

## PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AMONG SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISE OWNERS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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### *Abstract*

*The study examined the perception of entrepreneurship education among Small and Medium scale enterprise owners in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population comprised of One Hundred and Twenty (120) registered small and medium scale enterprise operators under the National Association of Small Scale Industries (NASSI) and Taraba State Chamber of Commercial Industries and Agriculture (TACCIMA) who are entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of credit and loan scheme in study area. Sample size of One Hundred (100) respondents was drawn using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected from respondents using structured questionnaire and hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Chi-square ( $X^2$ ). The results of the findings revealed that, that entrepreneurship education has significant influence in preparing small and medium scale enterprise owners to be enterprising which contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. The study recommended that, the transformation of entrepreneurship education should start from primary through secondary and tertiary levels of education. Government should create an environment where exchange of business ideas is easier among SMEs owners.*

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**Keywords:** Perception, Entrepreneurship Education Enterprise.

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship education is a product of the economic challenges in the society. Its curriculum content must be responsive enough to address the obvious shortcomings of our present school system. Douglasson and Gbosi (2006) defined entrepreneurship education as the individual ability to turn ideas into action, it includes creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This ability and creativity empowers the entrepreneur in day to day life at home and in the society to achieve entrepreneurship objectives. This makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities and provides as foundation

for entrepreneurs and enabling a social and commercial activity. Douglasson and Gbosi (2006) stated that entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society.

That is why Chan (2005) remarked that global changes in recent times call for innovation of the school curriculum. Entrepreneurial education is aimed at meeting the challenges of Millennium Development Goals (MDG5). Its curriculum must also be responsive and relevant to the current and anticipated needs, problems and aspiration of the learner (Douglasson and Gbosi, 2006). Entrepreneurial education seeks to prepare people, especially youths, to be responsible, enterprising

individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial, thinkers,, who contributes to economic development and sustainable communities. The need for entrepreneurship education started emerging in the mid 1980s. There was large scale lay-off of workers and retirements as a result of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and bad economic trends in the country. During this period, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged. It has been observed that tertiary education has not properly included in the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment that will promote pride in our local endeavours and self discipline and encourage people to actively and freely take part in discussion and decision affecting their general welfare, promoting new set of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Karutko and Helseh, 2001)

Nwangwu, (2007) argued that, the failure of tertiary education to imbibe the philosophy of entrepreneurship in students has led to wastages in term of both human and natural resources. This is because, the youth and graduates from tertiary institution were not equipped with vocational skills with which they could exploit the national resources that abound in Nigeria. UNESCO (2000) stated that entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that gives students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds, it goes beyond business creation, it is about increasing youth's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. It is by this (as education and training) which allows students to develop and use their creativity and to take initiatives, responsibility and risk.

There is no single universal definition of small business enterprises. Definitions tend to vary from one country to another. What is considered small in one country may not be

small in another country. In the same country, definition also tends to vary from one period to another (Inegbenebor, 2006). Varying definitions among countries may arise from different levels of economic development and differences in economic development in parts of the same country (Sule, 1986). For example a firm that can be regarded as micro or small in an economically advanced country like United States of America or Japan given their high level of capital intensity and advanced technology may be classified as medium or even large in developing countries like Nigeria or Ghana. Definitions also changes over time owing too changes in price level, advances in technology or other considerations. Even in the same country different institutions may adopt different definitions depending on their policy focus (Anyanwu,2001). Most definitions however use size of employment, the amount of capital investment, annual sales turnover, total assets or a combination of these. (Inegbenebor, 2006). In the current industrial policy of Nigeria small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) are now defined on the basis of employment as provided (Inegbenebor, 2006). As follows:

1. Micro/cottage industries are those enterprises which have between 1 to 10 workers.
2. Small scale industries are those enterprises which have between 11 to 100 workers
3. Medium scale industries are those enterprises which have between 101 to 300 workers
4. Large scale industries are those enterprises which have 301 and above workers.

The SMEs are generally characterized by simple management structure and managed by one or very few individuals; they tend to strongly revolve around the owner – manager subjectivity in decision making and prevalence of largely informal employer – employee relationship (Ukeje, 2003).

