# The Impact of Entrepreneurial Studies on Students' Aspiration for Self-Employment after School in Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The study examined the impact of entrepreneurial studies in the Federal University Lafia on students' aspiration for self-employment after school. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The theoretical frame work had a combination of McClelland's psychological theory of entrepreneurship, Hagen's (1962) theory of social change, Schumpter (1934) theory of entrepreneurship innovation, and the job creation model of Offusion, Nwolodo and Dele (2010). A survey design adopted for the study drew a total of 85 respondents, all final year students, from eleven departments in the University based on convenience sampling techniques. The findings revealed that aspiration of students to be self-employed was influenced by a combination of factors including the desire to be self-reliance, ending unemployment, and the need to get rid of poverty. Respondents were highly motivated by entrepreneurial studies on topics that placed emphasis on self-employment, enhancement of creative ideas and building of self-esteem; moderately motivated by "enhancement of aspiration, and provision of practical skills for development. However, the adequacy of the programme was rated low. Respondents who opted for self- employment looked up to family members and friends for soft loans, as well as banks and cooperative societies, to raise capital. Based on these findings we recommended among others,

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improvement on entrepreneurial studies to include more practical classes, provision of adequate classroom facilities, and equipment for practical among others.

**Key words**: Aspiration, creative idea, Entrepreneur, Federal University Lafia, Self-employment.

L'impact des études sur l'esprit d'aspiration pour des élèves après l'école au travail indépendant dans l'Université fédérale de Nasarawa Lafia, State, Nigeria

#### Résumé:

l'étude a examiné les effets de l'Entrepreneurial Studies à l'Université Abomey sur les aspirations de l'auto-emploi après l'école. Cinq questions de recherche et trois hypothèses ont guidé l'étude. Le cadre de travail était une combinaison de McClelland's théorie psychologique de l'entrepreneurship, Hagen (1962) Théorie du changement social, Schumpter (1934) théorie de l'esprit d'innovation, et le modèle de création d'Nwolodo Offusion, et Dele (2010). Une conception de l'enquête adoptée pour l'étude a attiré un total de 85 répondants, tous les étudiants en dernière année, de 11 départements dans l'université basée sur les techniques d'échantillonnage de commodité. Les résultats ont révélé que l'aspiration d'élèves d'être des travailleurs autonomes a été influencée par une combinaison de facteurs, notamment le désir d'être l'autonomie, se terminant le chômage, et la nécessité de se débarrasser de la pauvreté. Les répondants ont été très motivé par l'esprit d'études sur des sujets qu'a mis l'accent sur l'auto-emploi, la mise en valeur d'idées créatrices et renforcement de l'estime de soi ; moyennement motivée par "l'amélioration de l'aspiration, et la fourniture de compétences pratiques pour le développement. Toutefois, la pertinence du programme a été jugée faible. Les répondants qui ont opté pour l'auto-emploi leva les yeux pour les membres de la famille et les amis pour les prêts, ainsi que les banques et les sociétés coopératives, de lever des capitaux. A partir de ces résultats nous avons recommandé, entre autres, l'amélioration des études entrepreneuriales pour inclure plus de cours pratiques, mise à disposition de salles de classe, et de l'équipement pour, entre autres pratiques.

Mots clés: Aspiration, idée créative, Entrepreneur, Université fédérale Lafia, l'auto-emploi.

## Introduction

Nigeria's educational system is inherited from Britain which colonized her. The Colonial educational policy was geared toward serving the interest of the colonial masters in term of supply of manpower for effective administration of Nigeria colony and protectorates (Aladekomo, 2004). Educational policy therefore was aimed at producing Nigerians who can read and write to hold certain positions such as clerks, interpreters, inspectors, etc, in the Ministries, government Departments, trading store and religious organizations. This educational policy continues well

after independence in 1960 even when Britain which imposed the system had refined hers to foster social, industrial and technological development.

In the early 1980s the importance of small scale industries in economy received the recognition of the Federal Government, just as the oil boom which started in the 1970s failed to create sustainable jobs for young school leavers and university graduates. Urban centers had started to witness large number of school leavers roaming the street in wants of what to do to earn a living. Unemployment rate had become high in the country especially among the youth. The new National Economic Policy (1981) designed on the nexus of self-employment and industrial policy, had target only the primary and secondary schools (Aladekomo, 2004). The need to include the tertiary level of education on the crusade for self-employment came years later when escalation in the rate of unemployed graduates was observed (Ewhrudjakpor, 2008). Hundreds of unemployed university graduates had to mount demonstration in front of the presidential offices to openly and expressly register their concern for being unemployed (Dabalen, Oni, & Adekola. 2000). It was obvious that education that was supposed to be a means to an end, was failing in that expectation.

Education particularly, an entrepreneurial focused tertiary education therefore plays a very vital role in the development of the economy of any nation because the more the number of young graduates that are able to be self- dependent and self-employed, the more unemployment and related poverty are eradicated (Gindling & Newhouse,2014). Encouraged by the development among the Asian Tigers, Nigeria mooted a new education policy in 2006, with inputs for compulsory entrepreneurship studies for students of higher institutions irrespective of area of specialization. The National Universities Commission (NUC) was given presidential directives by the Ministry of Education to supervise and coordinate the programme of introducing entrepreneurship education in Nigerian institutions of high learning, in collaboration with all regulatory bodies of high institutions. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) are acknowledged state-holders in the entrepreneurial programmes of studies (Onuma, 2016). Entrepreneurship studies, therefore, have been adopted as a compulsory general studies course for students in the university.

