

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND EDUCATION AS STRATEGIC TOOLS FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to investigate the intensity of entrepreneurship training and education as strategic tools for poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 250 entrepreneurs and apprenticeships from five recognized local government areas in Lagos state, South Western Nigeria were selected as our respondents. Data were gathered through a self-monitored questionnaire survey. Simple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the entrepreneurship training and education and poverty alleviation. Two hypotheses were postulated to determine the relationship between technical skill and youth empowerment and between personal entrepreneurial skill and social welfare services. This study confirmed that entrepreneurship training and education are significantly related to the youth empowerment and social welfare services. Findings revealed that youth empowerment are influenced by their acquired technical skill. The study recommends effective technical education, youth empowerment, and social welfare service as a catalyst for poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Poverty Alleviation, Education.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria and other African countries, poverty is described as a socio-economic problem that affects growth and development in the region. The government of these countries have designed and embarked on several measures to reduce the degree of poverty and improve the social well-being of the people. In Nigeria, the federal government has initiated several measures and policies to reduce the level of poverty among the masses. Entrepreneurship is one the measures embraced by the government to reduce mass poverty and unemployment in the country. This study is not established to evaluate past measures of poverty reduction in Nigeria, but aim at investigating the effect of entrepreneurship training on poverty alleviation. Entrepreneurship education and training entails philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Arogundade, 2011).

The development process of any country is determined by the way the production forces in and around the economy is organized. For most countries the development of industry had depended a great deal on the role of private sector. Entrepreneurship has played a major role in this regard. This opinion is supported by Ogundele (2007) that the promotion and development of entrepreneurial activities would aid the dispersal and diversification of economic activities and induce even development in a country. Similarly, Osuagwu (2002) added that entrepreneurial development in Nigeria should be perceived as a catalyst to increase the rate of economic growth, create job opportunities, reduces import of manufactured goods and decrease the trade deficits that result from such imports.

In addition, Ariyo (2008) noted that if Nigeria wants to reach its full potential in terms of economic and social developments, it cannot afford to ignore the importance of its indigenous entrepreneurs and the contributions that they make to the country's economy. Entrepreneurship remains the gateway to sustainable wealth creation in Nigeria (Ogundele, 2000). In view of Matanmi and Awodun (2005), if Nigeria desire to move out of the disturbing high level of unemployment and ravaging level of poverty, adequate attention must be given to the growth of entrepreneurship. They concluded that Nigeria still remain in the doldrums because of the combination of ignorance, low capacity building and lack of encouragement of entrepreneurship.

The successful contribution of entrepreneurship to poverty alleviation and economic development in Lagos State depends on entrepreneurship training and orientation. Entrepreneurship, according to Ogundele (2000) is the process of emergence behaviour and performance of entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship education is a structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Another view of entrepreneurship education is the term given to someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities (Omolayo, 2006). Entrepreneurial orientation is the development of entrepreneurial skills, effective and efficient application of the skills in management of business to create a significant difference from other business, recognizing the skill and allowing it to function effectively.

Several studies on entrepreneurship concentrate on the contribution of entrepreneurship to sustainable economic development, job creation, innovation and resource allocation, but there is a little attention on effect of entrepreneurship training and education on poverty alleviation, especially in Lagos State. The success of entrepreneur in business depends on many factors including training and education, but these are often negligible. Also, most of the government efforts to reduce poverty in the country were not tailored towards entrepreneurship education and organization of training for the unemployed people in the society. These problems therefore prompt the need for current paper. The objective of this paper therefore is to examine the extent of the impact of technical skill on youth empowerment and analyse the relationship between entrepreneurial skill and social welfare service.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

H₁: There is a positive relationship between technical skill and youth empowerment.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between personal entrepreneurial skill and social welfare services.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Drucker (1985) entrepreneurship is a perceptiveness to change and the entrepreneur as one, who always searches for change, responds to and exploits it as an opportunity. Drucker notes that entrepreneurship is practice behaviour. It is a discipline and like any discipline, it can be learned. Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) noted that in the simplest of theoretical forms of studying entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs cause entrepreneurship. That is, $E=F(e)$ states that entrepreneurship (E) is a function of entrepreneur (e).

