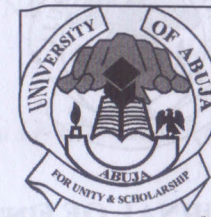


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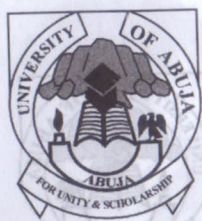
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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT ORIENTATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

*Olatunji, A.g; *Azeez, L.O & *Saadu, A.

**Department of Sociology*

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Ilorin

Abstract

Based on the current Nigeria economic situation characterized by frequent increase in the rate of graduate unemployment, campaign for self-employment orientation has been on the increase and this trend informed the introduction of entrepreneurship education as a means of equipping potential graduates with skills and knowledge needed to develop self-employment orientation. Due to the enormous attention and huge resources dedicated to entrepreneurship education in various higher institutions of learning, there is the need to examine the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in promoting self-employment orientation especially among undergraduates who have been exposed to this form of education. A survey was carried out among students in some faculties at the university of Ilorin based on purposive sampling technique; questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection, the result was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study finding indicates that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment orientation of the sampled undergraduates as entrepreneurship education has not been able to have a far-reaching effect on the students. The study thus recommends that entrepreneurship education should go beyond class works as practicum should be included, and moreover, effort should be made to address the university curriculum and allow for a strong emphasis on practical entrepreneurial trainings.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Self-employment, Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneur, Conception, JEL:Y

Introduction

Unemployment is one of the major social problems facing many developing nations in the 21st century, specifically, Nigeria as a nation is specifically faced with this problem of high level of youth unemployment (Babalola 2011). As a result of the demeaning effects of unemployment to the progress and development of the country, much recently, the Nigerian government has put vested interest in tackling and curbing the menace of unemployment and myriad of social problems associated with it by giving more dedicated interest to the issue of entrepreneurship development in the country. According to Okpara cited in Olatunji, Zakariyau & Issah (2014), in Nigeria, the need for entrepreneurship development started emerging in the mid-1980s; thus, it was not until recently that it was discovered that it is only through positive entrepreneurship orientations of the populace that such laudable objective could be achieved. Entrepreneurship was given such attention not just because of its ability to develop the economy of the country but also because of its potential to solve the challenges of unemployment, youth unrest and several other social problems in the country.

In realization of the above, various efforts have been put forward by Nigeria government in recent time to improve the entrepreneurial aspect of the economy. Apart from formulating entrepreneurship oriented policies for the teeming Nigerian population, the government went further to incorporate entrepreneurship education to the curriculum of teaching and learning in all tertiary institutions in the country. This effort is specifically aimed at equipping tertiary institution students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competencies in order to be job creators and not just job hunters; also, to improve the economic, technological and industrial development of the nation, as well as to reduce poverty to the barest minimal (Olatunji, 2015, 2016). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria amongst other things seeks to provide students in tertiary institutions with the

knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures (Unachukwu, 2009). Therefore, the move by the government through the Federal Ministry of Education to make entrepreneurship education one of the compulsory general studies for students in universities across the country is a positive step in the right direction (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi & Sofoluwe, 2013; Akpan, Effiong, & Ele (2012).

Since the introduction of entrepreneurship studies in the Nigerian university curriculum, several studies have been conducted to assess the viability and efficiency of the programme (Ayodele, 2006; Serikin-Daji, 2009; Agu, 2010; Bukola, 2011; Osalor, 2013; Olatunji, et al 2014), there have been concerns among most of these scholars that entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions is not really yielding the desired result. According to Olatunji, et.al (2014), inculcating entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of teaching in the tertiary institutions has not really yielded the desired result due to the mode and means of teaching the course. Bukola (2011) opined that despite the career guidance through entrepreneurial courses and seminars for undergraduates, most of the graduates still find passion in seeking for paid employment after graduation. This means, either that the students are not having interest in being self-employed or they are having other constraints to become entrepreneurs.

Thus, there is the need for further empirical research on the dynamics of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. To this end, there is need to examine other probable factors that could influence entrepreneurial event among university graduates in Nigeria, specifically, there is the need to empirically investigate how university undergraduates conceived the compulsory graduate entrepreneurship education programme and whether or not such conception has significant influence on their self-employment

orientations the paper is sub-divided into five sub-sections vis-à-vis: introduction, conceptual clarification/literature review, methodology, presentation and analysis of data and conclusion/recommendations.

Conceptual Clarification/Literature Review

Effort is made in this sub-section to conceptually review some concepts that are relevant for better understanding of this study.