The Federal University Lafia (FULafia) was established in 2011 by the Federal Government. The University commenced her academic programme in 2012 when the first batch of students was matriculated to start classes in the initial three faculties. The University in accordance with the directive of the NUC registered students for the compulsory courses in entrepreneurial studies, with the course code of GST 221: Entrepreneurial studies I, GST 311: Entrepreneurial studies II. The general overview of the course includes identification of the nature, purpose and scope of business, basic principles of feasibility report writing, financial acquisition and management, resource management, elements of marketing and skills acquisition for selected prototype enterprises. It also includes practical aspects on a range of product preparation. Students are encouraged to develop and inculcate entrepreneurial and innovative attitude through participation in practical activities such as tye and dye, pot making, fruit canning, coconut oil preparation, table water production, cloth weaving, soap/detergent/cosmetics production, poultry,

food processing, bread making, fashion designing, interior decoration, printing, wood/metal work, restaurant management, etc.

The course objective reveals that entrepreneurial education is not only meant to equip students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies in order to be self-reliant but also to be employers of labour. This will enhance the development of the country economically, technologically and industrially. Universities were therefore saddled with the responsibility of producing graduates who will be job creators and not necessarily job seekers. The belief is that when entrepreneurial skills are infused into the students, they will graduate with a new aspiration of creating their own job, and in this context can help to accelerate economic development in the country.

Compulsory entrepreneurship study started in Nigerian universities in 2006 (Ekpo, 2010). Unfortunately there is still noticeable large-scale unemployment among Nigerian University graduates; inspite of acquisitions of entrepreneurship skills. Many commentators and scholars have provided excuses that bordered on poor impartation of entrepreneurial skills and lack of training equipment (Onuma, 2016), inadequate teachers to provide the needed appropriate skills and attitude (Ekpo, 2010). Much as these evaluation outcomes could be helpful in policy reformulation, the study failed to look at the extent to which the students (beneficiaries of entrepreneurial studies) are motivated to take up self-employment after graduation and the factors that could engender and or thwart such aspiration. As McClelland (1961) argued decades ago, there exist major motivating factors such as motives, traits and personalities that instill entrepreneurship spirit in an individual. Such inner urges enhance the aspiration to be selfemployed. Okada (2000) described these as creation of positive attitudes, and ability for rational critical thinking, development of clear vision, innovativeness and ability to assume risk. How much of such inner urge or force are injected into students (undergraduates) to have a desire for self-employment would inspire them to generate ideas and also energize them to pursue entrepreneurship dream for economic growth and achievement in life. One sure way of doing this is to ask students who benefited from entrepreneurial classes their appreciation of the course, and their willingness to practice what they were taught.

In FULafia, several attempts have been made through mounting of entrepreneurship courses (both theoretical and practical classes), to instill both entrepreneurship spirit and culture in the students. It is not known how much of such efforts have inspired students to dream dreams of entrepreneurship. This study seeks to find out the impact of entrepreneurial studies acquired in FUlafia on students' aspirations to become self-employed and or employer of labour after school.

The paper is organized in themes beginning with this introduction. In the next theme we provide the conceptual clarification, literature review and theory. Thereafter, we turned to the explanation of methodology, where measures of variables are explained. This is followed with the presentation of results with the answer of research questions and test of hypotheses. Finally we discussed the findings; provide conclusion and recommendations as the concluding part of the paper.

# Conceptual clarification, Literature and theory

The Concept of Entrepreneurship: The concept of entrepreneurship has a long history. According to Shane and Venkataraman (2000), the word "entrepreneur" is derived from the French verb 'entrepredre'. It means 'to undertake'. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the Frenchmen who organized and led military expeditions were referred to as 'Entrepreneurs'. In the early 18th century, French Economist, Richard Cantillon used the term entrepreneur on business. Since then the word entrepreneur has been used to refer to one who takes the risk of starting a new organization or introducing a new idea, product or service to society (Frey & Benz, 2003).

According to Schumpeter (1883-1950), an entrepreneur is an individual with knowledge, skills, initiative, drive and spirit of innovation who aims at achieving goals. He or she identifies opportunities and seizes opportunities for economic benefits. In this context, entrepreneurs are not necessarily motivated by profit but regard it as a standard for measuring achievement or success. Entrepreneurship therefore, is a dynamic activity which helps the entrepreneur to bring changes in the process of production, innovation in production, new usage of materials, and creator of market (Onuma, 2016). It is a mental attitude to foresee risk and uncertainty with a view to achieving certain strong motive (Mintzberg & Waters, 1982). It also means doing something in a new and effective manner (Baumol, 1990).

Drucker (1909-2005, cited in Zoltan, 2006, p.98) described the entrepreneur as someone who "actually searches for change, responds to it, and exploits change as an opportunity". According to him, there is no one definitive profile for an entrepreneur. "Successful entrepreneurs come in various ages, income levels, gender, and race". They may differ in education and experience, but researches have indicated that most successful entrepreneurs share certain personal attributes, including: creativity, dedication, determination, flexibility, leadership, passion, self-confidence, and being smarts (Cohen, 2006). Although the typology of entrepreneur provided by Dawson, Henley and Latreille (2009) suggests various reasons that motivate people to go into entrepreneurship, many scholars have agreed that entrepreneurship is a necessary ingredient for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies (Stolze, 1999; UNDP, 2004). In the developing world, successful small businesses are the primary engines of job creation, income growth, and poverty reduction. Therefore, government support for entrepreneurship is a crucial strategy for economic development (Zoltan, 2006).

# The concept of aspiration

Aspirations literally mean 'hopes or ambitions to achieve something'. An aspiration is defined as "the perceived importance or necessity of goals" (Copestake & Camfield, 2010, p. 619). It is simply a target that one wishes to achieve (Bernard, Taffesse & Dercon, 2008). Aspirations also have something to do with wants, preferences, choices, and calculations (Appadurai, 2004, p. 67). In Rao and Walton's (2004, p. 25) argument the capacity to aspire is about how:

a group and the individuals within it succeed in reducing the costs of developing a culture of aspirations by collectively envisioning their future, and their capacity to share this future, through influencing other groups, the government, and other factors in their physical and social environment.

