



Entrepreneurship Education as an Instrument of Wealth Creation among Students in Federal Universities in South East Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward

John-Mba Roselyn Ijeoma; Onyido Chika Elizabeth; Nwabuku Nkiru Onyeka

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria.

Email: roselynjohn1990@gmail.com, conyido8@gmail.com, nwabukunkiru@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper examines entrepreneurship education as an instrument of wealth creation among students in Federal Universities in Southeast Nigeria, with focus on challenges and way forward. The paper reviews existing literature and the author's analysis. Findings reveal that while entrepreneurship education has potential to equip students with business skills, innovation, and self-reliance, its effectiveness is hindered by inadequate funding, poor facilities, theory-based teaching, negative student attitude, and lack of start-up capital. The study recommends among other things that practical training, functional business incubation centers, mentorship from successful Southeast entrepreneurs, partnership with financial institutions, and improved ODL delivery for institutions like NOUN should be sought for and put in place which will make entrepreneurship education birth wealth creation. It concludes that if properly implemented, entrepreneurship education can shift students from job seekers to job creators, thereby reducing poverty and promoting economic development in Southeast Nigeria.

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***Corresponding Author**

John-Mba Roselyn Ijeoma

E-mail: roselynjohn1990@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Education remains one of the most potent instruments for national development, human capital formation, and wealth creation. In contemporary societies characterized by increasing unemployment, economic instability, and technological transformation, entrepreneurship education has emerged as a strategic response to the challenges facing graduates and young people. Entrepreneurship education refers to the process of equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for identifying opportunities, creating ventures, and managing businesses successfully (Arogundade, 2011). Globally, higher educational institutions have embraced entrepreneurship education as a mechanism for fostering innovation, self-employment, and economic growth. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), entrepreneurship education contributes significantly to developing entrepreneurial mindsets among students, thereby enhancing their capacity for wealth creation and sustainable livelihood (UNESCO, 2022). In developed economies such as the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom, entrepreneurship education has become an integral component of university curricula, resulting in increased business start-ups and job creation among graduates (Neck, Greene, & Brush, 2019).

In Nigeria, the introduction of entrepreneurship education into university curricula was largely motivated by the alarming rate of graduate unemployment and the need to produce job creators rather than job seekers. The National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship studies as a compulsory general course in Nigerian universities in 2006. This initiative aimed at equipping students with practical entrepreneurial skills capable of fostering self-reliance and reducing dependence on government employment (NUC, 2019). Entrepreneurship education has become a critical component of higher education in Nigeria, especially in response to the rising rate of graduate unemployment. Federal Universities in Southeast Nigeria, like University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK), Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and Federal University Ndufu-Alike (FUNAI), have introduced entrepreneurship courses to equip students with self-reliance skills. The idea of creating wealth through entrepreneurship education goes past just collecting certificates. It centers on building students' ability to think creatively, take calculated risks, and manage business ventures. Ezeani and Oladele (2021) said that these Federal Universities in South East Nigeria that have established entrepreneurship centres is aimed at exposing students to practical entrepreneurial training. Through these centres, students receive instruction in

business planning, innovation management, digital entrepreneurship, vocational skills acquisition, and enterprise development.

The South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, has historically been recognized for its vibrant entrepreneurial culture. In South East Nigeria, where trading and commerce are part of the culture, this approach fits perfectly. Graduates are expected to become employers of labor rather than depend on scarce government jobs after school. The region has produced successful entrepreneurs in commerce, manufacturing, technology, and trade. The famous Igbo apprenticeship system, widely acknowledged as one of Africa's most effective indigenous entrepreneurial models, has contributed significantly to wealth creation and economic development in the region (Nwosu and Nkamnebe, 2022). Consequently, entrepreneurship education in federal universities within the region is expected to build upon this entrepreneurial heritage by providing students with modern business competencies.

Despite these efforts, graduate unemployment remains a major concern in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics reported that youth unemployment and underemployment continue to pose significant socioeconomic challenges, especially among university graduates (NBS, 2023). Many graduates still lack the confidence, financial resources, and practical exposure required to establish sustainable enterprises. This situation raises questions regarding the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in achieving its primary objective of wealth creation among university students. Furthermore, several challenges have been identified in the implementation of entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigerian universities. These include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of qualified instructors, excessive emphasis on theoretical teaching, lack of access to start-up capital, weak industry collaboration, and insufficient government support (Okoye, Nwankwo, & Chukwu, 2023). These constraints have limited the capacity of entrepreneurship education to produce the desired economic outcomes.

However, despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum by NUC, many students in federal universities in Southeast Nigeria still graduate without practical skills to start businesses. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the current approach and the challenges hindering its success as an instrument of wealth creation. This study therefore investigates entrepreneurship education as an instrument of wealth creation among students in federal universities in South-East Nigeria, focusing on its challenges and proposing practical ways forward.

Entrepreneurship education refers to the systematic process of developing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills,

attitudes, values, and competencies that enable individuals to identify opportunities, create ventures, manage resources, and generate economic value. According to Fayolle and Gailly (2015), entrepreneurship education aims at equipping learners with entrepreneurial mindsets and practical competencies necessary for venture creation and business sustainability. The process of providing students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to recognize business opportunities and start/manage enterprises. NUC defines it as education for self-employment and job creation. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is a government-driven initiative introduced in 2006 to reduce unemployment, foster innovation, and promote self-reliance among graduates (National Universities Commission, 2006). It emphasizes skill acquisition, creativity, and job creation, but faces challenges such as funding, infrastructure, and student. Entrepreneurship education refers to structured learning designed to develop entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, and competencies in students. In Nigeria, it was introduced by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 2006 to address unemployment and poverty (Yinusa, Bakare, Adebisi, and Jegede, 2020).

In the Nigerian context, entrepreneurship education was introduced into university curricula to address graduate unemployment and promote self-reliance. The National Universities Commission (NUC) designed entrepreneurship programmes to enable students acquire vocational, managerial, and innovative skills that facilitate self-employment and wealth creation (NUC, 2019). According to Fayomi and Fields (2016), the core objectives of entrepreneurship education includes the following:

- a. Job creation: Equip graduates to establish businesses rather than depend on government jobs.
- b. Innovation and creativity: Encourage problem-solving and opportunity recognition.
- c. Self-reliance: Reduce dependency on white-collar employment.
- d. Economic development: Contribute to national growth through SMEs.

Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment

Entrepreneurship education equips students with practical skills required for establishing and managing businesses. Studies indicate that self-employment remains one of the most direct pathways through which entrepreneurship education contributes to wealth creation (Fayolle and Gailly, 2015). Entrepreneurship education has become an important component of contemporary education because of its capacity to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and competencies required to identify opportunities, create enterprises, manage risks, and generate economic value. It goes beyond teaching students how to establish businesses; it also develops creativity, innovation, problem-solving ability, self-confidence,

leadership, decision-making, and adaptability. According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2006), entrepreneurship education prepares learners to become productive, self-reliant, and capable of responding constructively to economic and social challenges.

Entrepreneurship education also promotes entrepreneurial self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's confidence in his or her ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks successfully. Learners who receive practical entrepreneurial training are more likely to believe that they can develop business ideas, mobilize resources, solve business problems, and manage enterprises. Such confidence can strengthen entrepreneurial intention and increase the willingness to pursue self-employment. Studies have shown that entrepreneurship education can influence entrepreneurial attitudes, competence, self-efficacy, and intentions, although the movement from intention to actual business creation is also affected by access to finance, institutional support, social networks, and the broader economic environment (Abulude, 2025).

Wealth Creation

Wealth creation refers to the process of generating economic value through productive activities, investment, innovation, and enterprise development. It involves the accumulation of financial, social, and human capital that improves individual and societal well-being. According to Drucker (2014), wealth is created when entrepreneurial individuals identify opportunities and transform resources into products and services that satisfy societal needs. The process of generating income, assets, and economic value that leads to financial independence.

For students, it means moving from unemployment/poverty to self-sustenance through business. It refers to the process of generating, accumulating, and sustaining valuable assets over time. It goes beyond earning income, it is about building long-term financial security through investments, entrepreneurship, and disciplined financial management. In Nigeria today, wealth creation is tied to opportunities in agriculture, technology, real estate, and manufacturing. Among university students, wealth creation may manifest through business start-ups, innovation-driven enterprises, digital entrepreneurship, skill commercialization, and income-generating ventures established before or after graduation.