Hill and McGowan (1999) opined that, entrepreneurship is seen as a process which involves the effort of an individual (or individuals) in identifying viable business opportunities in an environment and obtaining and managing the resources needed to exploit those opportunities. Similarly, Timmons and Spinelli (2004) see entrepreneurship as the function of being creative and responsive within and to the environment. He stated further that entrepreneurship activity is a destabilizing force, which starts the process of "creative destruction" which is the essence of economic development. Ogundele (2000 and 2005) defines entrepreneurship as the processes of emergence, behaviour and performance of entrepreneurs. He notes that a focus on entrepreneurship is a focus on the processes involved in the initiation of a new organization, the behavior of such organization and its performance in terms of profits made.

Aina and Salako (2008) described entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities and takes advantage of scarce resources to exploits the opportunities profitably. It is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and efforts, assuming the accompanying financial social risks at the end receiving resulting reward.

Entrepreneurship education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business.

Alberti, sciascia and poli (2004) define entrepreneurship education as “the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth oriented ventures.

Training, according to Mullins (2010), is the process of systematically acquiring job related knowledge, skill and attitude in order to perform with effectiveness and efficiency specific tasks in an organization. He stated further that the acquisition of knowledge and skills during training is not desired for its own sake in industrial and commercial enterprises, and that it is utility that predisposes an organization to invest financial and material resources in it.

The skill required by entrepreneur can be classified into three main areas:

- i. Technical skills.
- ii. Business management.
- iii. Personal entrepreneurial skills.

Technical skills involve such things as writing, listening, oral presentation, organizing, coaching, being a team player, and technical know-how. Business management skills include those areas involved in starting, developing and managing an enterprise. The personal entrepreneurial skills differentiate an entrepreneur from a manager. Skills included in this classification are inner control (discipline), risk-taking, being innovative, being change-oriented, being persistent, and being a visionary leader among others (Osuagwu, 2006).

There is general agreement by researchers in the field of entrepreneurship that more emphasis should be placed on entrepreneurship education and training as opposed to business education. Business education has a more limited coverage than entrepreneurship education and training, which include additional topics, such as innovation and risk-taking, for example. The consortium for entrepreneurship education (2004) point out that entrepreneurship education is a life-long learning process and consist of five stage namely, basic, competency awareness, creative application, start-up and growth as depicted.

Poverty is the state of being very poor. Nweze and Ojowu (2002) assert that poverty can be categorized into three namely: absolute poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty. These three concepts formed the basis of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. Absolute poverty is a situation where an individual or household is faced with limited financial resources and as a result, unable to meet his/her or its basic necessities of life such as food, clothes, shelter and health is the nucleus of our study. In the words of Miller (1968), Wedderburn (1974), Plotnick and Skidmore (1983), World Bank, (1996) individuals, families or groups are considered to be in absolute poverty when they lack the resources particularly real income to obtain the types of diets needed to enjoy some fixed minimum standard of living determined by a given society. Relative poverty is a situation where an individual's or a household's income is less than the average income of the population in the society being considered. The result is that the individual or household has goods and services which are lower than those of other persons or households in the society (Garuba, 2010; Oladunni, (1999); Akeredolu-Ale, 1975).

In the words of O'Donnel (1997), those who are in relative poverty have their resources far lower than those possessed by average individuals or households to the extent that, they are, in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. Subjective poverty is a perception of respondents' about their standard of living. The feeling of whether one is poor or not depends on the absolute minimum standard of living below which one is categorized as poor (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004; World Bank,1996). Absolute poverty is the focus of this study because attempts made by the government to reduce poverty have led to the establishment of poverty alleviation programmes aimed at attacking absolute poverty. Furthermore, in Nigeria and many developing countries, attempts by governments to address poverty have focused more on reducing absolute poverty.

