

# Entrepreneurship Skills Education: A Catholicon for Youth Criminality in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines entrepreneurship skills education as a tool for addressing youth criminality in Nigeria. One of the objectives of entrepreneurship skills education is equipping and creating in the youth the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into viable enterprises, by the application of the acquired knowledge and skills in schools. The work looks at the skills required by an entrepreneur such as ability to recognize opportunity, innovative skills and interpersonal skills. The roles of entrepreneurship skills education in curbing youth criminality such as providing youth with the risk-taking ability and innovative capabilities to set up an enterprise rather than waiting to be employed, managerial skills necessary for self-reliance, which will help in reducing unemployment and poverty and keep them off crime were discussed. As Nigeria is currently witnessing high level of criminal activities, triggered by unemployment, the study maintains that one of the most plausible ways to empower the youth and reduce criminality is via entrepreneurship skills education. The study recommends amongst others: that there is urgent need to reactivate entrepreneurship skills education in all our institutions of learning. Our school curriculum should be design in such a way that entrepreneurship skills education will be practical-orientated. Government and non-governmental organizations should embark on enlightenment campaign to sensitize youths on the need to shun all forms of criminality, and stresses the need for acquisition of entrepreneurship skills education to maintain honest livelihoods.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship skills, education, criminality, youth training

## INTRODUCTION

Crime and criminality has become part of the problems of the nations of the world, mostly prevalent in lawless societies like Nigeria. It has eaten deep into the soul and fabric of the Nigeria society to a point that the “haves” and the “have-nots” as well as the “in-between” are all involved in one type of crime or the other. While it is generally acknowledged as one of the unavoidable problems of all societies, the rate and incidence of criminality varies among youths, states and nations. The increase and prevalence of criminal activities are explainable from the political, religious, economic, environmental and psychological paradigms. While all the above schools of thought are considered cogent in sociological and criminological analysis of crime and criminality among youth, Michael, Ojedukun and

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Chinwokwu (2013) submit that socio-economic paradigm is considered more concrete in the analysis of criminality in developing nations. Obioha (2004) in his erudition explains that crime in developing nations is attributed to unfriendly socio-economic and political problems. Against this background, Iwerimie-Jaja (2013) insisted that criminality and other social vices in most developing nations are intricately associated, thus considered as the by-products of poverty. As far as making the basic ends meet continued to be cumbersome, the propensity to explore other available means such as indulging in crime will remain high and unpreventable in developing countries (Obiora, 2004). Retracing Nigerian society to the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with regards to crime situation in Nigeria, it is clear that the introduction of SAP in Nigeria and most Third World Countries (TWC) had devastating implications on people, especially the poor. The cumulative effect was observed in the pool of unemployed youths, rising food prices, declining real wages, reduction in public expenditure on basic services and infrastructure, with a resultant upsurge in crime and criminality in developing nations (Michael, 2010). The twin problems of poverty and unemployment remain a major catalyst to crime in many developing nations.

Oarhe and Egeran (2011) acknowledge the influence of unemployment and poverty on criminality and argue that as the rate of crime reportedly influenced by youth unemployment and poverty, there has been pressing need for corresponding adequate policies to address the crime situation. The emergence and use of formal agencies of social control in addressing criminality has not adequately curb crime situation. This is exemplified in the continuous increase in criminality especially at the urban centres characterized by unemployment, under employment and poverty (Ikoh, 2014 and Michael, 2010). The utilization of formal agencies of social control in crime management has not adequately addressed the crime problems because poverty and unemployment regarded as a major catalyst to crime has not been adequately addressed through appropriate policy formulation and implementation (Michael, 2010). Acknowledging that youth criminality is triggered by poverty and unemployment, Nwokocha (2011) maintains that a sincere approach to crime reduction requires a pragmatic approach that will inculcate entrepreneurship skills on the poor, unemployed and underemployed so as to become self-reliant.

With the crime situation becoming worse and majority of those arrested in alleged criminal activities especially property crime, considered to be the poor, unemployed and underemployed constituting the majority, there is urgent need to inculcate entrepreneurship skills in the masses so that they can embark on diverse socio-economic activities to generate income for their upkeep rather than waiting for white collar jobs which are reportedly in short supply (Smith, 2012). This will at a long run address criminality among jobless, poor and underemployed youths in Nigeria. Therefore, embracing entrepreneurship skill education by government, non-governmental organizations and private sectors will go a long way in helping the poor, jobless and underemployed to be involved in meaningful socio-economic activities, thereby reducing criminality which is triggered by poverty, unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. Hence, entrepreneurship skills education: a catholicon for youth criminality in Nigeria is designed to contribute its quota in addressing the pending problem of crime among the youth in Nigeria.

## **Youth and Crime in Nigeria**

The term youth has been defined by different scholars based on their background and orientations. Youth can better be seen as a period of transition from the dependency of childhood to adulthood independence and awareness of their interdependency as members in a given community. The emphasis of this is that youth constitute a period of transition from dependence to independence. Jega (2012) maintains that youth is a special group of people with strong stamina and passion for realizing set goals and objectives. The perspective at which a particular nation sees her youth has social, economic, demographic and political undertone. For the purpose of execution of Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy; the youth comprises all young persons of age 18-35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The above definitions shows that youth constitutes young people who are capable of taking social, demographic and political decisions that can be beneficial or detrimental to the society. In Nigeria, youth constitutes recognizable proportion of the population. There are energetic and this characteristic gives them advantage when it comes to learning skills and other negative activities. Michael (2010) observes that Nigerian youths are vulnerable to all forms of criminal activities because of the high level of inequality, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and lack of proper parental upbringing.

