



## Entrepreneurship Education: A Panacea for Alleviating Poverty in Enugu State Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*The study focused on finding out the role of entrepreneurship education as a tool for alleviating poverty in Enugu State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 3567 beneficiaries of Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) including 18 government officials of PAP. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. There was no sample for government officials for PAP. Through purposive random sampling technique, 266 respondents were selected from the beneficiaries of the PAP giving a total of 284 respondents. Face validated questionnaire by three experts from Social Science Education, Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Sociology was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation for research question, while t-test statistic was used for testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among others that access to entrepreneurship education provided the beneficiaries of PAP the opportunity to acquire skills for job creation; there was no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondents with regards to the extent to which entrepreneurship education has promoted poverty alleviation. Based on the educational implications, recommendations made include that the government should establish small scale industries in both urban and rural areas to create job opportunities for those that have acquired skill and thereby save money to start off a business venture.*

### KEYWORDS :

#### Introduction

Poverty is a multidimensional concept that erodes deep in the society in different aspects of development. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2001) poverty is a situation of inadequate basic necessities that makes life meaningful. These basic necessities include shelter, good water, food, means of transportation, clothes, medical care and high rate of infant mortality. Poverty destroys peoples' hope and aspiration to achieve fundamental needs in the society. Poverty according to World Bank (2001) means vulnerability to advance shocks linked to inability to cope with lack of income, voicelessness and powerless to meet basic necessities. Poverty has many manifestations and dimension including unemployment. According to Igbo (2006) poverty associated with unemployment has resulted to high incidence of different type of social ills like armed robbery, rape, political thuggery, assassination, human trafficking, car snatching, abortion, unwanted pregnancy etc.

Poverty affects education by reducing the access to people to educational opportunities. In Nigeria in general and Enugu State in particular, many girls are not in school because of their state of poverty. The girls are particularly at risk more than their boys counterpart because they tend to inherit the poverty level of their mother (Jellema and Unterhalter, 2005). The authors stressed that girls are prone to abuse of all forms and are often confined to households cores. They found out that the only way to cushion the effects of poverty is to educate girls. This supports the old adage that says "education a woman, you educate a nation, educate a man, you education an individual. Still stressing on the issue of access to education, Action Aid (2003) reiterated that opportunity costs, illness and hunger, limited economic cost of education and low quality of schooling are caused by poverty. Consequently, through entrepreneurship education poverty seem to be drastically reduced. Yusuf (2002) lamented that pupils drop-out of school because of their inability to pay the examination fees especially West African Examination Council (WAEC). For Bradshaw (2006) poverty is deprivation charactering poor people in the society that results to inequality. No wonder the level of crime wave is alarming due to poverty to all ramifications. In this context, poverty refers to the denial of opportunities and choices that are basic to human development that leads to a creative life, income generation, self respect and enjoy decent standard of living.

Despite the fact that Enugu State had been the capital for the then Eastern Region of Nigeria, poverty is highly noticed from the looks of some individuals that roam about in the streets. According to Ogara (2011) due to poverty many people put their lives in danger just to

escape the poverty trap. Some roam about in the streets practicing one social ill or the other such acts such as kidnapping, armed robbery, suicide, abortion, rape Boko Haram insurgence etc. This means that to overcome this dangerous situation, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria becomes very necessary. Poverty alleviation programme is very crucial in minimizing the factors that lead to poverty in the society. According to Adelodum (2002) poverty alleviation is the reduction to some extent the level of sufferings, difficulties and human degradation related to poverty. This means that by way of human capacity building, skills acquisition, provision of social facilities, economic empowerment, enabling environment and also having a voice in decision-making, poverty is alleviated. Poverty alleviation programme therefore aims at providing citizens with these opportunities that would assist the beneficiaries to attain the essential means of achieving socio-economic freedom through entrepreneurship education.