Entrepreneurship education has been recognized as an important aspect of organization and economics (Aremu, 2010). This is because; the entrepreneurial skills acquired contribute in immeasurable ways toward creating new job, wealth, poverty reduction and income generation for both government and individuals. As such entrepreneurship education is very significant to both growth and development of any economy. Having understood the vital role of entrepreneurship in economic development, it become apparent that careful attention is needed to invest and promote entrepreneurship. This is because education is indisputably considered as the bedrock of any meaningful development (Aremu, 2004, Apomi, 2009), be it social, economic or political. With current educational curriculum which is none responsive and non functional with content interrelating and overlapping, however, entrepreneurial education can bridge the gap by equipping Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs) owners in Jalingo local government who are becoming successful and well enlightened in order to know how to manage their enterprises effectively. Therefore, this study seek to determine the perception of entrepreneurial education among small and medium scale enterprises owners in Jalingo local government area of Taraba

### Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the perception of entrepreneurial education among small and medium scale enterprises owners in Jalingo local Government area of Taraba state.

Specifically the study sought to find out:

1. Whether entrepreneurship education prepares small and medium scale enterprise owners to be responsible enterprising individuals who contribute to economic development of Nigeria.

2. The extent to which domestic skills such as shopping, cooking, laundry and housekeeping have been achieved through entrepreneurship education among SMEs owners in Taraba State.
3. The extent to which employment skills that covers prevocational skills and experience have been acquired among SMEs owners in Taraba State Nigeria.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study,

1. How does entrepreneurship education prepare the SMEs owners in Taraba State to be responsible enterprising individuals who contribute to the economic development of Taraba State
2. How does entrepreneurship education among SMEs, owners have the potentials to enable them acquire domestic skills such as shopping, cooking, laundry and housekeeping?
3. How does entrepreneurship education help in employment skills acquisition among SMEs owners in Taraba State?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference between perception of small and medium scale enterprise owners on entrepreneurship education acquired by individual entrepreneurs who contribute to the economics development of Nigeria

HO<sub>2</sub> There is no significant difference between perception of small and medium scale enterprise owners on entrepreneurship education and employment skills acquisition in Jalingo local government area.

### Methodology

The study adopted survey research design; it was conducted in Jalingo, located in the Northern part of Taraba State. The population was one hundred and twenty (120) registered

small medium scale enterprise owners with the National Association of Small Scale Industries (NASSI) and Taraba State Chamber of Commercial Industry and Agriculture (TACCIMA) in Jalingo Local Government Area. Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used to obtain a sample of one Hundred (100) respondents. The population was divided

into strata using the ten (10) wards in the study area.

The statistical tools used in data analysis included percentage mean and chi-square ( $X^2$ ) Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Items with mean of 2.5 and above were accepted while items with less than mean of 2.5 were rejected.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size of the Study

| No of reg. SMEs | Population | Sample size | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Under NASSI     | 67 SMEs    | 60          | 60.00      |
| Under TACCIMA   | 53 SMEs    | 40          | 40.00      |
| Total           | 120 SMEs   | 100         | 100.00     |

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

NASSI: National Association of Small Scale Industry

TACCIMA: Taraba State Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture

## Results and Discussion

### Research question one

How does entrepreneurship education prepare the SMEs owners in Taraba State to be responsible enterprising individuals who contribute to the economic development of Taraba State?

Table 2: Mean Rating of Responses on being Responsible Enterprising individuals as result of Entrepreneurship Education

| S/No | Statement of Item  | Mean  | Remark    |
|------|--|-------|-----------|
| 1.   | Entrepreneurial education prepares SMEs owners to be responsible enterprising individuals  | 3.13. | Agreed    |
| 2.   | Domestic skills as shopping cooking laundry and housekeeping can be achieved through entrepreneurial education   | 3.11  | Agreed    |
| 3.   | Employment skills through pre-vocational training and work experience can be achieved among SMEs owners through entrepreneurial education                  | 3.30  | Agreed    |
| 4.   | Management and social skills such as self regulation, recognition of emotions and social awareness of SMEs owners be achieved in entrepreneurial education | 1.69  | Disagreed |
| 5.   | Starting own, business is better than working for others   | 2.96  | Agreed    |
| 6.   | Small and medium scale enterprise owners have the ability to identify business opportunities   | 3.10  | Agreed    |
| 7.   | Small and medium scale enterprise owners can excel at identifying business opportunities through acquired entrepreneurial education                        | 3.24  | Agreed    |
| 8.   | Starting owner business would probably be the best way for SMEs owners to take advantage of entrepreneurial education                                      | 2.85  | Agreed    |
| 9.   | Small and medium scale enterprise owners can succeed if they start their business as individual  | 3.00  | Agreed    |
| 10.  | Entrepreneurship is highly desirable career alternative for people with entrepreneurial education  | 2.66  | Agreed    |

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The data presented in Table 2 shows that statement items had a mean range of 2.69 to 3.30. Most of the means were above the cut-off point of 2.50. The result shows that all the respondents agreed that entrepreneurship

education prepares SMEs owners to be responsible enterprising individuals, who contribute their quota to the economic development of Taraba State.