Discussion on crime has become a familiar terrain in research, academic and crime management. Its conception and meaning varies depending on scholars and orientation. Crime generally is an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law. In understanding what constitutes crime, the Webster's New World College Dictionary defines it as an act committed in violation of a law prohibiting it, or omitted in violation of a law governing it, often specific, such an act of a serious nature, as a felony. Crime entails an act or omission that violates that law of the land, which requires that the criminal be punished accordingly. Danmadami (1979) asserts that irrespective of what constitutes crime, it is clear that nearly in every instance of this social malaise, the following idiosyncrasies are present: there is always a harm brought about by human action which the government of the state desires to prevent; that among the means of prevention adopted is the threat of punishment; that legal proceedings of a special kind are employed to decide whether the person accused did in fact cause the harm, and is according to the law of the land, to be held legally punishable for doing so. This implies that in every criminal activity, the society is to some extent hurt by the acts of omission of an individual. Therefore, crime conveys something unpleasant, harmful and detrimental to the development of the society.

There are diverse types of crime in our society. Two major types are easily identified; crime against property and those that are non-property related (Obioha, 2004). The later do not exclusively rest on economic motive or property gain. Non-property crimes are non-materialistic in nature. The perpetrators are not considering the economic benefits of their actions, but may involve physical harms to the victims. Non-property crime include: murder, manslaughter, rape, assault and other criminal activities that are directly covered with harm or hurt to human life. Property crime involves illegal activities aimed at transferring or destroying of property, including cars, money, jewelry, shoes, drugs or other forms of wealth, whether or not violence is used or threatened in doing so (Wrights and Jacques,

2009). Property crime has materialistic undertone. It involves acquisition of wealth and economic gains. Property offenders may employ force or non-force in an attempt to cause economic harm to the victim, while at the same time desire economic gains. The forceful property crime include armed robbery, kidnapping (for ransom and without ransom), stealing, etc while non-forceful property crime are all manners of financial deceptive activities, cheating and swerving. All forms of property crime are aimed at achieving economic benefits by the criminals. Igbo (2007) classifies crime into four categories based on victims. These are offences against persons, assaults, suicide, murder, manslaughter etc., offences against property include armed robbery, false pretense, unlawful possession, fence, arson etc. Miscellaneous offences include gambling, pursuing, breach of public peace, bribery and corruption etc. Irrespective of the classification of offences, there are detrimental to societal development. In Nigeria, the poor, the wealthy, the employed and unemployed are involved in diverse criminal activities which require urgent attention through the approach of entrepreneurship skill education to address.

### **Socio-economic determinants of Youth Criminality**

Developing nations are engulfed with myriad of socio-economic problems such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and criminality which are evident in our society. Sociological and criminological studies reveal that crime is triggered by many socio-economic variables. While poverty, illiteracy, learning process and unemployment are social problems ravaging our society, crime is partly considered as a by-product of the above social problems. Many discussants underscored unpleasant socio-economic conditions as a major catalyst of crime in Nigeria. One of such socio-economic conditions is poverty. Poverty in Nigeria remains high despite the high economic growth it sustained during the colonial period. Nigeria is one of the developing nations with one of the highest economic growth rates averaging 7.4% over the last decade, a well-structured economy and abundant natural resources in many states of the federation (Nwagwu, 2014). In spite of the abundant natural and human capital resources, Nigeria retains a high level of poverty, with 63% of its population living below US\$1 per day, with attendant socio-economic consequences. This scenario compels the real poor but energetic to channel their arsenals to criminal activities as a means of livelihood.

Evidently, poverty which engulfs bulk of Nigerians has a close affinity with crime. Against this backdrop, Michael (2010) argues that crime and other social vices are related and are the by-products of poverty in developing society. Ihejiamaizu (2002) acknowledges the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria and stresses that it is a major motivation to crime in developing nations. Poverty in Nigeria is high and widespread and seems to be increasing on daily basis. Fakoya (2008) maintains that poverty is a motivation to crime in many societies. Poverty is not only lack of financial resources, but manifests as lack of educational opportunities, lack of meaningful employment options, poor housing, lack of hope and prejudice against persons living in poverty. From Fakoya's (2008) perspective, poverty remains a cogent factor in the sociological analysis of crime among the youths in Nigeria. Preece (2007) who describes poverty as a human condition characterized by sustained or

chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for employment of an adequate standard of living and other civic, cultural, economic, political and social rights, insists that it is an influencing factor to crime. In Nigeria, rural residents are among the poorest. There are predisposed to poverty because of lack of skills and other cultural and environmental factors which work against them. In most communities and families, resources are negligible, in order to survive, a bulk of members of the communities take into crime as the only means of survival (Alumona, 2014). Commenting on the nexus between poverty and criminality, Nwagwu (2014) avers that extreme poverty raise the likelihood of violent conflict, criminality, insecurity and plunged the society into the state of anomie. Over the past decades, criminality have undermined prospects for socio-economic development, destabilized the entire society and left millions of defenseless Nigerians at the mercy of heartless poor youths who have resorted to criminality as a means of survival. Oarhe and Egeran (2011) were alarmed at the rising poverty rate in the oil rich nation called Nigeria. Nwagwu (2014) views poverty as a product of marginalization, inequality, illiteracy, lack of appropriate skills and unemployment. The persistent incidence of kidnapping, armed robbery, vandalization of oil pipelines and Power Holding installations, and other diverse criminal activities associated with youths attest to the fact that poverty is on the increase.