According to Dorward (2009), aspirations begin to be shaped early in a child's life, but are modified by experiences and the environment. Aspiration tends to decline as children mature, in response to their growing understanding of the world and what is possible, and to constraints imposed by previous choices and achievements. This decline is particularly marked for those facing multiple barriers. Motivation remains the key factor for the formation of aspiration (Appadurai, 2004)

# The concept of self employment

Self-employment may be defined as, an economic activity which one may perform on his own as a gainful occupation, and this may consist of producing and selling goods, buying and selling goods, or rendering services for a price. It is a career because one may employ oneself in business or in service activities and earn one's livelihood. With growing unemployment and lack of adequate job opportunities, self-employment has become very significant; because it is a launching pad for entrepreneurship. Dawson, Henley and Latreille (2009, p. 11) listed the characteristics of self-employment to include:

doing something on one's own to earn one's livelihood; ownership and management of activities by a person although he/she may take the help of one or two persons to assist him/her; providing employment to other persons as well; earning from self-employment is not fixed; depending on the income one can earn by producing or buying and selling goods or providing services to others at a price; the owner alone has to take the profit and bear the risk of loss; there is a direct link between the effort and reward in self-employment.

# **Entrepreneurial education**

The need for education in the developmental effort of any nation cannot be underestimated. The development of educational sector is sine-qua non for the development in all other sectors. Emetaron (2008) and Akpomi (2009) asserted that development in any society is anchored primarily on education process. Onuma (2006) is of the opinion that education is a sure pathway to liberation of the mind and the improvement of socio economic status of people. It also follows that training help individual to be empowered and escape poverty by providing them with the skills and knowledge to raise their output, income and wealth (Uzoagulu, 2012). In the light of the above stated facts, entrepreneurial education becomes very important.

The concept of entrepreneurship has a long history, but it is relatively young in academic theorizing, and is in the early stages of its developmental cycle. This creates problems in defining

the field and the scope of its research (Zoltan, 2006). However, entrepreneurship education seeks to assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment. The expectation is that such education will produce graduates with self-confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development (Emetaron & Obunadike, 2008). In this context, entrepreneurship education is designed to change the orientation and attitude of the students, and in the process equip them with the skills and knowledge that can enable them to start and manage business enterprise (Agu, 2006).

Entrepreneurial education therefore, has the objective of developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes competences and dispositions that will predispose students to be at the driving side of managing a business. In Emetaron and Obunadike's (2008) argument, entrepreneurship education deals with those attitudes and skills that are necessary for the individual to respond to his environment in the process of conserving, starting and managing a business enterprise. This is based on the fact that some basic attitudes and skills are essential for an individual to respond positively to his environment and explore its potentials. This argument suggests that entrepreneurship education prepares the students to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage their own businesses or that of other persons.

According to Bird (2002), in an educational setting, entrepreneurship education is interested in individual level competency as it attempts to make sure that students become more skilled and motivated to start and succeed in new ventures. A common concern among academics, therefore, is to get students to have more entrepreneurship skills and instill in them the development of entrepreneurial competencies so that they can be better prepared for entrepreneurship life. In their perception, Adeola and Bolarinwa (2010) regarded entrepreneurship education as a collection of formalized teaching that informs, trains and educate anyone interested in business creation or small business development. For Uzo-Okonkwo (2013), entrepreneurship education is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them.

The Wikipedia (2009) analysis on entrepreneurship education regarded it as the platform for knowledge acquisition for skills and motivation that encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. In other words, entrepreneurship is a competency-based education that focuses on knowledge and skills. Bolarin (2012) further described entrepreneurship education as the one that transverse the length of business formation, management, diversification and growth and ongoing process that equip entrepreneurs (students) with entrepreneurial skills. The European Union Commission (UNC) (2003, p.1) reported that:

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings; variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling through graduate university programme.

In the same vein the Nigeria National Universities Commission (NUC) has designed curriculum that make the teaching of entrepreneurship courses compulsory in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is aimed at preparing students for entrepreneurship life after graduation. Thus, Akpomi (2009) observed that entrepreneurial education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts. This type of education is open to all and not exclusively the domain of the high-flying growth-seeking business person. The propensity to behave entrepreneurially is not exclusive to certain individuals. Different individuals will have different mix of capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial behaviours skills and attitudes. These behaviours can be practiced, developed and learned.

Entrepreneurship has to do with introduction of changes and new ideas and the ability to control resources in a way that will satisfy the objectives of the entrepreneur. Okada (2000, pp:69 -70) argued that the role of education in developing entrepreneurial skills should also aim at encouraging the students to actualize their aspirations through:

Motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic); Awareness of self and world; Identification with universal values (beauty, justice, truth) that is important to well-being; Positive attitudes, high aptitude for rational critical thinking and timely decision-making; Clear vision, generation of progressive ideals drive and passion for success; Ability to convert vision into concrete reality; Creativity, innovativeness, courageousness and self confidence; Ability to assume reasonable risk; Mercurial ingenuity, resourcefulness patience and/or opportunities insight; Confidence and good judgment which involves taking decisions and making choices; Prudence which means due care in the management of resources especially financial; Wiliness to learn to develop a disposition to pick up and store knowledge and use it; Hard work which is an indispensable ingredient of success in business and other sectors.

Education is seen as one of the precondition for entrepreneurship development particularly in a place where the spirit and culture is very minimal. It is said to be an important determinant of selection into entrepreneurship, formation of new venture and entrepreneurial success (Dickson, Solomon & Weaver, 2008). However, it is equally assumes here that there is a positive relationship between education and individual's choice to become an entrepreneur as well as the result and outcome of his or her entrepreneurial activity.