Who is an entrepreneur and what is entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is a technical concept with varieties of meaning which cannot be defined in simple terms. According to Olatunji et. al (2014), "there has not been a universally accepted definition of the concept of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. There have only been variants of definitions depending on the field, the area and angle at which individual researchers sees it" According to Kilby (1971:1), entrepreneurship could be compared to the animal: 'Heffalump' which has "been hunted by many individuals using various ingenious trapping devices; all who claimed to have caught sight of it reported that it is enormous, but they disagree on its particularities". Okpara, (2005:8) defined entrepreneurship as the ability to create a non-existing business entity from practically nothing. 'It is initiating, building and watching an enterprise rather than watching one'

Cantillon cited in Olatunji (2012) defined an entrepreneur as a rational decision maker who initiates a business venture and assumes the risk and provides management for the firm. Bygrave & Hofer (1991) conceived of entrepreneurship as the creation of a new organization to pursue an opportunity. Kuratko & Hodgets (2004) see entrepreneur as someone who creates something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. Some researchers such as Okpara (2005); Osalor (2013); Olatunji, et al (2014) have conceived an entrepreneur as an individual who understands an opportunity and generate the resources to take advantage of, or act on that opportunity.

Inferring from the set of definitions given above, an entrepreneur could be described as someone who exercises initiative by organizing a business venture to take benefit of an opportunity and, as the decision maker, decides what, how, and how much of a good or service will be produced, all in a bid of creating value and making profit. In line with our present purpose, any individual (young or old, male or female) that took initiative and the risk of starting a business endeavor on their own, someone who organizes, operates and assumes the risk for such business.

Entrepreneurship education/Self-employment orientations

In its general conception, entrepreneurship education could be referred to any teaching or learning effort that is directed at exposing the dynamics of entrepreneurship to an individual in order to enhance the entrepreneurial functioning of the person or spur entrepreneurial mindset into an individual. According to Okpara (2005) entrepreneurial education is formulated on the idea that education is a necessary ingredient for the optimal functioning of human senses responsible for the functioning of the overall system of an individual internally and externally. He remarked further that, without adequate and functional education on entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur will be akin to a farmer without farming tool.

Olatunji (2012) supported the above conception when they remarked that, would-be and actual entrepreneurs need to be well educated about entrepreneurial dynamics in order to know the challenges before them and also take rational decisions that will help their business grow. Thus, entrepreneurial education is oriented towards equipping people with the necessary intellectual ingredients that will support and encourage those interested in knowing what it is like to run a business. It could be inferred from the above that entrepreneurship education is generally targeted at two main sets of people, those who are already in business and others that are not yet in business but need to be encouraged to become an entrepreneur. The student population been exposed to entrepreneurship education fell within the latter category.

In other words, entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions fundamentally seeks to provide students with the necessary ingredients such as, knowledge, skills and motivation to spur entrepreneurial mindset in them such that they can give favourable consideration to becoming an entrepreneur after leaving school. Thus, one of the goals of entrepreneurship education to the student population is to develop self-employment orientation in them. Self-employment orientation in this regard could be referred as the development of favorable mindset towards becoming an entrepreneur after leaving school. Maina (2014) observed that entrepreneurial education can be a single predictor for favourable entrepreneurial mindset. Several other researchers such as Ekpoh & Edet (2011) also have explored the relationship between entrepreneurial education and students' self-employment tendencies.

Emmanuel & Olatunde (2012) in their study have shown that students with a major knowledge in entrepreneurship are likely to initiate business while in school or after graduating in school. Maina (2014) confirms that students who are exposed to entrepreneurship had higher scores in entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy. Understanding the relationship between entrepreneurial education and self-employment orientation is very significant so as to justify the introduction of entrepreneurial education in the universities. Inferring from the brief literature review made above, it could be deduced that entrepreneurship education has a tendency of igniting self-employment orientation in an individual, though lots of studies have been conducted in this regard but few of such researches are empirically oriented and the empirical oriented too are with diverse findings, thus, this study is an attempt to contribute to the existing empirical knowledge on whether or not entrepreneurial education is actually having significant influence on self-employment orientations of undergraduates in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

Social Learning Theory of Career Choice

The social learning theory of career choice was propounded by Krumboltz (1996), the theory is a strand of the social learning theory of John Dollard and Neal Miller, the theory specifically emphasizes the person-environment interaction and attempts to explain how skills are acquired through learning in the social environment and how such learning situations influence occupational preferences and career choices of the people and how selections of occupations, field of work and employment orientations are made. The theory identified interactions between individual's social learning circumstances, environmental conditions, learning experiences, cognitive and emotional responses that produce movement along one occupational path or another. According to Krumboltz (1996), internal and external learning experiences could be constraint or facilitator that will shape the nature and number of occupational options available and the ways individuals respond to them. In application to the assumption of this study, it could be said that the type and intensity of entrepreneurship education that the undergraduate is exposed to will tend to determine his/her conception of it and such conception to a large extent would determine whether or not the undergraduate will choose to make self-employment his/her career choice during or after school.