In Nigeria, most of the poverty alleviation measures or initiatives are embedded in entrepreneurship but have suffered several challenges culminating into their failure. Some of the schemes include National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). In the attempt of the Lagos State government to alleviate poverty, entrepreneurship training and education has been geared by including the education in the curriculum design and development in university. Similarly, training centers such as technical and vocational schools, and apprenticeship centers for all were established to absolve the unemployed and intending public to eradicate poverty in the state.

For example, the Lagos State government has developed Vocational and Acquisition Training Centers in all the 20 Local Governments and 37 Local Council Development Areas in the State. Therefore, the impact of entrepreneurship training in alleviating poverty by providing jobs and adequate skills, in Lagos State cannot be over emphasized.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurs as agent of social and economic change were focused upon by Ogundele and Olayemi (2004) in their call for Nigeria education curricula to concentrate on developing Entrepreneurial capabilities in Nigerians, in all Nigerian educational institutions. The objective is to ensure that Nigerian is not left behind in the global competition that is knowledge managed. Such Entrepreneurship Training will equip the people with skills for constant improvement and innovation in their undertaken. The entrepreneurship development program in Nigeria is designed to help an individual in strengthening his/her entrepreneurial motivation and in acquiring skills and capabilities necessary for playing his/her entrepreneurial role effectively.

Wiklund and Shepherd (2003), Luthje and Frank (2002), Charney and Liecap (2000) all put forward that a positive correlation exists between education and business creation. Based on Timmons and Spinelli (2004) and others who are of the opinion that entrepreneurship can be learnt, Kuratko (2003) observes the decision by many tertiary institutions in Nigeria to design and implement relevant entrepreneurship teaching programme. Entrepreneurial training and education encourages Nigerian to become jobs creator rather than job seekers. It also equips them with skills for constant improvement and innovations in their undertaken. Ogundele (2004) observes that for the success of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Nigeria require a new development approach which will release the best in the nation human capital for the economic development effort. This Ogundele (2004) calls spiritual capitalism, which will involve among others calling out the best from every Nigerians. It will also involve individual self-development where individuals are the key driver in developing themselves. These will be capped by leadership with vision. One of the major thrusts of NEEDS is, growing the private sector, and this calls for massive training and development of indigenous entrepreneurs in Nigeria, hence the demand for refocusing on training programme more importantly on entrepreneurship.

It is commonly believed that Entrepreneurship education is an absolute imperative that would make a positive contribution to improving the entrepreneurial orientation of the people. Wiklund (1999) postulated that entrepreneurial orientation consist two components, namely, action orientation, which results in actual entrepreneurial behaviour; and mental orientation or way of thinking of the small business manager, which is not necessarily put into action.

According to Alberti et al. (2004), for effective Entrepreneurship education there should be a relationship between the goals of Entrepreneurship programme, the audiences to which the programme is delivered, the contents of the Entrepreneurship courses or modules, the method of delivery or pedagogy, and finally, the assessment that will be used.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This study is conducted under the guiding light of poverty theory which falls into one of the four perspectives as stated by Ogboru and Abiniku (2011). The four perspectives are: the Conservative, the Liberal Reformists, the Radical Structural/Marxists and the Social Exclusion. The conservative theories namely: individualistic and culture of poverty posit that the poor are responsible for their poverty. The liberal reformists' perspective which deals with situational theory of poverty is hinged on the fact that poverty results from experiences that individuals or groups pass through. On their part, the radical structural/Marxist perspective argued that capitalism produces poverty due to its exploitative syndrome. The social exclusion theory is predicated on poverty resulting from people who tend to be excluded from effective participation in a society's activities due to segregation. Entrepreneurship training tends to emphasize the identification and assessment of skills, understanding of entrepreneurial process, all needed for alleviating poverty through the creation of new business and assessing other business opportunities thereby making entrepreneurs create an employment opportunities and not seekers of employment opportunities.