The key principles of wealth creation includes the following: asset building and in this principle, wealth is not just income; it is the accumulation of assets such as real estate, businesses, stocks, and intellectual property. Financial discipline which has to do with avoiding debt traps, budgeting wisely, and reinvesting profits are essential habits. Diversification referring to relying on multiple income streams reduces risk and increases

resilience. Long-term mindset creates room for wealth creation. Wealth is created gradually through consistent savings, investments, and value creation.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education for Wealth Creation

According to Ternege, Uchejeso and Philemon (2020), an important benefit is employment generation. Entrepreneurship education may enable individuals to establish businesses that create employment not only for the owners but also for other people. As entrepreneurial ventures expand, they may require employees, suppliers, distributors, service providers, and other business partners. In this way, entrepreneurship contributes to reducing unemployment and expanding economic opportunities within communities. Entrepreneurship education has therefore been identified as an important tool for wealth creation, job creation, self-reliance, and unemployment reduction.

Nevertheless, the wealth-creation potential of entrepreneurship education depends on effective implementation. Entrepreneurship education must be practical, skill-based, innovative, and connected to real business environments. It should be supported by access to finance, mentorship, incubation centres, technology, market opportunities, and favourable government policies. Evidence indicates that entrepreneurship education can improve business skills and support self-employment, but training alone may not produce substantial employment or wealth outcomes where institutional and financial support are weak (Premand et al, 2016).

Other benefits of entrepreneurship education for wealth creation includes: job creation instead of job search; poverty reduction among graduates; contribution to GDP of South East region and development of innovation and creativity.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two major theories: Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship and Human Capital Theory. These theories explain how entrepreneurship education can serve as an instrument of wealth creation among students in federal universities in South East Nigeria.

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory: Joseph Schumpeter, in 1934, proposed that entrepreneurs are the driving force of economic development. He called them "innovators" who engage in "creative destruction" - meaning they break old ways of doing business and introduce new products, new methods, new markets, and new ways of organizing industry (Schumpeter, 1934). The theory views entrepreneurs as innovators who create economic development through new combinations of resources. Schumpeter (1934) argued

that entrepreneurs introduce innovations in products, processes, markets, and organizational systems, thereby creating wealth and stimulating economic growth. Entrepreneurship education encourages innovation among students by exposing them to creative problem-solving, opportunity recognition, and business development skills. According to Schumpeter (1934), an entrepreneur is not just a business owner, but someone who has the ability to see opportunities where others see problems, take risks, and combine resources in new ways to create wealth. This theory is relevant because wealth creation among university students largely depends on their ability to innovate and transform ideas into profitable ventures.

Entrepreneurship education in federal universities in South East Nigeria is meant to develop this "Schumpeterian spirit" in students. The course should train students to think like innovators, not just job seekers. For example, instead of waiting for government job, an engineering student from FUTO can use entrepreneurship education to develop new solar inverter designs. A UNN education student can create new e-learning platforms for secondary schools. Therefore, if entrepreneurship education is properly delivered, it will produce graduates who can create new businesses, new jobs, and new wealth - which is exactly what South East Nigeria needs due to limited white-collar jobs and "sit-at-home" economic challenges.

The Researcher's opinion based on Schumpeter's Theory: Schumpeter said entrepreneurs must be innovators. But what I observe in UNN, FUTO, and other Federal Universities is that students are taught entrepreneurship as "definition of entrepreneur" and "types of business" only. That is theory, not innovation. In my opinion, we are not producing Schumpeterian entrepreneurs yet. We are producing "note-copying entrepreneurs". For wealth creation to happen, universities must train students to identify problems in South East Nigeria and create solutions. Example: "Sit-at-home" has killed Monday businesses in Onitsha and Aba. A true Schumpeterian graduate will use entrepreneurship skills to create online business, delivery service, or weekend market strategy. That is innovation which is wealth creation.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory was propounded by Schultz (1961) and further developed by Becker (1993). The theory states that education and training are investments in human beings, just like investing money in machines or land. When you invest in education, skills, and health of people, their productivity and earning capacity increase. This increased productivity leads to higher income and wealth creation for both the individual and the nation. Becker argued that skills and knowledge acquired through education are forms of "capital" that yield economic returns. The more skills a person has, the

more valuable they become in the labor market, and the more wealth they can create for themselves. According to Becker (1993), investments in education increase knowledge, skills, and competencies, thereby improving productivity and income generation. Entrepreneurship education therefore serves as a form of human capital investment that equips students with entrepreneurial skills necessary for wealth creation. Entrepreneurship education is a form of human capital investment. When federal universities in South East Nigeria teach student's skills like soap making, ICT, poultry farming, fashion design, and business planning, they are increasing the students' human capital. This increased human capital enables students to create wealth for themselves after graduation instead of depending on government jobs that are scarce. For NOUN, ODL students who are already working adults, entrepreneurship education adds new skills to their existing human capital, making them more productive and financially independent.