In alliance to the above factor, as a motivation to crime, is unemployment which has remained a cankerworm of developing nations and a trigger of diverse social vices. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2012) cited in Nwagwu (2014) defines unemployed as members of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs or who voluntarily left work (IBRB, 2009). The above definition shows that people of various categories can be unemployed. It is quite disheartening that the federal government continued claim of strong real GDP growth rate measuring 6 or 6.5% since 2005 has not yielded any reasonable impact on Nigerians (Ogunmade, 2013). This is a clear paradox. A situation whereby, there is a decade of strong real GDP of 6.5% economic growth, and in the same era, unemployment rate continues to rise annually from 11.9% in 2005 to 19.7% in 2009, and over 37% in 2013% (Ogunmade, 2013). The apparent economic growth has not led to economic development. The level of poverty is still very high, the industries have collapsed, technological development is till at rudimental level, social inequality is high, crime rate is high, per capita income is low, our social institutions are in shambles, child mortality rate is high, Nigeria development index is still very low when compared to other nations (Asaju, Arumo and Anyio, 2014). The ILO (2012) asserts that unemployment is one of the greatest threats to developing nation stability. ILO puts the global rate of unemployment at 12.6% in comparative terms, Nigeria unemployment rate is more devastating as it stood at 37% in 2010, compared to Ghana and South Africa with the rate of 14% and 25.2% respectively. The situation in Nigeria is pathetic considering huge and abundant resources which are carted away by few but privileged classes (Michael, 2010).

Table 1 shows unemployment rate by States. With a focus on 2011, the table reveals that Zamfara, Niger, Gombe and Bauchi are among the States with the highest

level of unemployment in Nigeria while Osun, Kwara and Lagos are among the States with the least level of unemployment in Nigeria. The statistical evidence shows that the future is blurred. A society characterized with threatening statistics of unemployment is bound to witness high level of criminality. Okafor (2011) maintains that there has been a steady increase in the involvement of people in various anti-social activities and offenses in Nigeria as a result of unemployment. Ogunjobi (2007), cited in Omotor (2009) study sought to juxtapose the determination and nexus between unemployment and crime in Nigeria from 1988-1998. The technique employed for analysis was the error-correlation mechanism and conventional Granger causality. The results of the study established that a positive long-run equilibrium correlation exist between unemployment and crime series in the study area. Egbuna's (2001) observation on the connection between unemployment and crime was alarming. He discovers that unemployment results in psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility and criminal behaviour. Buttressing the above observation, Ezeani (2012) stresses that youth unemployment encourages the development of street gangs, who are deprived of legitimate means of livelihood to grow up in a society that promotes criminal behaviour. Unemployed youths in the urban centers survive by indulging in various activities such as stealing, snatching of valuables, pick-pocketing, prostitution and other nefarious activities that are detrimental to our society.

On the contrary, Smith (2012) argues that while it is an established fact that unemployment influences criminal activities, not all criminals are unemployed. He maintains that majority of white-collar criminals are gainfully employed. Nwankwo (2013) buttresses Smith's (2012) observation that besides unemployment, other factors such as greed, quests to satisfy material needs, insatiable or inordinate desire for material wealth accounts for the involvement of youths in criminality. The theoretical enterprise of Sutherland establishes that criminal behaviour has to do with learning process. Criminality from Sutherland's perspective has no biological under bearing. He posits that exposure to criminal association and definitions considered favourable to criminal tendencies, motivates a person to learn criminal traits, depending on the process of communication patterns, frequency duration, priority and intensity of learning. The emphasis of the differential association as expounded by Sutherland is that crime and the techniques of committing crime can be learned. Learning requires attention, time patience and skills. The Anomie perspective as elaborated by Merton (1968), establishes that in a capitalist oriented society, all are enjoined and encouraged to strive for success goals by established approved means. At the same time, equal opportunity to reach the laid down goals via normatively regulated and approved means are not equitably distributed. The opportunities are differentially distributed to the point that individuals will resolve to circumvent the approved means. From the Mertonian analysis, it is the way the society is structured that creates opportunities for few to achieve legitimate goals. Those in a disadvantaged situation easily resort to criminality.

### **Entrepreneurship Skills Education**

At this point, it is pertinent that entrepreneur, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship skills education be explained from the conceptual and analytical perspectives. An entrepreneur is any individual who assumes the major risk in terms of equity, time and/or career

commitment or provides value for some products or services. The products or services may be modern or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by acquiring the necessary skills and resources required for the product or services. Hisrich and Peters (2012) aver that entrepreneur is one who takes the risk of beginning a modern organization or by a way of introducing modern products, services and idea to the society. To Hornby (2010), entrepreneur is any individual who willingly makes money by beginning a business, especially when it involves assuming financial risks. The above definitions depicts that an entrepreneur is an individual who has the capability to utilize both material and non-material resources at his disposal to introduce new ideas, products and services for his benefits and the society.