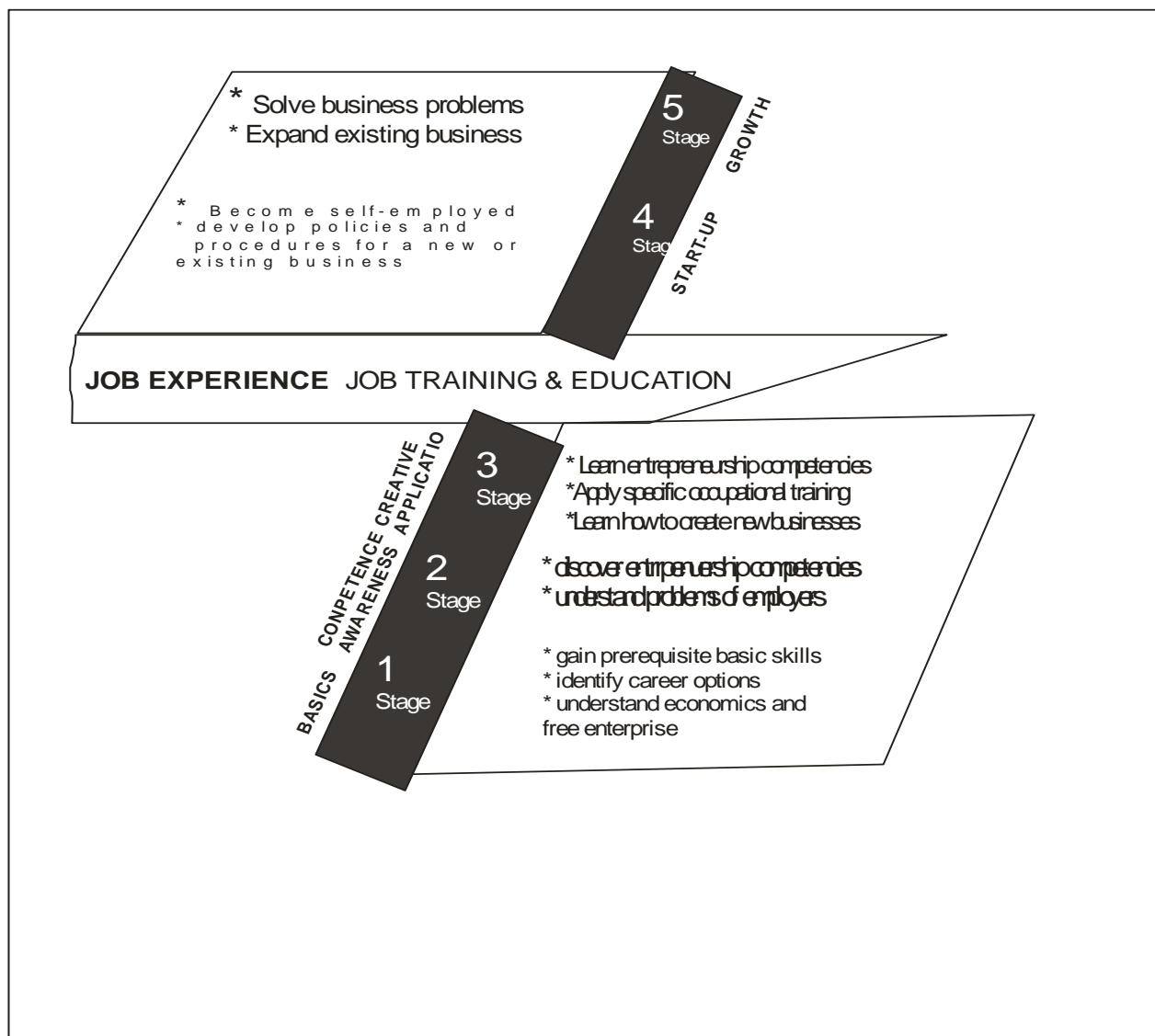
METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey design. The purpose of descriptive survey design, according to Ezeani (1998), is to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon.

