurship education cannot be over-emphasized since appropriate skill acquisition through entrepreneurship will help to make young school leavers' to be self-reliant and boost their economic states. Isike (2008) stated that Entrepreneurship has been identified globally and nationally as a tool for generating sustainable economy which is the core value of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS). Uloko and Ejinkonye (2010) remarked that when youths are empowered through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, there is the possibility that they will use the skills to create avenue for wealth. Empowering the youths to set up businesses involves proper acquisition of skills through education and training.

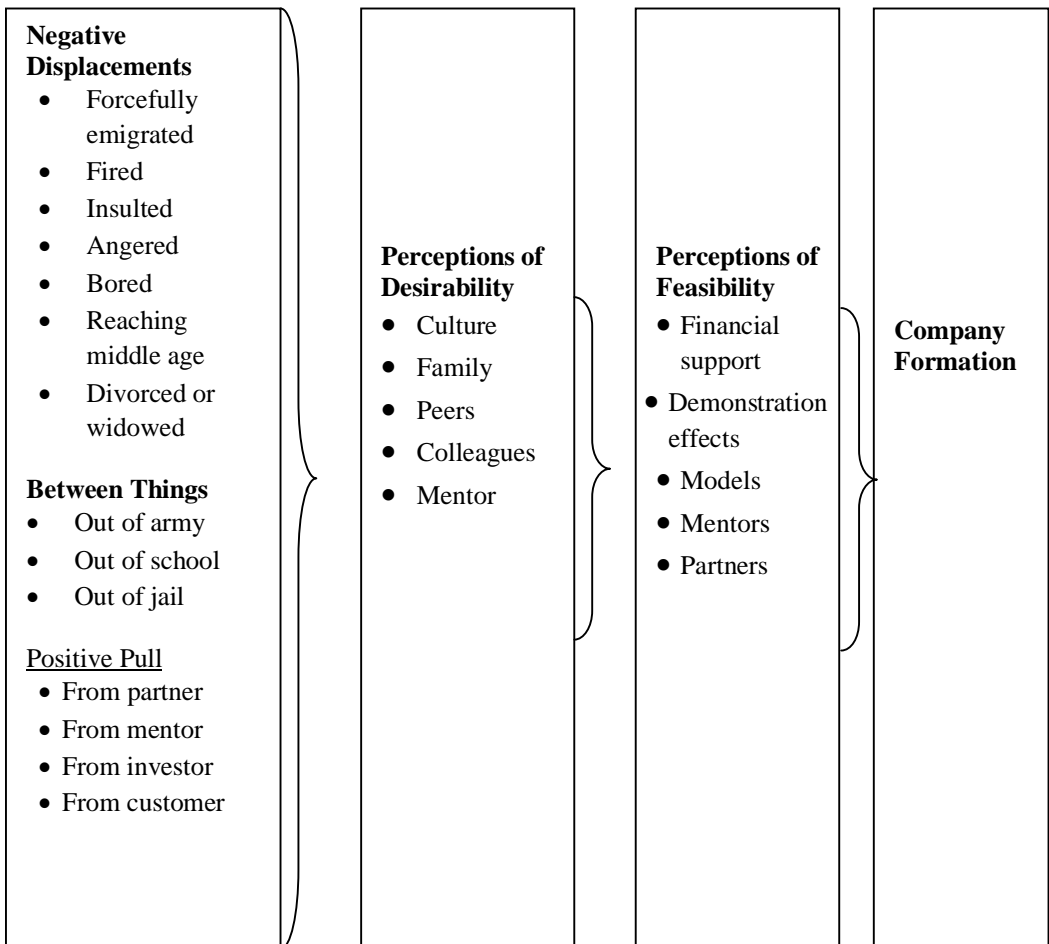
### **Concept of Peace and Economic Development**