Entrepreneurship is the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high great potential. It is developing the economy of nations, creating modern industries, young entrepreneurs, employment, and wealth for the individual and the society and reducing social problems (Henry, 2003). Agbionu (2008) states that entrepreneurship involves the complex processes aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth, development of the environment, eradication of unemployment, reduction in crime for national sustainability. Hisrich and Peters (1998) see entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and efforts assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

Entrepreneurship skills involve competence and capabilities that enables the entrepreneur to create something new with value by devoting the necessary time and efforts assuming the accompanying outcome. Smith (2012) states that entrepreneurship skills are competencies that an entrepreneur acquire via learning and training to enable him/her introduce or create new products or services that are beneficial to him and the society. It is concerned with knowing to create products and services through provision of resources and at the same time bearing the consequences with such creation. These skills can be learned through training.

Entrepreneurship Skills Education (ESE) refers to the inculcation and polishing of entrepreneurial competence into an individual needed to establish and successfully run his/her enterprise. Nwagwu (2014) defines entrepreneurship skills education as the process of carefully equipping entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs with an enhanced capability to create ideas, and the competence to make them happen. It focuses on the provision of knowledge, attributes and capabilities required to apply these abilities in the context of establishing a new venture. The United Kingdom Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2012) posits that entrepreneurship skills education focuses on the development, inculcation or transference and application of an enterprising mindsets and competence in the specific contexts of establishing a new venture, developing and growing an existing venture or designing an entrepreneurial Organization. Ebele (2008) states that entrepreneurship skill education is the process of imparting knowledge and competence that enables the students to plan, start and run their own businesses for their benefit and

that of the society. Atakpa (2011) sees that entrepreneurship skill education to be an aspect of education which has the capability of equipping an individual and creating in the person the mindset and innovation to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and competencies acquired in school via learning and training. Commenting further on entrepreneur skill education, Atakpa (2011) further submits that it is aimed at stimulating creativity in youths, enabling them to identify opportunities for innovation and motivate them to transform the ideas into practical and targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context for the benefit of the society. The above definition shows that entrepreneurship skill education entails teaching youths, learners and would-be businessmen, the necessary and valuable competencies required to establish and run a viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with competencies required for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of prospective trainees (Ezeani, 2012).

The hallmark of entrepreneurship skills education is the inculcation and transference of both theoretical and practical entrepreneurial knowledge to existing and potential entrepreneurs, to enable them develop new ideas and create products and render services that will be of benefits to the society. Entrepreneurship skill education is aimed at producing individuals who are able to identify opportunities and developing ventures, or revamp the existing ones for greater efficiency. The European Commission (2008) maintains that the purpose of entrepreneurship education should be to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets that benefit economies by fostering creativity, innovation and self-employment. Thus, entrepreneurship skills education is a major prerequisite for sustained economic growth and productivity in any economy. It remains an asset to any nation willing to develop and address unemployment, poverty and criminality.

### **Required Entrepreneurial Skills**

Udu, Udu and Eze (2008), Bosire and Ngaramba (2013) have identified various skills that an entrepreneur requires to open and run an enterprise or expand the existing enterprise. The researchers have chosen some of the skills relevant to this work; ability to recognize opportunities, innovative skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills.

***Ability to recognize opportunities:*** Entrepreneurship rest on the recognition of real opportunities from a spectrum of possible ideas. Entrepreneurs require the skills to enable them recognize available opportunities and utilize the opportunities so recognized to create products or services that will fill the vacuum identified (Bosire and Ngaramba, 2013). Entrepreneurs all over the globe try to identify and recognize opportunities that others do not recognize. These opportunities may include pushing up a produce that is much better than the one in existence in the market, solving a problem or annoyance that consumers have and meeting the demands that is currently not met by entrepreneurs (Lambing and Kuchl, 2007). Nwagwu (2014) observes that opportunities exist everywhere for entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs, but that the skills of recognizing the opportunities have not been adequately received by many young Nigerians. The ability to recognize opportunities requires adequate education and training. Thus, the skills to recognize opportunities can be learned, mastered and used by youth (Jack and Anderson, 2002).



***Innovative skills:*** Innovation is a potential attribute which an entrepreneur must imbibe. It involves new venturing and new ideas, new products and services, new markets and geographical locations and new techniques of production. Innovative skills are practically the types of skills that allow individuals to become innovative in what they do. Innovative skills are usually the combination of cognitive skills (such as the capability to ponder critically and creatively) and behavioural skills (ability to solve problems). Innovative skills of the entrepreneur help him to extend the inventions of the scientist from confined laboratory to society where, they are made valuable. Many Nigerian youths lack the innovative skills to become creative and this accounts for many of them considered unemployable.