The target population of the study was entrepreneurs and apprenticeships in 20 local governments in Lagos state. A sample of five recognized divisions that also serve as local government areas were chosen; they are Ikorodu, Badagry, Ikeja, Lagos Island and Epe local government areas in Lagos State. The study considered entrepreneurs and apprenticeship in the selected local government as the sampling frame from which 250 respondents were selected via enumeration and stratified sampling technique.

The questionnaire was specifically designed to accomplish the objectives of the study. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section collected information such as age, sex, experience, professional status, marital status and position while the second section contained 16 questions that measure the role of entrepreneurship training and education on poverty alleviation in Lagos state, using a Likert scale of five points: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. There are 250 respondents. Of these, 148 (59.2%) were entrepreneurs, while 102 (40.8%) were apprenticeship; while 161 (64.4%) of the respondents were male; while 89 (35.6%) were females. Their age ranges from 25-46, with a mean of 36 years. The academic qualifications of the participants are: SSCE, OND, NCE, B.SC, BED, MSC, and MBA. The Ordinary Least Square method (OLS) was used in the analysis which comprises various tests such as **t- test**, **F- test**, **r²** and the **adjusted r²**. The framework of the study is given in Figure 1.

Model for Entrepreneurship Education Stages



Isaac, E; Visser, K; Friedrich, C. & Brijlal, P. (2007) Entrepreneurship Education and Training in South Africa; in South Africa Journal of Education.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a positive relationship between technical skill and youth empowerment.

Table 1: Summary of regression analysis on relationship between technical skill and youth empowerment

Dep. Variable	Co-efficient	t- value	Std. Error	R	R ²	R ² adjusted	F Ratio	Sig.
Youth empowerment								
Constant	12.423	6.700	0.026	0.686	0.640	0.622	21.604	0.00
Youth Empowerment	3.413	5.903						

Source: Author's Computation (2011)

The result of the regression equations in Table 1 shows the existence of a positive relationship between technical education and youth empowerment of 0.686 percent. Majority of the respondents agreed that technical education strategically empowered the youths. The result reveals a good degree of dependency of youth empowerment on the technical education. The results also agrees with the work of Garba (2010) that technical education gives training and impact the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. The coefficient of determination (r^2) which is the proportion of the total variations in youth empowerment explained by the technical education shows an average performance score of 60.40 percent in youth empowerment from the contribution of technical education. The adjusted r squared (r^2) which shows the actual variations in youth empowerment attributable to the variations in technical education reveals the actual variation 0.622 as against the 0.640 suggested by r^2 . The standard error of 0.026 suggests that the independent variable (technical education) is significant in explaining the variation in youth empowerment. The t test of significance (5.903) shows that the existing relationship between technical education and youth empowerment is a true reflection each other. The F statistic which shows the overall significance of the model and goodness of fit of model shows that the model has a good fit because the calculated F-ratio of 21.604 is greater than the table value of 3.92 at 5% level of significance. The independent variable is a good predictor of the dependent variable.

H2: There is a positive relationship between personal entrepreneurial skill and social welfare services.

Table 2: Summary of regression analysis on relationship between personal entrepreneurial skill and social welfare services.