Peace is conceived as one of the indices for measuring economic development. Hornby (2001) described Peace as a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area. According to Jegede, Ememe and Kolawale (2013), peace is a necessary condition for development. The authors stressed further that all efforts to bring peace to the world have not yielded the expected results. Peace has been observed as a necessary condition for real development to take place (Jegede, 2000; Akwayena, 2000). This is because real development can only take place when individuals are able to be involved in a critical process of praxis in a continuous fashion. This process involves rational thinking that requires settled mind, devoid of fear, anxiety and intimidation. Some authors have attributed the absence of peace in the country to the high level of unemployment currently being faced by the citizens, that is, graduates and non-graduates alike. The absence of relevant entrepreneurial skills among the people accounts for the high level of unemployment, idleness and insecurity. The unstable social/political climate is a problem facing entrepreneurship education (Babalola, 2010). It is a known fact that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of rancor, chaos and insecurity. The current 'Boko Haram' sect threat to the peace and stability of the nation is having an adverse effect on entrepreneurship education. When students are even equipped with the skills and knowledge to start and manage a business, the insecurity arising from bombings and kidnapping will hinder the products of this programme from becoming entrepreneurs. No individuals will be willing to "fish in troubled water" and as such, no individual will be willing to invest in a place that is highly unsafe. The level of insecurity will go a long way to heighten the risk rate in

the country. Though, it is often said that risk bearing is a major feature of entrepreneurs but taking reasonable and calculable risk is worthwhile.

For there to be economic development, the necessary machineries must be put in place. Economic development is described as the steady increase in the per capital income of a country accompanied by certain desirable changes. It also refers to the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development)). It consists of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy; and Entrepreneurship education is considered a panacea to the problems facing the economy.

### **Shapero and Sokol's Entrepreneurial Event Model**



**Source:** Adapted from Shapero and Sokol (1982: 83)

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is built on the Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) introduced by Shapero and Sokol in 1982. The model assumes that inertia guides human behavior until some event “displaces” that inertia and unblocks previously undesired behaviours. For example, a displacement such as job loss, might alter the perception of the desirability to become self-employed. Shapero and Sokol (1982) classify these life paths changes into the three categories and they are: negative displacement, between things and positive pull (Kermit, 2008; Kollmann & Kuckertz, 2006).

Negative displacements refers to such things as being fired, insulted, angered, bored, reaching middle age, getting divorced or becoming widowed. The second is being between-things such as graduating from high school, university, finishing military duty or being released from jail. Especially, this second category of between-things is potentially interesting for entrepreneurship education programmes since students often have no clear idea of what they want to do after graduation. It is upon this premise that entrepreneurship education was introduced by the Federal Government in 2006 to be taught as a compulsory course across the tiers of tertiary institutions in the country. The third category is of a positive nature, the so-called positive pulls from the partner, mentor, investor or customer. The behaviour ultimately performed depends on the credibility of the alternatives and the propensity to act. Credibility in this context is given when there is perceived desirability and feasibility of the specific behaviour. However, this alone is not enough to execute a specified behavior; what is needed is a precipitating event, a displacement event that changes these perceptions and propensity to act in such a way as to eventually perform the behaviour. Thus, if a displacement event triggers cognitive processes and changes perceptions of feasibility and desirability, the individual may act if the credibility of the specified behaviour is higher than that of the alternatives and if the individual has a general propensity to act on that action.

Perceived desirability refers strongly to values and how they will ultimately impact the individual’s perceptions of what is attractive or desirable and what is not. In this context Shapero and Sokol (1982) identified culture, family, peers, colleagues, mentors and previous work experience as factors that strongly influence personal value and the perception of desirability. Perceived desirability is closely related to “subjective norms” in the theory of planned behaviour (Krueger & Reilly, 2000). The history of experiences strongly influences what is desirable and what is not.

Perceived feasibility indicates to which degree someone feels personally capable, of, for example, starting a business. The concept of perceived feasibility is similar to Bandura’s self-efficacy, which is often used as a measure of perceived feasibility (Krueger & Reilly, 2000). Propensity to act is the personal disposition to act on one’s decision (Krueger, 1993). Conceptually, Shapero and Sokol (1982

suggested an internal locus of control as a measure of the propensity to act. There is no agreement as to how to best measure propensity to act. Other authors suggested equating the propensity to act with “learned optimism” (Krueger & Reilly, 2000) or risk-taking propensity or tolerance of ambiguity (Kermit, 2008).

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

The need for education in the development effort of any nation cannot be underestimated. The development of education sector is a *sine-qua non* for the development of all other sectors. According to the European Union Commission (2010) as cited in Ekankumo and Kemebaredikumo (2011), 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 settings. The commission emphasized that different aspects of entrepreneurship education are offered at all level of schooling. In a similar vein, the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2004) maintained that it is a lifelong learning process, starting from elementary level to other levels of education and spanning to adult education. Akpomi (2009) also held the view that entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for the pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and attitudes in widely different context. According to Alain (2009), Entrepreneurship education refers to all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills as well as covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation. Akudolu (2010) saw entrepreneurship education as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude to enable the learner apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life.