#### **Theoretical Consideration**

Three basic ideas that explain the appearance of entrepreneurial activity have been given by Coviello and Jones (2004). The first focuses on the individual; in other words, entrepreneurial action is conceived as a human attribute, such as the willingness to face uncertainty, accepting risks, the need for achievement (as argued by McClelland, 1961), which differentiate entrepreneurs from the rest of society. The second fundamental idea emphasizes socio-economic environmental factors that motivate and enable entrepreneurial activity, such as the dimension of markets, the

dynamic of technological changes, the structure of the market and the industrial dynamic. The third factor is linked to the functioning of institutions, culture and societal values. These approaches are not exclusive, given that entrepreneurial activity is also a human activity and does not spontaneously occur solely due to the economic environment or technological, normative or demographic changes. Given this understanding, this work adopts a combination of theories and a model to explain aspiration-entrepreneurial motivation in the creation of self-employment. These include McClelland's psychological theory of entrepreneurship, Hagen's (1962) theory of social change; Schumpter (1934) theory of entrepreneurship innovation and the model of job creation credited to Offusion, Nwolodo and Dele (2010).

## McClelland's psychological theory of entrepreneurship

The theory propounded by McClelland (1961) argued that traits, motives and personalities are major motivating factors that instill entrepreneurship spirit in an individual. The psychologist was of the view that there is an inner urge in someone that makes an entrepreneur to desire for a change of status and environment that may lead to innovation. In this context, the inner urge or force should be injected into students (undergraduates) to see a desire for a change of status that inspires them to generate ideas and also energize them to pursue small scale businesses for economic growth and achievement in life.

# Hagen's (1962) theory of social change.

This theory centers on various social context that give the opportunities entrepreneurs leverage. In his contribution to the theory, Kilby (1971) observed that entrepreneurship results from "adaptation". In order for graduates to be entrepreneurs, they must be ready to adapt to their environment for easy identification of business opportunity. Adaptation metamorphoses into reality as an enterprise.

# Schumpter (1934) theory of entrepreneurship innovation

The theory credited to Schumpter was propounded in 1934 and is called by his students Schumpterism. The tenet of the theory is that a major force behind entrepreneurship is innovation. In his postulation he argued that "every growth oriented venture is a function of innovation without which theory of entrepreneurship does not exist". The implication of Schumpter's theory of entrepreneurship is that entrepreneurs (graduate entrepreneurs) must not only be innovative but should also be creative.

# Offusion, Nwolodo and Dele (2010) job creation Model

The author advocated for job creation or venture through orientation, skill development, career development, and opportunities. According to them a direct link exists between job creation, orientation, skills development, career development (self-employment) and available opportunities. They maintained that students while in school will acquire necessary training and

skills, identify an opportunity to exploit and eventual creation of their venture. Hence the need to incorporate and fully integrate entrepreneurial education in schools to ameliorate persistent socioeconomic problems of graduates unemployment (Onuma, 2016).

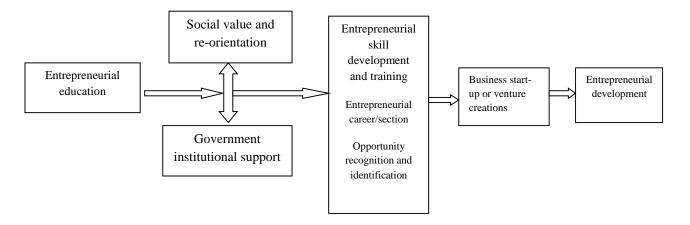


Fig. 1: Entrepreneurship Model (Source: Onuma, N, 2016, p. 20)

## Some Empirical explanations

# **Entrepreneurship and employment creation**

Entrepreneurship is often discussed under the title of the entrepreneurial factor, the entrepreneurial function, entrepreneurial initiative, and entrepreneurial behaviour and is even referred to as the entrepreneurial "spirit" (Baumol, 1990). The entrepreneurial factor is understood to be a new factor in production that is different to the classic ideas of land, labour and capital, which must be explained via remuneration through income for the entrepreneur along with the shortage of people with entrepreneurial capabilities. Its consideration as an entrepreneurial function refers to the discovery and exploitation of opportunities or to the creation of enterprise. Entrepreneurial behaviour is seen as behaviour that manages to combine innovation, risk-taking and pro-activeness (Miller, 1983).

Historically, entrepreneurship has at least two meanings. Blanchflower and Oswald (2012) provided explanations for the meaning. First, entrepreneurship refers to owning and managing a business. This is the occupational notion of entrepreneurship. Within this concept of entrepreneurship, a dynamic perspective focuses on the creation of new jobs, while a static perspective relates to the number of businesses owners. Second, entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial behavior in the sense of seizing an economic opportunity. This is the behavioral notion of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs in the behavioral sense need not be business owners. At the crossroads of behavioral entrepreneurship and the dynamic perspective of occupational

entrepreneurship, a new focus has arisen that considers new venture creation as the hallmark of entrepreneurship. In this context, an entrepreneur becomes someone who specializes in making judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources for the purpose of job creation. The word, judgmental, suggests that the decision cannot be simply a routine application of a standard rule. The idea that the perception of opportunities is subjective, but opportunities are objective, has a long history in the theory of entrepreneurship (Blanchflower & Meyer, 19994). It is most clearly expressed in early work of Schumpeter, who observed that the entrepreneur was the prime mover in economic development and his function was to innovate.

Entrepreneurship has been recognized as an important aspect of organization and economies (Dickson et al, 2008). It contributes in an immeasurable ways toward creating new job, wealth creation, poverty reduction, and income generation for both government and individuals. Thus Schumpeter (1934, cited in Audretsch, 2007) argued that entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies. Having understood the vital role of entrepreneurship in economic development, it become apparent that careful attention is needed to invest and promote entrepreneurship.

Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009) reported that about 80 per cent of the graduates find it difficult to get employment every year. This is suggestive that much has not been done in trying to bring collaboration between the entrepreneurs and the institutions. The universities, polytechnic and any other academic institution stand to benefit a lot from entrepreneurs out there. Similarly the entrepreneurs may harness and use the expertise of faculties in those institutions. This kind of interaction and interrelationship will go a long way in bridging the gap that exists between the entrepreneurs and the institutions. Aladekomo (2004) and Akpomi (2008) observed that lack of this kind of synergy shows the weaknesses, inadequacies and fallacies of the educational policies in Nigeria in attainment of its educational objectives.

In their study, Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009), suggested that education should be refined with a view to creating and enhancing the supply of entrepreneurial initiative and activities. The bottom line here is to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship in the students through education. In fact this calls for more serious adjustment of policies and new curriculum in line with demand of the present time. Dickson, et al, (2008) observed that in both developing and industrialized countries there is evidence to support a positive and significant relationship between education and entrepreneurial performance, where performance is measured as growth, and profit (earning power) of the entrepreneur. They further concluded that evidence linking general education to selection into entrepreneurship is ambiguous and cannot be classified as either positive or negative (Dickson et al, 2008).

## The challenges to self-employment

A study by Dawson, Henley and Latreille (2009) observed that majority of those in selfemployment considered it a positive choice compared with being an employee. The benefits reported most often were having flexibility, independence, and job satisfaction. About 84 per cent of the respondents thought their life overall was better in self-employment compared with being an employee and over half believe they are better off financially than they would be as an employee. The Global Entrepreneur Monitor (GEM, 2006) also observed that people entered self-employment for a range of reasons, and that more than one factor contribute to their decision. Although some may see themselves as people who run businesses, relatively few people are entrepreneurs out of necessity; the most common circumstances for entering self-employment were people seeing a business opportunity and it being normal for the type of work. The study also found that many people in self-employment were more flexibility, independence, and had job satisfaction than they thought they would as an employee. Most self-employed people had several or many customers in a typical month, and were not dependent on a former employer when starting out.

Viewed from the above discussion, we can conclude that self-employment is an important occupational option for many in the labour force. However, being self-employed is not without constraints. While "opportunity entrepreneurs" start their business venture voluntarily, that is as individuals attracted into self-employment by perceived benefits such as independence, wealth, satisfaction, and personal and family motivations, necessity entrepreneurs are 'pushed' into self-employment because of negative external forces, such as layoff and a subsequent lack of available paid-employment work (Blanchflower & Meyer, 1994).

Researchers (Carter, Gartner, Shaver, & Gatewood, (2003) have raised concern that people in self-employment may be struggling with a lack of success or wider challenges that employees do not face. A study by Audretsch (2007) observed that over 30 percent of respondents said they were not getting paid when ill and that taking time off was a big problem, and 26 per cent had a big problem with not being able to save enough for the future. The research found that around half of those applying for a loan to start a business were not given, that being self-employed caused difficulties with their application. Although the research did not identify the nature or extent of these difficulties, one suggests it may have to do with bank collateral.

Other researchers have provided analysis of entrepreneurs' successes and failures (Frey & Benz, 2003). They identified key factors for up-and-coming business owners to consider closely. Taking them into account can reduce risk. In contrast, paying them no attention can precipitate the downfall of a new enterprise. These key factors are explained below

*Motivation:* What is the incentive for starting a business? Is it money alone? True, many entrepreneurs achieve great wealth. However, money is almost always tight in the startup and early phases of a new business. Many entrepreneurs do not even take a salary until they can do so and still leave the firm with a positive cash flow.

*Strategy:* What is the strategy for distinguishing the product or service? Is the plan to compete solely on the basis of selling price? Price is important, but some scholars (Earle & Sakova, 2000)

agreed that it is extremely risky to compete on price alone. Large firms that produce huge quantities have the advantage in lowering costs.

**Realistic Vision**: Is there a realistic vision of the enterprise's potential? Insufficient operating funds are the cause of many failed businesses. Entrepreneurs often underestimate start-up costs and overestimate sales revenues in their business plans. Some analysts (Blanchflower & Meyer, 1994) advised on adding 50 percent to final cost estimates and reducing sales projections. Only then can the entrepreneur examine cash flow projections and decide if he or she is ready to launch a new business.

Beside difficulties in drawing up implementable plan, is the difficulty in accessing capital. In starting up a business there are required procedures and registration fees as well as the initial costs of the new enterprise itself. Therefore, the most important activity a government can undertake is to assist potential entrepreneurs with finding money for start-ups. There is also the problem of taxation. Governments use taxes to raise money. But taxes increase the cost of the activity taxed, discouraging it somehow especially in the face of multiple taxation. Therefore, policymakers need to balance the goals of raising revenue and promoting entrepreneurship. Corporate tax rate reductions, tax credits for entrepreneurs and tax deductions for businesses are all proven methods for encouraging business growth.

Given the reality of globalization, small businesses are becoming increasingly vital to the economy and as society continues to be more service oriented and as businesses continue to trim the numbers of employees, self-employment and business ownership will become viable and appealing goals for today's students. Therefore, educational institutions have a responsibility to include in their curriculum techniques for helping students overcome constraints of implementing their entrepreneurial skills so that they could see themselves as creators of jobs and not job seekers as provided by the NUC objectives.

# Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design that relied principally on the instrument of questionnaire. One hundred and fourty (140) final year students of the 2016/2017 academic session were systematically selected from three faculties and fourteen (14) departments for the study. Eighty five (85) questionnaires were completed and returned, thus suggesting a response rate of 60.71 per cent. Apart from the socio-demographic questions which were measured in nominal and ration scales, the questions that elicited responses on the entrepreneurship were measured on four Likert-Scales that ranged from strongly disagree (SD), which was coded 1 to strongly agree (SD), which was coded 4. All categorical variables were coded as Yes = 1 and No = 2, for the purpose of labelling.