***Communicative skills:*** Required communication skills do not make an entrepreneur an orator rather it makes him to be good user of words. With good communication skills, an entrepreneur comes face to face with the realities of the human situations, predicaments, feelings and relationships. An entrepreneur conceptualizes an idea about a venture and is capable of explicating it to others what the venture is all about in a good and logical manner. This implies that communication skills are imperative for the realization of entrepreneur's visions and mission. Any entrepreneur that is deficient of communication skills will see visions and dreams in vain (Udu A., Udu G. and Eze, 2008). Successful or intending entrepreneurs depend upon clear and impactful communication of their vision and mission to gather support.

***Interpersonal skills:*** This involves the ability of the entrepreneur to communicate with, understand and motivate both individuals and groups. Nwagwu (2014) asserts that interpersonal skills require the entrepreneur to work within teams in building effective relationship with others. These skills are not found among many entrepreneurs or prospective entrepreneurs. The acquisition of the interpersonal skills can be done via education and training.

### **Objectives of Entrepreneurship Skills Education**

The general objectives of entrepreneurship skills education is to ensure that Nigerians are transformed into job creators and not seekers. It is aimed at inculcating entrepreneurship skills to identify opportunities, bear the risk associated with the opportunities and create products and services. It is a tool via which socio-economic and political advancement of any nation could be attained if given adequate attention. The specific objectives of entrepreneurship skills education (ESE) as identified by Osuala (2010) includes:

1. To ensure that meaningful entrepreneurship skills education is provided for youth which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self-dependent.
2. To ensure that graduates are provided with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium scale enterprise.
3. To provide graduates with employable skills that will make them meet the human capital needs of their society.
4. To provide graduates with adequate competence in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.

5. To work towards the stimulation of industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas in the society.
6. To provide graduates with adequate entrepreneurial training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying current enterprise opportunities and capitalize on the opportunities by making products and services available to the society.
7. To provide small and medium scale enterprise with the opportunity to recruit graduates with requisite entrepreneurial skills.

If the above objectives of entrepreneurship skills education are given adequate attention, Nigeria will not only succeed in providing the nation with quality and employable graduates but the graduates will also help to create job and reduce poverty and criminality among youths.

### **Methods of Acquiring Entrepreneurship Skills Education**

In many academic discussions, the question of entrepreneurship skills is related to the argument on whether the skills can be considered as something teachable or not. Katz (1991) is of the view that entrepreneurship skills can be taught in both formal and informal setting. In most developed countries including United Kingdom, it has become a common place to ensure that entrepreneurship skills are taught in schools. In various institutions of learning, courses aimed at teaching entrepreneurial skills have become popular during the last couple of decades. The essence is to inculcate entrepreneurship skills on youths to become self-reliant upon graduation. Nwagwu (2014) submits that entrepreneurial skills can be taught. He further maintains that the unprecedented increase in demand for entrepreneurship education and training in most developing countries was to be matched by a corresponding increase in the number of courses being offered by both academic institutions and entrepreneurship agencies in Nigeria. Anderson and Jack (2000) assert that the increase in demand of entrepreneurship education is a clear reflection of the modern forms of capitalism and that enterprise education and training is capable of providing the state with an urgent response to the overt social and economic challenges.

From various literatures, it is evident that entrepreneurship involves more than starting a venture, and it also includes the development of skills to grow a venture, together with personal competencies to make the venture a success (Cooney, 2012). Gibb (1987) cited in Cooney (2012) asserts that though in some communities, while the entrepreneurial role can be both experimentally and culturally acquired, it is consistently being influenced by education and training. Thus education and training are imperative in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria and the world over. The current economic challenges which manifest in high level of unemployment and poverty, with a corresponding increase in youth criminality implies that there is need for our educational institutions not only to be saddled with the onus of teaching entrepreneurial courses, but efforts must be made to acknowledge that there is a requirement to advance from traditional “instruction” towards experiential learning techniques. This will also require the use of action- oriented, mentoring and group-work approach to ensure greater learning effectiveness in entrepreneurship behaviour. Utilizing experiential learning approach will ensure that learners develop critical

thinking, innovative risk taking and problem solving techniques which are keys in understanding social or commercial ventures. Cooney (2012) acknowledges the value and need to inculcate entrepreneurship skills via education and training. It must be acknowledged that entrepreneurship skills development process can be acquired through education and training over a period of time, which also requires the active participant of the entrepreneurs (Kutzhanova, Lyon and Lichtenstein, 2009). With the economic challenges in most developing countries including Nigeria, there is need to ensure that the school curriculum be designed to ensure that adequate entrepreneurship skills are taught. Students of all tiers of education should be taught and trained in entrepreneurship so as to be self-reliant. Abosedo, Oyenuga and Oweyele (2012) reveal that entrepreneurship education is key to addressing youth unemployment in Nigeria. In their submissions, they acknowledge that most government funded skill acquisition programmes outside the educational institutions shortly fade away after much expenditure without any positive impact on the youths.

Most of the programmes are never sustainable in that the benefactors do not sustain economic livelihood after. This implies that after the training, the objective was not achieved as trainees are not provided with funds to successfully start their own businesses that will be of benefit to them or the society. To achieve result, our institutions of learning must be mandated to ensure that students are adequately tutored with both practical and theoretical entrepreneurship skills and knowledge that will help them become self-reliant by creating jobs not only for themselves but also for others and thereby contribute to the socioeconomic development of the society. Furthermore the import of education and training on entrepreneurship skills acquisition was buttressed by Bosire and Ngaramba (2013) who observe that apart from educational institutions being mandated to socialize students on entrepreneurship skills, the Human Capital Institutional Development (HCID) in Rwanda has the onus of inculcating entrepreneurial mindset on the population and to train them on skills required to set up and succeed in their future venture. This is done via the provision of entrepreneurship education to young Rwandans. The aim of the programme of this nature is to ensure that the right skills required in starting up a business after graduation are inculcated. The situation is similar in most developing countries with conscious effort towards addressing the myriads of social problems.