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

The overall objective of entrepreneurship education is to continuously foster entrepreneurship culture amongst students and faculty with a view to, not only educating them but to also, support graduates of the system towards establishing and also maintaining sustainable business ventures including but not limited to those arising from research. Akudolu (2010) stressed that the major goals of entrepreneurship education is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment among the citizens through the inculcation of entrepreneurial knowledge, competencies and attitudes in the learners. To achieve the major goals of entrepreneurship education, there is need to ensure that instructional activities are directed towards the achievement of specific objectives.

Entrepreneurial education like business education is vocational in nature; it is geared towards the inculcation and acquisition of functional knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies needed to function economically in today’s ever-changing technology and business environment. Business education has a role to play in training potential entrepreneurs for job creation, (Orah, and Itua, 2011).

## **Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Promoting Peace and National Development**

The introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Colleges of Education) is actually a direct response to the changing socio-economic and political conditions in the world and Nigeria in particular. According to Ewubare (2010), entrepreneurship education programme can equip students with entrepreneurial skills that will enable them create and develop enterprises in various areas. The emphasis here is that the programmes have a way of shifting the focus of students from paid employment to self-employment. During the colonial era, people were trained to work for the colonial masters and as such, their education was patterned towards such. Immediately after independence, the emphasis of education system was on paid employment (Akpomi, 2009).

Entrepreneurship education has the tendency of equipping and making students experts in the production of certain items. The curriculum framework of this programme has been designed such that individuals will be able to channel their creative abilities and skills to an area or areas of interest. The interest area may be barbing, soap making, farming and so on (Agoha, 2011).

The knowledge of entrepreneurship education helps the students to gain information that will help to boost further teaching and learning (Agoha, 2011). Entrepreneurship education builds the spirit of being entrepreneurs in the minds of the students. Thus, Entrepreneurship education has a way of discouraging laziness and idleness among youths. Most people that are idle today or probably lazy are those that seem to know little or nothing about entrepreneurship, that is, what it take to develop business plans, start and manage businesses.

Entrepreneurship education can greatly help in addressing the level of poverty in the country. The issue of poverty eradication has been a top priority of many governments and institutions, especially in developing countries where extreme poverty is conspicuous and has become endemic (Akpomi, 2009, Kalirajan, 2009). The incidence of poverty in Nigeria is on the high side, where about 70% of the total population has been classified as poor (Ewhrudjakpor, 2008). This state may be seen as a direct consequence of the absence of entrepreneurial spirit and culture which entrepreneurship education is supposed to foster. In other words, the relevance of entrepreneurship education is felt more in the area of checking or reducing poverty. Entrepreneurship education equally helps in checking high dependency ratios (That is, the ratio of dependent population to working population) in the country. Once the working populations are adequately equipped with these entrepreneurial skills leading to self-employment, the burden arising from dependent population will be reduced.

## **Conclusion**

This paper x-rayed the concept of Peace in relation with entrepreneurship education and economic development. The term peace was examined in relation with insecurity and unrest. The authors stressed that the absence of Peace in the country may not be unconnected with the high level of unemployment currently being faced in the country. The concept of entrepreneurship education was looked at including its goals and objectives. The roles of entrepreneurship education in promoting peace and national development in Nigeria was examined also.

## **Recommendations**

It is obvious that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere that is void of peace. Based on this, the following recommendations are therefore made:

1. There should be massive enlightenment on the evils and setbacks that result from a violence and chaos economy/society.
2. The people should be encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship education or training in order for them to be self reliant, especially through business education in particular and vocational education in general;
3. There should be adequate funding of the business education programme in order for the objectives and goals of the programme to be realized.
4. Entrepreneurship educators should be exposed to regular training in order to update their knowledge and make them to be more productive;
5. There should be adequate provision of the necessary resources needed to fully run the programme in institutions of higher learning.
6. The government should make fund available for graduates of entrepreneurship education to start up their businesses.
7. Practicing entrepreneurs should be involved in the teaching of entrepreneurial educations.

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