# **Research questions**

Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. These include:

- i. What influences the aspiration of students to be self-employed after graduation?
- ii. In what ways have entrepreneurial studies in FULafia motivated students' aspiration to be self-employed?
- iii. Has entrepreneurial study in FULafia created a significant effect on the acquisition of creative skills needed by students for self- employment?
- iv. What hindrances do students perceived about self-employment?
- v. How can entrepreneurial studies in FULafia be repositioned to create significant impact on skills acquisition and motivate students towards going into self-employment

The three hypotheses were formulated in a null form:

- i. **Ho**<sub>1</sub>There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills acquired by Students in FULafia and their aspiration for self-employment.
- ii. **Ho2:** There is no significant effect of entrepreneurial education on acquisition of creative skills needed by students' for self-employment after graduation.
- iii. **Ho3**: The perception of hindrances by students has no significant influence on their aspiration toward self-employment.

## Result

Table 1: Gender and age distribution of respondents (N = 85)

Age	No	Percentage	Mean	SD
16 – 20	8	9.41	24.76	3.84
21 – 25	46	54.11		
26 - 30	24	28.24		
31 – 35	7	8.24		

#### Gender

Male	51	60.00
Female	34	40.00

Source: Field work

As shown in Table 1 the mean age of the respondents was 24.76 years with a standard deviation of 3.84 years. Majority of them (N=46 or 54.11%) were within the age bracket of 21-25 years, while very few (N=7 or 8.24%) were in the age range of 31-35 years. Majority (N=51 or 60%) of the respondents that participated in this study were male. This was not deliberate. The sample distribution was on a systematic random basis. The result suggests that the male students are in the majority among the student population.

## **Answering of Research Question**

This study proposed five basic questions at the commencement of the work. In this section these questions are re-stated in order to answer them.

**Research question one**: What influenced the aspiration of students to be self-employed?

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by motivation into entrepreneurship (N = 74)

Motivation	No	Percentage
Self- reliance	64	86.49
Alleviate poverty	2	2.70
Escape unemployment	8	10.81
Total	74	100.00

Source: Field work

Table 2 is a summary of the responses to research question one. A combination of factors is cited by the respondents. Although majority of them (N = 64 or 86.49%) cited self-reliance, others acknowledged the urgent need of ending unemployment, and rooming the street for non-available work. Unemployment breeds poverty and poverty has consequences on several aspects of well-beings such as health, payment of school fees, feeding, etc, and some respondents cited the need to get rid of poverty as the motivational factor to take to self-employment.

**Research question two**: In what ways have entrepreneurship studies in FULafia motivated students' aspiration to be self-employed?

Table 3 Respondents rating of Entrepreneurship training in FULafia

			Rat	ting (%)		
S/N	Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Motivation for self	30	44	10	1	3.21
employment	employment	(35.29)	(51.76	(11.76)	(1.18)	
2	Creative ideas	22	53	7	3	3.11
		(25.88)	(62.35)	(8.24)	(3.53)	
3	Build self esteems	21	62	1	1	3.21
		(24.71)	(72.94)	(1.18)	(1.18)	
1	Encourage aspiration	11	48	22	4	2.78
		(12.94)	(56.47)	(25.88)	(4.71)	
5	Practical for skill	4	10	56	15	2.04
	development	(4.71)	(11.76)	(65.88)	(17.65)	
6	Adequacy of programme	4	7	34	40	1.71
		(4.71)	(8.24)	(40.00)	(47.06)	

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree' D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

The recognition and the need to be self-employed are based on entrepreneurship curriculum design and the delivery by lectures. We tested to see how much of these curriculum contents constituted motivational factors that encouraged aspiration to be self-employed by respondents. In Table 2 above, six variables lifted from the entrepreneurship curriculum were operationalised and enclosed in the questionnaire under a 4-Likert scale measurement for respondents to rate. The variables

ranged from motivation for self-employment, enhancing of creative ideas, building students' self-esteem, encouraging self-aspiration, providing practical skills, and adequate delivery of entrepreneurship training programme by lecturers. As shown in the table respondents were of the opinion that entrepreneurship studies in the Federal University Lafia was highly motivational and encouraged the desired to be self-employed. This is similarly seen in the high mean rating given to the "enhancement of creative ideas and building of self- esteem". Under a mean scale of 4, the ratings of the three variables were above 3, thus suggesting the high motivation for entrepreneurship engagement of these factors.

Although the rating for "encourage aspirations" did not receive the mean score of three, it was above the average of 4 (*mean* score = 2.78). Respondents were of the opinion that entrepreneurship studies in FULafia encouraged the students to aspire to venturing into self-employment. However, the rating of "provision for enhance practical skills' and "adequacy of delivery" was low (2.04 and 1.71 respectively). Under a score of 4, these ratings were below average, suggesting that much more need to be done on these aspects to enhance entrepreneurial motivation.

**Research question three**: Has entrepreneurial study in FULafia created a significant effect on the acquisition of creative skills needed by students for self- employment?

This question is answered by Table 3 in the rating pf "practical skill". The means score of 2.04 suggested that almost a half of the respondents did not believed that entrepreneurial study impacted practical skills on them. This is worrisome as practical skill is needed for the conversion of entrepreneurial ideas into practice, and hence tangible products and or services that can generate income.

**Research question four:** What hindrances do students perceived about self-employment?

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by hindrance to self-employment and Remedy

Perceived hindrance	No	Percentage
Finance	82	96.47
<b>Expected sources of capital</b>		
Bank	72	84.71
Cooperative societies	12	14.12
Family/Friends	40	47.06
Others	9	10.59

Source: Field work

In the rating of hindrance to starting self-employment, respondents were also asked to indicate how such hindrances can be overcome. Table 5 presents a summary of the findings to this question. Respondents acknowledged the financial implication to starting up a self-employed business. While a majority of them looked up to the banks for funding of their proposals (84.71%), others had hope on family and friends (47.06%). Others saw cooperative societies as available sources to raise capital from. When expected sources of income are analysed further, we found that the percentage did not add up to a 100, thus suggesting that many respondent had more than one source of income in mind where they can raise funding for their entrepreneurship business.