Okoye (2010), Ademola (2012) and Adeoti (2013) agree that entrepreneurship skills can be made available to youths in Nigeria through educational institutions. Of particular note, Okoye (2010), while stressing the contribution of educational institutions to entrepreneur development laments that the culture of creativity which was prominent among pupils in primary schools in Nigeria had collapsed. He recalled that in the early 1980s, pupils were taught “local craft” and were encouraged to produce materials locally. Pupils imbibed the culture of using their hands to work. The effort was geared towards developing the culture of creativity. A similar trend was observed at the secondary school. The culture was not sustained partly because it was later commercialized or monetized; school administrators in the nearest future preferred pupils and students bringing money rather than encouraging them to become creative. Also, pupils and students who were creative and innovative in developing material items were not encouraged to continue. Materials

gotten were sold to future students for resubmission by the school administrators that eventually killed the creativity in terms of local craft in both primary and secondary schools. Okoye (2010) however, notes that such creative and innovative culture can be revived through appropriate policy formulation. On his part Ademola (2012) observed with dismay the collapse of introductory technology skills that was acquired in the past decades in secondary schools. Students were taught and trained on how to become self-employed after graduation. The introductory laboratories were not sustained and the objective was defeated. In a positive manner, Ademola (2012) maintains that with the current drive towards self-reliance and self-employment, it is imperative that such training be revived.

Adeoti (2013) avers that it is quite imperative for entrepreneurship skills to be taught to pupils and students at secondary and tertiary levels. The submission of these scholars is that our educational institution if adequately equipped can inculcate entrepreneurship skills on youths at our institutions of learning. This implies that entrepreneurship skills can actually be acquired through learning and training in different institutions. Ademola (2012), Ojo, Abayomi and Odozi (2014) have eruditely identified the methods of acquiring entrepreneurship skills education (ESE). These methods include- Teaching Strategy (TS), Excursion strategy (ES), Group Learning Strategy (GLS), experimental and industrial training strategy. All these techniques are beneficial to the entrepreneurs for self-reliance.

### **The Role of Entrepreneurship Education in Reducing Youth Criminality in Nigeria**

Considering the present socio-economic challenges facing many nations across the globe, the notion of engendering greater entrepreneurial activity has become predominant goal for many governments. The upsurge in criminal activities like terrorism, kidnapping, gambling, burglary and all forms of property crime that are partly blamed on poverty and unemployment can adequately be tackled through appropriate entrepreneurial skills acquisition. Nwagwu (2014), ILO (2012), Okafor (2011) are all alarmed at the nature, extent, pattern and consequences of the problems of poverty and unemployment. Iwarieme-Jaja (2013), Michael (2010) and Obioha (2004) have all acknowledged the impact of poverty and unemployment in youth criminality. Cooney (2012) has demonstrated that many of the socio-economic challenges facing the nations can be addressed via entrepreneurship skill education. The review of literature established that youth criminality is on the increase partly because of the high level of unemployment and poverty.

It is worrisome therefore, that some of the graduates from our institutions of learning are not employable and cannot even create jobs for themselves and others because they lack the requisite entrepreneurial skills. Since white collar jobs are in short supply, there is urgent need to inculcate entrepreneurship skills on youths while in schools so that they can be off the streets as they engage in meaningful developmental economic activities. When youths are adequately trained with the requisite entrepreneurship skills, they can start up and run a business successfully. Similarly those with adequate skills can be employed either in the public or private sector of the economy. This will reduce the risk of these crop of youths becoming vulnerable to criminality such as kidnapping, rape, armed robbery and other social vices which many unemployed and poverty stricken youths are currently

involved (Nwachukwu and Nwamuo, 2010; Michael, 2010). Entrepreneurship skills afford the youth the risk taking ability and innovative capabilities to set up an enterprise rather than waiting to be employed. This acquisition of skills, ideas, managerial and communicative abilities necessary for self-reliance helps in reducing unemployment and poverty through creation of valuable jobs by the entrepreneur. Going beyond employment creation, entrepreneurship skills acquisition enables graduates have self-determination to create their own future, exploit and utilize existing opportunities in the complex society (George and Archibong 2010). This according to Smith (2012) will inevitably reduce the rate of crime since many of the youths will be employed.

Criminality requires skills and energy. The youth are energetic. If a lot of energy and intelligence are channeled to criminal activities, it is crystal clear that when such energy and intelligence are guided through entrepreneurship skills education, the same energy and intelligence could be used in activities that are socially and economically approved by the society. These activities may involve rendering services that will be of value to the society. Ogunmade (2013) argues that many Nigerian graduates are not employable because they lack adequate skills. This to him makes many of them unemployable. With adequate skills acquired through education and training, it will become easy to employ them. He maintains that youths that are gainfully employed will not have time to embark on some criminal activities like armed robbery and kidnapping. Entrepreneurship skills education equips the youths with creative, innovative traits and the requisite foreknowledge to promote local technology. Trained entrepreneurs are capable of tapping from immediate environment. This will help to drive local economy, create jobs and wealth in society.