Human Capital Theory: Becker said education increases productivity and income. But human capital only becomes valuable when it is practical. Currently, many students graduate from federal universities with entrepreneurship certificates but zero practical skills. That means their "human capital investment" is incomplete. In my opinion, 2 units for 1 semester cannot build human capital for wealth creation. It's like teaching someone to swim on land. Students need at least 3 levels:

1. **Skill acquisition** - learn catering, graphics, coding, farming practically
2. **Capital access** - link students to BOI, SMEDAN grants before graduation
3. **Mentorship capital** - connect them to Onitsha/Aba billionaire traders for real business exposure. That is how human capital becomes wealth.

Linking Schumpeter and Human Capital Theories to the topic: Schumpeter's Theory explains the "spirit" - the innovation and risk-taking mindset that entrepreneurship education must build in students. Human Capital Theory explains the "skills" - the knowledge and competencies that increase students' capacity to create wealth. Together, both theories support this study: Entrepreneurship education develops innovative entrepreneurs + equips them with productive skills [Human Capital] which is Wealth Creation for students in federal universities in South East Nigeria [Schumpeter].

Many researchers agree that entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in tackling graduate unemployment. Several studies have examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education and wealth creation among university students.

Afolabi and Macheke (2021) found that entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial intentions and business start-up

capabilities. Their study revealed that students exposed to practical entrepreneurship training demonstrated higher levels of innovation and self-employment orientation. Similarly, Eze, Onoh, and Chukwu (2022) reported that entrepreneurship programmes in Nigerian universities positively influence students' capacity for wealth creation through small-scale enterprise development. The study emphasized the importance of practical training and mentorship.

In South-East Nigeria, Nwosu and Nkamnebe (2022) observed that entrepreneurship education complements the region's indigenous entrepreneurial culture. Their findings indicated that students who combined formal entrepreneurial education with traditional apprenticeship experiences recorded greater business success. Okoye, Nwankwo, and Chukwu (2023) identified inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient practical exposure as major obstacles to effective entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The study argued that these challenges reduce the effectiveness of entrepreneurship programmes in promoting wealth creation.

Furthermore, Ugwuanyi and Ezeani (2024) found a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and graduate employability. The researchers concluded that entrepreneurship education enhances students' ability to create self-employment opportunities rather than depending solely on government jobs. Despite these positive findings, some scholars argue that entrepreneurship education in many Nigerian universities remains largely theoretical. Okechukwu and Nwafor (2023) observed that limited access to business incubation centres and start-up funding continues to hinder the translation of entrepreneurial knowledge into business ventures.

Scholars like Adebisi and Oni (2012) observed that undergraduates who take entrepreneurship courses develop stronger interest in starting their own ventures. This matches the business-oriented nature of South East Nigeria, where the traditional "Igba boi" apprenticeship system already encourages self-employment from a young age. Studies by Akpomi (2009) and Nwachukwu (2012) show that entrepreneurship education provides technical skills, business planning, and financial literacy. However, Enyindah (2018) found that most federal universities focus on theory rather than practical business incubation.

Entrepreneurship education is not new in Nigerian universities. Historically, entrepreneurship has served as a major driver of economic development. Previous studies have established a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education (independent variable) and wealth creation (dependent variable). Existing literature suggests that entrepreneurial skills acquisition enhances students' ability to establish enterprises and generate income. The relationship between these variables is

further strengthened by factors such as innovation, access to finance, mentorship, and institutional support.

NUC made it compulsory in 2006 for all undergraduates. What existed before was mainly business education in departments of Business Administration and Vocational Education. The current approach differs because it is general studies GST 302/GST 312 for all students, not just business students. In federal universities in South East Nigeria like UNN and FUTO, this means engineering, education, and science students all take the course. The connection is that while the concept existed, the scale and target audience have expanded to reach every graduate as potential wealth creator.