Education is the tool to achieve social justice and improve the quality of lives of all individuals in the society. According to FRN (2004 p. 4) education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development. This means that entrepreneurship education is very important in empowering one for survival. For Cherwitz (2006) entrepreneurship is the process of creating value through appropriate resources that combine to exploit opportunity by implementing innovation using skills that are characteristically inherent in or acquired by the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship education is education that is geared towards development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society. According to Obiefuna, Ifegbo, Ike-Obioha and Uwazurike (2010) entrepreneurship education is the type of education that exposes the learner to cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities for self sufficient, self reliant and sustainable life in the society. Education is indispensable in making an entrepreneur irrespective of gender in risk taking in business venture.

Education equips the entrepreneur with relevant skills for coping with the initial problems encountered in starting an enterprise, such as, lack of financial support in alleviating poverty (Chukwudolue, 2000). An entrepreneur means different things to different people. According to Hisrich and Peters (2002) to an economist, it is one who brings resources, labour, materials and other assets into combination that will make their value greater and give rise to new changes while for psychologist, it is a person totally driven by certain forces to accomplish and escape the authority of others. Nevertheless, an entrepreneur according to Onoh (2004) runs an economic growth that

is basically his own irrespective of positive gains and reasonable risks encountered in the business. Alio (2004) earlier noted that entrepreneurship development in the informal sector of economy is currently seen as one of the effective strategies for promoting skill acquisition, employment generation or wealth creation. This informal sector is totally outside the control of the government. Alio (2010) further found out that informal sector constitutes the greater employers of labour for school dropouts, young school graduates from different academic disciplines who join this sector for survival. In the context of this study entrepreneurship education therefore refers to the ability to package individual or group of individuals with the enabling skills capable of making them overcome poverty and survive as members of the society through education.

Based on the foregoing this study sought to determine the extent entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation in Enugu State.

**Research Question**

To what extent has entrepreneurship education promoted poverty alleviation?

**Hypothesis**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents with regards to the extent to which entrepreneurship education has promoted poverty alleviation.

**Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive surveys are mainly concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation (Nworgu, 2006). The estimated population for the study was 3567. There was no sampling for the 18 government officials of PAP made up of one state coordinator and 17 committee secretaries, one from each of the 17 local government areas that made up Enugu State. Through purposive random sampling technique, 266 respondents were drawn giving a total of 284. Gender used in the context of this study were drawn from the beneficiaries of PAP to know the difference in the mean perception of male and female respondents as it concerns poverty alleviation. Questionnaire developed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument has 15 items that helped in elicit the required information from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined by trial testing using 20 respondents from Anambra State, Nigeria which is outside the study area. This was to make sure that the items were clear and comprehensible enough for the respondents. The internal consistency reliability co-efficient of 0.83 was computed using the Cronbach Alpha method. This showed that the instrument used was highly reliable. The degree of acceptability of the identified items (through literature and personal contact) was measured by asking the respondents to indicate to what extent each of the items on a four – point scale of 1 (Very Low Extent), 2 (Low Extent), 3(Great Extent), 4(Very Great Extent) at the end of each statement. For decision-making scores above 2.55 was accepted while scores below 2.55 were not accepted.

**Results**

The results are presented in line with the research question and null hypothesis that guided the study.

**Question One:**

To what extent has entrepreneurship education promoted poverty alleviation?

**Table 1: Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Respondents on the Extent Entrepreneurship Education has Promoted Poverty Alleviation.**

S/N	Item	Male 142			Female 142		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec.
1	Opportunities to acquire skills for job creation.	2.58	0.99	GE	3.05	0.87	VGE
2	Development of skill for self empowerments.	3.19	0.89	VGE	3.15	0.77	VGE