Availability of jobs and wealth will inevitably reduce the rate of criminality among youths. Ademola (2012) maintains that crime will reduce when a society has many jobs for the youth and the level of poverty is reduced. In all societies, entrepreneurship skills education inculcates in learner the mentality of financial prudence meant, investment potentials hard work and savings. Commenting on the role of entrepreneurship skills education in addressing criminality among youths, Udu A., Udu G. and Eze (2008) observe that entrepreneurship skills education is a major driver of the economy as exemplified in Japan and South Korea. With entrepreneurship skills education, Adeoti (2013) maintains that jobs will be created and the corresponding long – run social effects is crime reduction. This will be possible because poverty and unemployment which are the major socio-economic determinants of youth's criminality in most developing countries will be addressed.

Finally, Okafor (2011) asserts that if poverty and unemployment are twin triggers of crime in many developing nations, therefore if the problems are adequately addressed, it will reduce criminality. To him, this can partly be addressed through entrepreneurship education. It requisite skills if adequately imbibed and utilized by the youths, poverty will be addressed, thus crime situation will reduce. Okon and Uke (2015) say entrepreneurship skills education stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. It contributes to the development of rural areas. Youths do this by using the knowledge acquired through entrepreneurship skills education to establish small/medium scale enterprise in the rural areas, thereby discouraging youths from migrating to urban areas in search of white –

collar jobs which are in short supply. This will prevent many of the youths from becoming urban vagabonds and criminals, which is common in the urban area. Through entrepreneurship skills education, utilization of local resources is made possible. Graduates will set up and run small/medium scale enterprise, which will afford them the opportunities to use local resources thereby creating jobs for different group of youths and reduce criminal activities.

**Table 1: Unemployment Rates by States in Nigeria 2002-2011**

Abia	14.8	11.4	9.7	7.9	13.5	10.9	14.5	14.5	15.5	11.2
Adamawa	12.9	11.9	16.7	21.4	17.9	11.9	29.4	29.4	31.4	18.4
A/Ibom	12.3	14.4	14.4	14.4	15.3	13.5	34.1	34.1	36.1	18.4
Anambra	6.6	9.1	9.5	9.8	10.8	11.1	16.8	16.8	17.8	12.2
Bauchi	10.4	20.5	25.1	29.7	23.9	7.3	37.2	37.2	39.2	41.4
Bayelsa	3.5	7.1	14.0	20.9	16.0	6.9	38.4	38.4	40.4	23.9
Benue	8.2	4.8	11.7	18.6	10.8	67.4	8.5	8.5	9.5	14.2
Borno	6.4	0.8	3.6	6.3	5.8	7.8	27.7	27.7	29.7	29.1
C/River	7.9	12.0	11.5	11.1	16.9	11.8	14.3	14.3	15.3	18.2
Delta	14.9	17.1	10.8	4.5	13.8	18.9	18.4	18.4	20.8	27.2
Ebonyi	2.8	16.7	11.8	7.0	10.9	11.5	12.0	12.0	13.0	23.1
Edo	4.8	3.1	6.5	9.9	8.6	5.1	12.2	12.2	13.2	35.2
Ekiti	17.5	8.2	7.9	7.5	8.7	15.6	20.6	20.6	22.6	12.1
Enugu	15.2	16.5	21.6	27.4	20.0	11.5	14.9	14.9	15.9	25.2
Gombe	13.4	7.6	15.2	22.8	15.6	10.5	32.1	32.1	34.1	38.7
Imo	19.9	22.1	19.3	16.5	21.5	7.6	20.8	20.8	22.8	35.9
Jigawa	6.1	20.5	19.8	19.1	21.6	17.4	26.5	26.5	28.5	35.9
Kaduna	8.4	19.6	15.9	12.1	14.1	5.9	11.6	11.6	12.6	30.3
Kano	12.8	25.9	22.5	19.1	19.4	12.7	27.6	27.6	29.6	21.3
Katsina	10.4	20.3	22.1	23.8	19.3	5.8	37.3	37.3	39.3	28.1
Kebbi	12.3	19.8	19.9	19.9	15.2	11.8	12.0	12.0	13.0	25.3
Kogi	19.9	14.9	11.8	8.7	12.5	16.5	19.0	19.0	21.0	14.4
Kwara	8.8	5.4	4.2	2.9	7.5	16.4	11.0	11.0	12.0	7.1
Lagos	8.0	25.6	16.1	6.5	15.5	10.2	19.5	19.5	20.5	8.3
Nasarawa	1.6	5.1	6.9	8.7	8.1	7.6	10.1	10.1	11.1	36.5
Niger	6.3	6.7	3.5	0.2	3.6	17.0	11.9	11.9	12.9	39.4
Ogun	9.2	1.3	1.9	2.5	2.3	3.9	8.5	8.5	9.5	22.9
Ondo	16.8	7.3	6.8	6.2	6.7	5.8	14.9	14.9	16.9	12.5
Osun	1.0	0.4	1.2	1.9	2.7	6.3	12.6	12.6	13.6	3.0
Oyo	7.0	0.8	3.1	5.3	4.3	6.5	14.9	14.9	15.9	8.9
Plateau	11.8	0.4	1.6	2.8	2.9	8.7	7.1	7.1	8.1	25.3
Rivers	6.6	15.3	11.2	7.0	25.0	4.7	27.9	27.9	29.9	25.5
Sokoto	4.1	4.9	4.5	4.1	6.4	12.1	22.4	22.4	24.4	17.9
Taraba	16.8	23.8	13.6	3.4	14.0	5.9	26.8	26.8	28.8	12.7
Yobe	15.0	12.1	10.7	8.0	13.6	19.9	27.3	27.3	29.3	35.6
Zamfara	46.4	71.5	61.3	51.1	50.8	12.8	13.3	13.3	14.3	42.6
FCT	14.4	5.3	5.9	6.5	16.4	16.4	21.5	21.5	23.5	21.1
Nigeria	12.6	14.8	13.4	11.9	13.7	14.6	19.7	19.7	21.5	23.9