**Question five**: How can entrepreneurship studies in FULafia be repositioned to create significant impact in skills acquisition and motivate students toward going into self-employment?

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by suggestion toward improving entrepreneurship education in FULafia

Suggestion	N
More practical classes	43
Entrepreneurship teachers should have skills and not theory based	12
Adequate facilities and classroom space	37
More time should be given for entrepreneurship lecture	59
Provide equipment for practical	28
Provide funding for students who have skills to start	15

In order to find answer to this question, respondents were asked to make suggestion in an open-ended question provided in the questionnaire. Responses were grouped based on similarity, as shown in Table 6

# **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one**: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills acquired by students in FULafia and their aspiration for self- employment.

The hypothesis seeks to find the relationship between entrepreneurship skills acquired by students and their aspiration for self-employment. In order to do this we subjected respondents' ratings of "motivation for self-employment" and "acquisition of practical skills" in Table 3 into Pearson correlation test. Table 7 provides the result of the bivariate relationship test.

Table 7: Bivariate relationship between entrepreneurial skills acquisition and aspiration for selfemployment by students in FULafia

Variables	Mean	Со	rrelation
Practical skills	2.04	1.00	
Aspiration for Self-employment	3.21	.72**	1.00

<sup>\*\*</sup>Significant at 0.01 level (2-tails)

The mean rating for acquisition of practical skills is low (x = 2.04), when compared with the rating for aspiration for self- employment (X = 3.21). Although the relationship between them is high and positive (r = .72), it was not significant at .05 percent (r = .72, p > .05). Thus suggesting that the level of practical skills imparted by the entrepreneurship class may relate with student aspiration for self-employment, but the level of practical skills imparted may not be adequate enough to sustain such aspiration at 95 per cent confidence level. It will be better to engage the students on more practical lessons, may be based on different types of entrepreneurial businesses, to meet up the different aspirations of the students.

**Hypothesis two**: There is no significant effect of entrepreneurship education on acquisition of practical skills needed by students for self-employment after graduation.

In order to test this hypothesis, we used the rating of "acquisition of practical skills" in table 3 as dependent variable and regressed it on other promises of entrepreneurship course, viz: motivation for self-employment, enhancing of creative ideas, building students' self-esteem, encouraging self-aspiration, and adequacy of entrepreneurship training programme delivery (as independent variables). Table 8 provides a summary of multiple regression analysis that tested the impact of the relationship.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) section of the table reveals that the model fit was significant [F (4, 80) = 47.272), P < 0.0001]. Given this finding we reject the null hypothesis that says "there is no significant effect of entrepreneurship education on acquisition of practical skills needed by students for self-employment after graduation". The  $R^2$  suggested that the model accounted for about 70.20% of the variances explained in the equation. In other words, the variables tested in this hypothesis can explain about 70.20 percent of the effect of entrepreneurship education on acquisition of practical entrepreneurship skills by students in FULafia, the remaining 29.80 percent cannot be explained by the model.

Each of the independent variables impacted positively on the dependent variable (acquisition of practical skills). This is as shown in the beta weight of .089 (Motivation), .168 (creative ideas), .108 (build self-esteem), and .540 (encourage aspiration). However, it is only the variable, "encourages aspiration" that exerted significant effect on acquisition of practical skills (β

= .540, t = 5.378, P < .0001). This finding suggests that the course content of entrepreneurship has done more on building aspiration of students. A lot more are yet to be done on other aspects of entrepreneurship education that can positively and significantly impact on practical skills acquisition by the students.

Table 8: Multiple regression analysis of effect of entrepreneurial education on skill acquisition needed for self-employment

Equation	
R = .838	
$R^2 = .702$	
Adjusted $R^2 = .688$	

Analysis of variance	df	Sun		Mean squares			•
Regression	4	28.	736	7.184			
Residual	80	12.	158	.152			
F = 47.272		Sig =	.000				
Variables	В	Std.	Beta	T	Sig	Collinear	ity Statistics
						Toler ance	VIF
Constant	685	.282	-	-2.433	.017	-	-
Motivations	.090	.181	.089	.690	.492	.819	1.221
Creative ideas	.170	.165	.168	1.029	.306	.743	1.346
Self esteem	.146	.153	.108	.954	.343	.480	2.083
Aspirations	.516	.096	.540	5.378	.000	.715	1.399

**Source:** Field data analysis

**Hypothesis three:** Students' rating of entrepreneurship studies in FULafia has no significant influence on their perception of self-employment as a mean of curbing unemployment among University graduates.

The hypothesis seeks to investigate the extent to which unemployment can be curbed by entrepreneurship training programme at least from the perception of FULafia students. In order to test the hypothesis, we used the responses of students in Table 2 (respondents perception that entrepreneurship programme can curb unemployment), and regressed it on the six variables in

table 3 (motivates, creative ideas, build self-esteems, encourages aspiration, acquisition of skills and adequacy of programme delivery). These variables are the expected outcome of entrepreneurship studies. In this context curbing unemployment through self-employment depend on the extent to which "motivation, creative ideas, building self- esteems, encouragement of aspiration, acquisition of skills and adequacy of programme delivery" impact on the students.

Table 9 is the model summary derived from the multiple regression that tested the relationship between the variables. The test of collinearity result suggested that high correlation among the variables that could have distorted the prediction between them did not exist. The ANOVA statistics revealed a significant influence between the independent variables and the dependent variable [F(4, 80) = 32.499), P = .000]. The  $R^2$  of .714 suggests that 71.40 percent of the variances were explained by the model. Given this finding we reject the null hypothesis that stated that "students' rating of entrepreneurship studies in FULafia has no significant influence on their perception of self-employment as a mean of curbing unemployment among University graduates".