S/N	Item	Male 142			Female 142		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec.	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec.
3	Promotes creative ability.	3.07	0.76	VGE	3.77	0.88	VGE
4	Decreases the rate of social ills.	3.23	0.63	VGE	3.84	0.88	VGE
5	Reduction of access to formal education.	3.29	0.99	VGE	3.82	0.86	VGE
6	Promoting risk taking propensity.	3.45	0.93	VGE	3.32	0.92	VGE
7	Increasing in the number of people with new positive ideas.	3.24	0.84	VGE	3.80	0.65	VGE
8	Encourages informal value orientation.	3.19	0.74	VGE	2.82	0.61	VGE
9	Provides opportunity to change for better.	3.63	0.78	VGE	2.90	0.62	GE
10	Financing individuals with micro credit facilities start small scale business.	2.44	0.94	VLE	2.25	1.04	VLE
11	Promotes socio-economic freedom to make profit.	3.22	0.74	VGE	3.18	0.78	VGE
12	Encourages sustainable life.	3.59	0.99	VGE	3.82	0.86	VGE
13	Provides self sufficient, self reliable and self respect.	3.36	0.92	VGE	3.89	0.92	VGE
14	Provides opportunity to explore the environment.	3.62	0.84	VGE	3.59	1.02	VGE
15	Reduces high rate of school dropouts.	3.22	0.86	VGE	3.34	0.78	VGE

Table 1 revealed that apart from item 10 which is financing individual with micro credit facilities to start small scale business that received mean scores below 2.55 for both male and female respectively; items 1 to 15 received scores above 2.55. This therefore signifies that entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation to a great extent. The mean scores for male apart from item 10 which is 2.44 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.94 range between 2.58 – 3.63 with corresponding standard deviation which range between 0.63 – 0.99. The mean scores for female apart from item 10 which is 2.25 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.04 range between 2.90 – 3.89 with corresponding standard deviation which range between 0.61 – 1.04 respectively.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents to the extent entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation.

**Table 2: t-test analysis of difference between mean scores of male and female respondents on the extent entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Prob.	Dec.
Male	142	2.89	0.69					
				282	0.47	1.96	0.05	Do not reject
Female	142	3.01	0.88					

Table 2 shows that t-test value is 0.47 and the critical value of t was 1.96. Since the calculated value of t was less than the critical value of t, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that no significant difference exist between the mean perception scores of male and female respondents regarding the mean extent entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings from the research question revealed that the extent entrepreneurship education promote poverty alleviation in Enugu State in very great. This is line with Obiefuna, Hegbo, Ike-Obioha and Uwarurike (2010) who stated that entrepreneurship education exposes

the learner to cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities for self sufficient, self reliable and sustainable life in the society. They also, agreed that the extent financing individual with micro credit facilities is very low. This is not surprising. Reasons being that both males and females rarely got financial support with regards to micro credit facilities that would assist them to establish small scale business venture. This is in line with Chuwkudolue (2000) who stated that lack of financial support is one of the major problems facing poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria.

It is also worthy to note from the findings that entrepreneurship education contributes to a very great extent in packaging individuals for survival in the society. Alio (2004) and Alio (2010) noted that informal sector of economy currently seem to be one of the effective strategies for promoting skill acquisition, employment generation or wealth creation as school dropouts, young school graduates from different disciplines join this sector for survival. This means that whether formal or informal entrepreneurship education, risk taking potency is inculcated to promote socio-economic freedom and profit making tendencies.

### Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is no doubt an essential strategy for poverty alleviation. It is alarming that majority of graduates from different fields of academic pursuit roam about looking for jobs that rarely come from the government. However, the acquisition of appropriate skills (physical and intellectual) assists the individual (s) to explore their environment and engage in creative activities, hence, promote useful living after school. An idle mind is the devils workshop. When an individual is educated and meaningfully occupied with various economic activities that generate wealth the tendency for the uncomfortable social ills like, armed robbery, kidnapping, Boko Haram, rape, car snatching, abortion, human trafficking etc would be drastically reduced or eradicated. Invariably when individuals are educated and supported with finance to establish a business venture and at the same time create job for others, poverty will be alleviated.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are made.

1. The federal government should establish workshops and seminars on empowering individuals to skill acquisition for wealth creation. This will help to reduce the poverty level of the members of the society.
2. The government should establish small scale industries in both rural and urban areas. This will help to create job opportunities for those that have acquired skills and save money to start off a business venture.
3. Individuals should explore their environment to utilize the opportunity and generate wealth. This will assist in alleviating poverty in the society and eliminate evils thoughts that manifest into armed robber, rape, kidnapping, abortion, Boko Haram insurgency etc.

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