### Research Question Two

How does entrepreneurship education among SMEs, owners have the potentials to enable them acquire domestic skills such as shopping, cooking, laundry and housekeeping?

Table 3: Mean Responses on the Potentials of Entrepreneurship Education to enable SMEs owners to acquire domestic skills.

| S/No | Statement of Item  | Mean | Remark    |
|------|--|------|-----------|
| 1.   | Would it be easy for SMEs owners to own business with entrepreneurial education skills | 2.92 | Agreed    |
| 2.   | SMEs owners are more excited when they saw their ideas turns into reality              | 3.06 | Agreed    |
| 3.   | It is better to find a new company than to be a manager of the existing one            | 3.22 | Agreed    |
| 4.   | It is more beneficial to the society to have a large enterprises than small firms      | 1.94 | Disagreed |
| 5.   | SMEs owner should be actively encouraged to pursue their own ideals in their community | 2.45 | Disagreed |
| 6.   | SMEs owners meets any people with good ideas for new business                          | 3.03 | Agreed    |
| 7.   | It is employable to face and overcome obstacle with SMEs owners ideals                 | 2.97 | Agreed    |

Source: Field Survey 2016

The data in Table 3 revealed that statement items had a mean range of 1.94 to 3.22 indicating that most SMEs owners agreed to the statement, it is easy to start their own business with entrepreneurship education; with 2.92 mean range, small and medium scale owners all agreed that is joy when they see their ideas turn into reality with a mean of range of 3.06 to back up their perception with weighted mean of 3.22,

the respondents agreed that it is better to find a new company than to be a manager of the existing one. The respondents disagreed with the item that is beneficial to the society to have large enterprises than small firms. Also disagreed with a mean of 2.45 that small and medium scale owners should be encouraged to actively encouraged to pursue their ideals in their community.

### Research Question Three

How does entrepreneurship education help in employment skills acquisition among SMEs owners in Taraba State?

Table 4. Mean Responses on whether Entrepreneurship Education helped in employment skills acquisition among SMEs owners in Taraba State.

| S/No | Statement of Item   | Mean | Remark    |
|------|---|------|-----------|
| 1.   | Training and skills received through entrepreneurial education can make small and medium scale enterprises owners successful as entrepreneurs       | 4.00 | Agreed    |
| 2.   | It is advisable to allow family and friends to support one to start him/her own business  | 3.60 | Agreed    |
| 3.   | Entrepreneurship courses in the tertiary institutions can prepare people well for an entrepreneurial career   | 1.90 | Disagreed |
| 4.   | Entrepreneurial education gives better understanding of entrepreneurship as an occupation   | 3.47 | Agreed    |
| 5.   | It is difficult to teach entrepreneurship education in schools  | 2.45 | Disagreed |
| 6.   | For a successful entrepreneurship education a well function support institution infrastructure in institution to support up of a new firm is needed | 3.24 | Agreed    |

|    |  |      |        |
|----|--|------|--------|
| 7. | Entrepreneurial in tertiary institutions have helped many people to star up their own business | 2.56 | Agreed |
| 8. | Being an entrepreneur come with self-actualization   | 3.83 | Agreed |

Source: Field Survey 2016

The data presented in table 4 shows that statement items had a mean range of 1.90 to 4.00. Most of the means are above cut-off points of 2.50. The result shows that 4.00 range of respondent agreed that training and skill acquired through entrepreneurship made them very successful entrepreneurs. The respondents also agreed with mean range of 3.60 that families and friends are good supporters for them to start-up their own businesses, the

respondents disagreed with a mean range of 1.90 on the assertion that entrepreneurship courses in the tertiary institutions prepare people well for entrepreneurial career. This is may be due to lack of logistic and support of vocational training tools and equipment. And that made entrepreneurship education difficult to teach, because everything is theoretically taught instead of putting more emphasis on practicals.

**Hypothesis 1**

Table 5: Chi-Square (X<sup>2</sup>) Analysis of Mean Responses of SMEs owners Perception of being Responsible Enterprising Individual

| Variable   | N   | Critical-X <sup>2</sup> |        | DF | p-value | Remark |
|--|-----|-------------------------|--------|----|---------|--------|
|  |     | T-Cal                   | T- tab |    |         |        |
| SMEs owners , being responsible enterprising individuals through entrepreneurial education | 100 | 181.7                   | 40.1   | 27 | 0.05    | Accept |

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 5, above shows that since the X<sup>2</sup> calculated (X<sup>2</sup><sub>c</sub>=181.7) is greater than X<sup>2</sup> tabulated (X<sup>2</sup>=40.1). We reject the null hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2**