However analysis of the regression result shows that only "motivation, self-esteem, self-aspiration and adequacy of the programme delivery" were significant predictors. The direction of the relation was both positive and negative. For instance, the perception of respondents on the motivational influence of entrepreneurship studies on curbing unemployment was positive and significant (coefficient, B = .243, t = 2.851, P < .05), thus suggesting that a unit increase in motivation will exert about 2 unit increase in the perception of students about the important of entrepreneurship studies in curbing unemployment. The table also indicated that the influence of self-esteem (B = -.231, p = .029) was significant and its coefficient is negative, thus indicating that the greater the number of students lacking self-esteem, the lower their perception on the ability of entrepreneurship education to curb unemployment.

Table 9: Model summary of multiple regression analysis of student perception of influence of entrepreneurial studies on curbing unemployment

Equation		
R = .845		
$R^2 = .714$		
Adjusted $R^2 = .692$		

Analysis of variance	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares
Regression	4	11.983	1.997
Residual	80	4.798	.061
F = 32.499		Sig = .000	

Variables	В	Std.	Beta	t	Sig	Colline	arity Statistics
		CITOI				Toler	VIF
						ance	
Constant	.491	.206	-	2.380	.020	-	-
Motivations	.243	.085	.377	2.851	.006	.621	1.610
Creative ideas	072	.113	112	642	.525	.570	1.753
Self esteem	231	.104	266	-2.227	.029	.722	1.385
Aspirations	.586	,077	.957	7.598	.000	.812	1.232
Practical skills	.018	.081	.028	.224	.823	.510	1.961
Adequacy	141	.067	256	-2.088	.040	.762	1.312

Source: Analysis of Field data

The "self-aspiration" variable is highly related to students' perception on entrepreneurship education curbing unemployment (B = .586, t = 7.591, p = < .0001). This finding suggests that the higher entrepreneurship education impact on students' self- aspiration, the higher their belief in the efficacy of entrepreneurship in curbing unemployment. Finally much as "practical skills" is needed, its contribution was not significant by students' perception. The low rating in Table 3 of entrepreneurship education impact on practical skill was further confirmed in this analysis with a Beta weight of .028, suggesting that a two standard deviation decrease will result in a one unit increase in practical skill acquisition by student. The finding suggests that for entrepreneurship education drive to curb unemployment through self-employment, FULafia need to deliberately enhance the "acquisition of practical skills' aspect of the entrepreneurial courses.

# **Discussion of Findings**

One of the findings of this study is the high and positive relationship between entrepreneurship study and students aspiration for self-employment. As Copestake & Camfield (2010), argued aspirations is the 'hopes or ambitions to achieve something'. The capacity to aspire is based on successfully envisioning of the future, and the capacity to share the future, through influencing other groups (Appadurai, 2004). With growing unemployment in the country, building aspiration of the undergraduate for a self-employ future becomes necessary. This study found a positive and significant contribution of entrepreneurship study in FULafia toward this endeavour.

Entrepreneurial education has the objective of developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes competences and dispositions that will predispose students to be at the driving side

of managing a business. Yet the future is uncertain, and so students need to be sufficiently motivated to aspire for the future inspite of the uncertainties. This is more so in Nigeria where economic uncertainties easily conspire to kill aspirations for a better future. One of the findings of this study is the positive relationship between entrepreneurship studies in FULafia and the students' motivation and aspiration toward self-employment. In table 2 respondents gave reason for the high mean score of 3.21 recorded in table 3 on the need to be self-reliance, alleviate poverty, and escape unemployment. This finding confirms the position of Wikipedia (2009) that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings.

In the argument of the National Universities Commission (NUC), the teaching of entrepreneurship courses is aimed at preparing students for entrepreneurship life after graduation. In this context, Akpomi (2009) observed that entrepreneurial education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts. Different individuals will have a different mix of capabilities for demonstrating and acquiring entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. We tested to see this mix and relationship in this study (tables 8 and 9). Although the need for acquisition of practical skills was highly demonstrated, availability of practical skill and entrepreneurship training prograame delivery received very low rating.

Inspite of the positive relationship between entrepreneurship education, motivation and enhanced self- aspiration among students, the perception of entrepreneurship as a necessary tool that can curb unemployment received mix rating, as some of the independent variable tested in this study did not yield significant influence on curbing unemployment. This finding is similar to that of Uzoagulu (2012) who found that some universities simply design one or two entrepreneurial courses, taught by some lecturers that have no practical experience of entrepreneurship while students take such courses as a requisite for graduation.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. The University may need to create more practical classes on entrepreneurship training for the students.
- ii. Following suggestion number one above, adequate classroom facilities may be needed.
- iii. Entrepreneurship teachers should have skills of practical on the subject areas to complement the theoretical based.
- iv. Equipment for practical should be acquired for teaching and demonstration in relevant areas of entrepreneurship education

v. In order to have the needed practical skills entrepreneurship courses may be given more credit load and the reach for the programme expanded. This is based on the wide areas of small scale businesses that University graduates may like to venture into.

#### Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to find out the impact of "entrepreneurship studies on students aspiration for self-employment after school". The study revealed the existence of high and significant aspiration among FULafia students for self-employment after school. Such high aspiration is demonstrated on the need to be self-reliance, escape poverty and unemployment which have become the bane of many Nigerian graduates. The study found that the aims of entrepreneurship education are widely embraced by the students, viz: motivation for self-employment, enhancing of creative ideas, giving practical skills, building students' self-esteem, encouraging self-aspiration. However, adequacy of entrepreneurship training programme delivery seems to be thwarted by inadequate practical skills and that can enhance the realization of entrepreneurial dream and business ownership by the students. es by the students adequacy of entrepreneurship training programme delivery". It suggests two important areas in entrepreneurship education in FULafia that need close attention.

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