**Source:** NBS (2010); CBN Annual Report and Statement of Account

### **Challenges of Acquiring Entrepreneurship Skills Education in Nigeria**

Every programme or policy in Nigeria is always confronted with many challenges. Challenges are not peculiar to Nigeria, as all societies of the world have difficulties implementing programmes. Udu A., Udu G. and Eze (2008), Nwagwu (2014) have all agreed that the problem of most developing countries is the implementation of programmes that are carefully designed by experts. The constraints to the entrepreneurship skills education have inevitably prevented the full realization of the objectives of the programme. The ongoing dichotomy between the polytechnic graduates and the university graduates is not in any way helping

matters in this direction. To attain a status of sustained economy, Nigeria should see the indispensable roles played by both arms of the tertiary institution and jettison any form of dichotomy. Osuala (2010), Ojo, Abayomi and Odozi (2014) have reflected on some of the obstacles to entrepreneurship skills education in Nigeria. These obstacles are:

1. Inadequate funding by government and non-governmental organizations. This is one of the major obstacles to the success of programmes and policies in Nigeria and some developing countries.
2. Ineffective programme design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme across board.
3. Poor implementation of programmes at various levels.
4. Insufficient infrastructural facilities, materials and equipment that could facilitate teaching and training of those in need of the entrepreneurial knowledge. .
5. The challenges posed on globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) have impacted our school curriculum, teaching methods, facilities, staff and equipment.
6. Insufficient competent, qualified teachers and instructors as well as supporting staff at all levels. Qualified entrepreneurship instructors required to impart the requisite entrepreneurial skills to students in Nigeria are in short supply.
7. Insufficient motivations in terms of remuneration, allowances, awards, praises, holidays etc. for existing teaching and non-teaching staff. This inevitably affects their performances, innovation, creativity and initiative.
8. Too much emphasis on theoretical rather than practical knowledge in Nigeria.
9. Endemic corruption that has ravaged our society.
10. Lack of maintenance culture in Nigeria.
11. Unwillingness of the existing entrepreneurs to transmit the requisite skills and competencies to others.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Entrepreneurship skills education is considered as a veritable tool capable of addressing the scourging problems of unemployment, poverty and youth criminality. When the Nigerian youths are adequately inculcated with requisite entrepreneurship skills via education and training, they utilize the acquired skills to explore their environments, create small/medium scale jobs for themselves and other youths. This will make them self-reliant and self-employed rather than migrating from one urban centre to another in search of white-collar jobs which are in short supply, and subsequently resorting to criminality as a means of survival. The development of entrepreneurship skills education will inevitably results in creating employment, providing rear opportunities for the youths, developing their skills, transforming them from job seekers to job creators. Based on the foregoing, the following are recommended.

1. There is urgent need to reactivate entrepreneurship skills education in all our institutions of learning, thereby preparing students to be ready for business or

- commercial ventures before leaving school.
2. Our school curriculum should be designed in such a way that entrepreneurship skills education will be practice-orientated.
  3. There is need to organize excursion programmes, seminars, conferences and training at all levels of our education so that pupils and students will have the opportunity of interacting with successful entrepreneurs.
  4. Local craft and handicraft should be re-introduced in our primary schools.
  5. Government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropist should periodically organize entrepreneurship skills acquisition training for youths and upon completion of the training, they should be assisted financially to start a business venture.
  6. The government and non-governmental organizations should embark on enlightenment campaign to sensitize youths on the need to shun all forms of criminality and stress the need for honest livelihood and need for acquisition of entrepreneurship skills education to maintain their lives.
  7. Parents, guardians, and community leaders should admonish and encourage youths to learn a trade or acquire entrepreneurship skills when on vacation.
  8. Government at all levels should take funding of entrepreneurship skills education seriously. This can be achieved via upward review of the yearly budgetary allocation to educational sector.
  9. Private organizations should be encouraged to take up the provision of entrepreneurship skills education as part of its corporate social responsibility to the nation. By so doing, youths will be engaged in lawful ventures rather than indulging in criminal activities.
  10. Teaching in this field should be encouraged by way of sending them for further training so as to be sufficiently able to impart their skills to be youths.

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