Dep. Variable	Co-efficient	t- value	Std. Error	R	R ²	R ² adjusted	F Ratio	Sig.
personal entrepreneurial skill								
Constant	8.312	6.430	0.014	0.690	0.678	0.613	19.402	0.000
Social welfare services	2.016	5.868						

Source: Author's Computation (2011)

The second equation in Table 2 examines the relationship between personal entrepreneurial skills and social welfare services. The coefficient of determination (r^2) 0.678 obtained from the results indicates an average relationship between the two variables. The regression explains 67.8 percent of the total variation of social welfare services as explained by the personal entrepreneurial skills. The relationship is significant, given the value of the coefficient of determination and the t- statistics of 5.868. This implies that a large proportion of the total improvement in personal entrepreneurial skill is attributed to provision of social welfare services in Lagos State, which is major quality of successful entrepreneur. It does not, however, explain the sufficiency of the personal entrepreneurial skill compared to entrepreneurship training and education.

CONCLUSION

The contribution of entrepreneurship training and education on poverty reduction through youth empowerment and social welfare service improvement will be much significant if entrepreneurship is encouraged at all level in the state especially at local and community level.

Youth development and empowerment are vital stages in life for building the human capital that allows young people avoid poverty and leave better life. Education and training helps individuals to be empowered and escape – poverty by providing them with the skills and knowledge to raise their output, income and wealth. The technical skill is significant, as seen in the relationship between the technical skill and youth empowerment for the selected areas. This shows that government should promote entrepreneurship training and education through appropriate policy in Lagos state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The wide spread of skills acquisition centers in all the Local Governments and Local Council Development Areas in Lagos State is a clear indication of the acceptance of entrepreneurship education and training by the government, necessary for economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. Developing entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment and a powerful weapon of fighting poverty in the country. Entrepreneurship development is crucial in boosting productivity, increasing completion and innovation, creating employment and prosperity and revitalizing economies. To encourage entrepreneurship training and education, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Entrepreneurship development should be inculcated into the school's curriculum to promote human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial skill acquisition and training.
- ii. There should be collaboration between small business entrepreneurs and research institution for exploitation and research findings of those institutions to achieve technology development.
- iii. Governments at all levels could intervene in postulating good policies to reduce the problems of entrepreneurs through the supply of needed technological and business information and advices.
- iv. Entrepreneurship training should be part of programmes of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria to make the fresh graduate self-employed after a year mandatory programme to serve their father land.
- v. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should mandate all Universities in Nigeria to create Entrepreneurship development centre to put in place two compulsory courses on Entrepreneurship for all undergraduate students' irrespective of their discipline. The same thing should be done for the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.
- vi. The federal government of Nigeria should provide enabling environment conducive for the smooth operation of both indigenous entrepreneur and foreign investors in order to boost the economy.
- vii. Securities of life and Properties, Provision of Infrastructural facilities like constant power supply, good road, good health care services, and drinkable water among others should be guarantee by the federal, states and local governments in Nigeria for better performance of entrepreneurs at reduced cost also to prevent them from migrating to neighboring countries.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONS	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1. Lagos state government has a training program that benefits the youth.					
2. Technical education enhances youth empowerment.					
3. My technical skills improved after each training program I attended.					
4. Vocational training organized by private individuals is of immense advantage to the youth.					
5. Technical training organized by your organization is of benefit to the junior workers.					
6. Youths are developed when they attend technical schools.					
7. Personal entrepreneurial skill improves social welfare.					
8. A catalyst to social welfare is personal entrepreneurial knowledge.					
9. Entrepreneurs' operation transcends to social welfare packages.					
10. Donations by corporate organizations to communities improve social welfare.					
11. Individuals and organizations benefit from social welfare packages from the government.					
12. The clear understanding of personal entrepreneurial skills and correct application has greatly influenced social welfare packages.					
13. The standard of living of the people can be improved through entrepreneurship education.					
14. Entrepreneurship training helps to bring out the best in workers.					
15. Entrepreneurship training enhances workers' productivity.					
16. Efficiency and effectiveness in an organization can be improved by entrepreneurship training.					
17. Organization's output can be increased through continuous entrepreneurship education.					
18. Increasing training budget will allow more people to benefit.					