Today, Nigeria faces over 30% youth unemployment rate according to National Bureau of Statistics (2024). In South East Nigeria, “sit-at-home” and limited industries make white-collar jobs scarce. Contemporary issues like digital economy, online business, and “Japa” syndrome make entrepreneurship education more urgent. Students now use phones for drop shipping, content creation, and forex trading. Therefore, entrepreneurship education must link with digital skills, e-commerce, and modern business models to be relevant as instrument of wealth creation in 2026. Contemporary economic realities have increased the relevance of entrepreneurship education. Rising unemployment, technological disruption, and economic uncertainty have made entrepreneurial competence essential for graduate survival. Digital transformation has created new opportunities for wealth creation through e-commerce, freelancing, software development, digital marketing, and online consultancy services. Consequently, entrepreneurship education must evolve to address emerging digital and global business realities.

Federal Universities in South East Nigeria

The South-East region of Nigeria has five major federal universities: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAAU), and Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AE-FUNAI). Federal university students constitute a significant segment of Nigeria's youthful population. These students represent potential entrepreneurs capable of contributing to national economic development. Entrepreneurship education seeks to transform these students from job seekers into job creators by fostering entrepreneurial competence and innovation.

These institutions are pillars of higher education, research, and innovation in the region.

Table 1: **Federal Universities in South East Nigeria**

S/NO	UNIVERSITY	STATE LOCATED	YEEAR FOUNDED
1.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN)	Enugu	1960
2.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa (UNIZIK)	Anambra	1992
3.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	Imo	1980
4.	Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAAU)	Abia	1992
5.	Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AE-FUNAI)	Ebonyi	2001

Challenges and Prospects of Entrepreneurship Education in Federal Universities, South East Nigeria

A. Challenges: The challenges facing the entrepreneurship education in federal universities in South East Nigeria includes the following:

- 1. Funding:** Inadequate funding of entrepreneurship centres. Most entrepreneurship centers in federal universities lack modern equipment. FUTO has good center but UNN's is underfunded. There is poor budget for workshops, equipment, and business incubation centers.
- 2. Poor Facilities:** Lack of entrepreneurship centers, workshops, and modern equipment in UNN, FUTO, etc. There is also the challenge of poor infrastructure and training facilities and there is the scaring acceleration of low student motivation and risk aversion.
- 3. Lack of Practical Training and Mindset:** Too much theory, little hands-on practice in soap making, ICT, farming, etc. On the aspect of mindset, students prefer certificates to skills. Many attends class just to pass GST.
- 4. Lecturers:** Some lecturers teach what they read, not what they practice. This is a very great challenge. Some lecturers teaching entrepreneurship have no business experience themselves. This points to manpower, there is shortage of qualified entrepreneurship instructors. This leads to excessive theoretical orientation.
- 5. Absence of After-School Support:** No link between university and BOI, SMEDAN, CBN grants. This is as a result of limited access to start-up

capital, weak university-industry collaboration and inadequate government support.

6. **Negative Student Attitude:** Many students see the course as “carry-over course” not serious career path.
7. **Unemployment of Graduates:** Even after training, graduates lack startup capital and mentorship.
8. **Weak Practical Component:** Most federal universities teach entrepreneurship mainly through lectures and textbooks, with very little hands-on training. Students learn concepts but rarely get chances to produce goods, run mini-businesses, or practice skills like ICT, catering, or craft work during their study period.

B. Prospects/Way Forward:

1. **Practical Training:** Make 70% practical. Students should produce soap, tie-dye, website, or farm produce before graduation.
2. **Funding Partnership:** Universities should partner with banks and South East businessmen like Innoson, Ibeto for student grants. Establishing and strengthening funding partnership with South East successful businessmen and banks will help in the expansion of SMEs and facilitate economic growth and development.
3. **Mentorship:** Invite successful Igbo entrepreneurs to mentor students monthly. This is not just to fulfill all righteousness but it will help to increase graduate self-employment, bring about the reduction in unemployment and poverty and promote innovation and creativity.
4. **Business Incubation:** Every federal university must have functional incubation center where students run real businesses on campus.
5. **ODL Model:** NOUN should create entrepreneurship channel on YouTube and virtual pitch competitions. This will enhance greater participation in digital entrepreneurship and global competitiveness.