Table 6: Chi-Square (X<sup>2</sup>) Analysis of the Mean Responses of SMEs owners on Entrepreneurial Education as means of acquiring Employment Skills that cover pre-vocational skills and Experience in Taraba State.

| Variable  | N   | Critical-X <sup>2</sup> |        | DF | p-value | Remark |
|---|-----|-------------------------|--------|----|---------|--------|
|   |     | T-Cal                   | T- tab |    |         |        |
| Entrepreneurial education as source of employment skill covering entrepreneurial skills and work experience | 100 | 108.45                  | 32.67  | 21 | 0.05    | Accept |

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Result in Table 6 shows that the X<sup>2</sup> — calculated (X<sup>2</sup> = 108.45) is greater than the X<sup>2</sup> — tabulated (X<sup>2</sup> = 32.67) at 21 degree of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of significance. We now reject the null hypothesis

**Discussion of Results**

In the analysis of research question one; on whether entrepreneurial education prepare

SMEs owners to be responsible enterprising individual who contribute to the economic development of the state, the result shows that 70% of the respondents agreed to the assertion with the mean of 3.23 giving a positive perception to the statement items.

These findings agrees with Aremu (2011) who said small and medium enterprises have been considered as the engine room of economic growth and for the promotion of equitable development. The UNESCO (2008) also clearly indicated that entrepreneurship and innovation are increasingly recognized as important drivers of economic worth, productivity and employment in this present era of global competition.

The study also revealed that, majority of respondents agreed that domestic skills such as shopping, cooking, laundry and housekeeping contributes to the entrepreneurial education this findings confirms Shane (2009) research which revealed that personal development through domestic skills, builds confidence, boost morale, progress and strengthens the entrepreneurs mindset, foster a desire achieve and inspire action. The statement item 3 result shows 100% of the respondents agreed that pre-vocational skills and work experience contributes to entrepreneurial education, this may have both positive and negative perception among SMEs owners. The result of statement item 4 which deals with the management behavior and social skills such as self-regulation recognition of emotions and social awareness among SMEs owners is achievable, the result shows that only 20% of the respondents, with 1.69 mean which have negative responses or disagreed with the statement the result line with Basil (2005) who said that most SMEs particularly in Nigeria died within first five years of existence because of the poor management system. Statement item 5 revealed that, respondents have positive

perception toward to start their own business than working for others. This shows that majority of the respondents believed in their capabilities and understand the entrepreneurship education by stating up their own business.

The study revealed in statement item eleven that 2.92 mean range of respondents agreed that with prevocational skills acquired through entrepreneurship education, it would be easy for them to start their own business with little or no assistance.

Statement item 12 result in Table 3 shows that SMEs owners are more excited, when they see their ideas turn into reality with 3.06 mean range. This agreed assertion is in line with Chan (2005) who indicated that in knowledge economy, tertiary education can help the economics up to catch up with more technological advanced society. Entrepreneurial education, a means to employment skills and work experience the result of statement 18 shows that majority of respondents agreed (4.00) that skills and capabilities acquired through entrepreneurship education can make SMEs owners, a successful entrepreneurs. This result agrees with Paul (2005) who urged that entrepreneurship education is aimed to achieve functional education among SMEs owners to enable to be self employed and self-reliant. Item 19, result shows that respondent disagreed, with the assertion that entrepreneurship course in the tertiary institutions can prepare people well for an entrepreneurial career. This supported Omolayo (2006), who said, it is fact that entrepreneurship is not a new concept in Nigeria, but it is being poorly or rarely implemented. The training tools and equipment required for the studies are little or non available for the skills acquisition, so people act of starting a company, arranging business deals and risk taking in order to make a profit through the education skills acquired is not always

feasible. Item 25 shows that entrepreneurship education comes with self-actualization. This agrees with Aremu, (2010) who said entrepreneurial education is a tool for reducing unemployment in Nigeria aim at developing and exploring the effectiveness of entrepreneurial strategy in education at institutions of learning to achieving success.

### Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that, the perception among small and medium scale enterprise is positive and encouraging for business project. The entrepreneur who is not exposed to entrepreneurship education must have to sit up to meet up with the trend of events in the small and medium scale enterprise. Capacity building, especially in terms of business knowledge, self-confidence, skills and attitude, acquisition and development of entrepreneurship spirit and right business motivation, ability to set goals were found to be essentials for entrepreneurial education to be successful.

### Recommendations

In views of the finding the following recommendations were made:

1. The transformation of entrepreneurship education curriculum should start from primary through secondary and tertiary, emphasizing the cultural re-orientation and focus should be on technological studies through all stages.
2. Government should create an enabling environment that is appreciable and entrepreneurially friendly, where exchange of business ideas is easier and transferable among SMEs owners.

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