Implications for Open and Distance Learning

For Open and Distance Learning institutions like NOUN, entrepreneurship education must be practical despite distance. Implications are:

1. ODL institutions can provide entrepreneurship education to large numbers of learners irrespective of geographical location. For instance, there can be virtual business plan competition for students across study centers.
2. Digital learning platforms facilitate access to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. For instance the use of video demonstrations for skills like catering, phone repairs, graphic design.
3. Online business simulations, virtual mentorship, and digital incubation programmes can enhance entrepreneurial competence among distance learners.

4. Beyond the online and onsite trainings which is theoretical, the ODL Centres can partner with local businesses near each study center for student attachment.
5. Develop mobile apps for tracking students' mini businesses during study.

Institutions such as the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) can leverage technology to promote entrepreneurship education and wealth creation among students.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education has strong potential as an instrument of wealth creation among students in federal universities in South East Nigeria. The review shows that if students are properly trained with practical skills, innovative mindset, and business management knowledge, they can become job creators instead of job seekers after graduation. However, the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in the study area is currently limited by several challenges. These include inadequate funding, poor facilities, lack of practical training, negative student attitude, and insufficient mentorship. The current theory-based approach without link to funding agencies and real business practice makes the course less impactful. The study established that entrepreneurship education contributes significantly to self-employment, job creation, innovation, and economic development.

Therefore, for entrepreneurship education to truly serve as an instrument of wealth creation, federal universities in South East Nigeria must move from theory to practice. Students must graduate with not just certificates, but with skills, business plans, and access to startup support. When this happens, graduate unemployment will reduce, poverty will decrease, and economic development in South East Nigeria will improve.

Findings:

1. South East already has indigenous entrepreneurship model. Igbo boys serve masters for 5-7 years, learn trade, then get “settlement capital” to start own business. Federal universities can adapt this model. Final year students should “serve” in business incubation centers for 1 year before graduation. Furthermore, integrating aspects of the Igbo apprenticeship system into university entrepreneurship programmes may enhance practical business competence among students.
2. As ODL students, many NOUN students are traders, artisans, and working adults already. Entrepreneurship education for NOUN should not copy regular university theory. It should use WhatsApp groups, YouTube videos, and weekend physical practice at study centers. This will turn their

existing trading experience into formal human capital.

3. Government spends millions on entrepreneurship education, but 90% goes to salaries and seminars. Very little goes to buying equipment or giving students startup capital. Until universities have functional “student business bank” like we have in USA, wealth creation will remain theory.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal universities should ensure that 70% of entrepreneurship courses are practical. Students should produce real products like soap, tie-dye, websites, or run mini farms on campus before graduation.
2. This study recommends that Federal universities should strengthen practical entrepreneurship training through workshops, internships, and business incubation programmes.
3. Government, NUC, and university management should provide sufficient funds to equip entrepreneurship centers with modern equipment and materials for skill acquisition. It also recommends that financial institutions should provide accessible start-up loans for student entrepreneurs. That the government should increase funding for entrepreneurship centres and innovation hubs.
4. It recommends that mentorship programmes should be developed to guide aspiring student entrepreneurs. Also that Universities should establish stronger partnerships with industries and successful entrepreneurs. So Universities should partner with successful South East entrepreneurs like Innoson, Ibeto, and market leaders in Onitsha and Aba to mentor students and offer internship opportunities.
5. Universities should collaborate with BOI, SMEDAN, CBN, and commercial banks to create easy access to loans and grants for graduating students with viable business plans.
6. Students should be sensitized through seminars and campaigns to see entrepreneurship education as a serious career path, not just a “carry-over GST course”.
7. For NOUN and other distance learning institutions, entrepreneurship education should use video demonstrations, virtual business simulation, and partnership with local businesses near study centers for practical attachment.
8. That entrepreneurship curricula of Universities in the South East of Nigeria and in general should incorporate digital entrepreneurship and emerging technologies.
9. That the NUC and Federal Ministry of Education should recruit qualified entrepreneurship educators and continuously be trained and retrained.
10. That Universities should integrate indigenous entrepreneurial models such as the Igbo apprenticeship system into entrepreneurship education.

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