Methodology

According to Stay & Margret (1999), methodology is a step by step procedure relating to how the researcher arrived at the findings of the study. Specifically, it is the explanations regarding how data are collected, collated, and analyzed in order to test the hypotheses proposed for the study. The research design utilized for the study is survey; survey design was employed for the study due to the social nature of the topic as well as that of its prospective respondents. From the data gathered from the Technical Entrepreneurship Centre (TEC), university of Ilorin, seven thousand, seven hundred and twenty-one (7721) students across fifteen faculties registered for the Graduate

Students Entrepreneurship (GSE) course and following sampling processes, 1697 students who registered for Graduate Student Entrepreneurship (GSE) course in the session from three faculties constitutes the population of the study.

The sampling procedure adopted in the study is the multi stage sampling procedure. This was carried out by first using stratified sampling method to delineate the students' population into strata in line with the available faculties; this allowed the researchers the opportunity to select faculties where the study of entrepreneurship has direct bearing to their disciplines. Afterwards, purposive sampling technique was used to select three faculties from the sixteen faculties in the university; this technique was adopted to purposively select departments that participated in the study. Afterwards, simple random sampling technique was used to distribute questionnaire to students in the selected faculties. Simple random technique was used to select respondents for the study after purposively selecting the departments for the study. It is important to note that simple random technique allowed the respondents in the selected departments to have equal chance of being selected for the study. Thus, this allowed the researcher to minimize the feature of biasness and smooth collection of data for the study.

The sample size for the study was 10% of 1697, this decision was taken because, it would be practically impossible to have access to the entire population. Thus, the sample size was 170 approximately. Questionnaire was used as the main instrument of collecting primary data for the study, this instrument was adopted due to its suitability to measuring the research variables and also because of the large population of the respondents and also because the research respondents are literates who can read and answer the questions successfully. The questionnaire was divided into sections based on the objectives of the study, accordingly, a section of the questionnaire dwelled on issues relating to the independent variables (conception of

entrepreneurial education) while another section was devoted to questions on the dependent variables (self-employment orientation).

However, of the 170 questionnaire distributed to sample, a total of 139 questionnaires were returned validly filled and regarded as useful for analysis, hence the analysis and presentation of data was based on 139 respondents. Frequency count and simple percentages were utilized as the descriptive statistical tools to achieve objectives of the study that are descriptive in nature. More so, inferential statistical tool (simple regression analysis) was used to test the hypotheses raised in the study, specifically to achieve the main objectives of the study which is to find the significance of the influence of the independent variables (students' conception of entrepreneurship education) on the dependent variables (self-employment orientation). SPSS (17.0) was the statistical software used in analyzing the data collected for the study.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This sub-section of the research is used to present and analyze the data derived for the study.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Conception of Entrepreneurship Education

1	Conception of the courses taken in	Frequency	Percentage
	Innovative	35	25.2
	Not innovative	94	67.6
	Indifferent	10	7.2
	Total	139	100.0
2	Conception on whether the course is interesting	Frequency	Percentage
	No	70	50.4
	Yes	69	49.6
	Total	139	100.0
3	Conception on the course curriculum	Frequency	Percentage
	Practical	18	13
	Theoretical	109	78.4
	Mixture of both	12	8.6
	Total	139	100.0
4	Conception on the university management give enough priority to entrepreneurship courses	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	96	69.1
	No	43	30.9
	Total	139	100.0
5	Conception on whether entrepreneurship course is vibrant enough to make someone wanting to become an entrepreneur	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	40	28.8
	No	99	71.2
	Total	139	100.0

Source: Researcher's Computations using SPSS version 17.0

Table 1 is dedicated to measuring the independent variable of the study, the section centers on students' conception of entrepreneurial education. Item 1 on the table shows the distribution of respondents' views of the entrepreneurship course, The table shows that 94 (67.6%) of the respondents held the view that the courses they took in entrepreneurship is not innovative, while 35 (25.2%) of the respondents believe that the course is innovative and a minute 10 (7.2%) of the respondents responded with undecided option. While assessing the interesting nature of entrepreneurship course syllabus,

70 (50.4%) of the respondents believed that the entrepreneurship course syllabus covers contents that are not interesting enough to spur self-employment orientations; this is against 69 (49.6%) of the respondents that held an alternative view. Item 3 of Table 1 measured respondents' conception on the nature of the curriculum in terms of how entrepreneurship is been taught, the item revealed that 18 (13%) of the respondents held the view that the course curriculum is practical, while 109 (78.4%) held the view that the curriculum is theoretical. Item number 4 on Table 1 measured respondents' views on the priority the University authority gave to entrepreneurship courses, 96 (69.1%) of the respondents responded positively while 43 (30.9%) of them responded otherwise. Item 5 on Table 1 measured the extent at which entrepreneurship lessons received by the undergraduates could motivate them to become entrepreneur, the responses show that 99 (71.2%) of the respondents held the view that taking entrepreneurship courses is not vibrant enough to spur self-employment orientations in them while 40 (28.8%) held the opinion that taking the entrepreneurial education course is enough to spur self-employment orientations in them.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Self-employment Orientation of Undergraduates

1	Respondents' Plan of setting up business after graduation	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	72	51.8
	No	67	48.2
	Total	139	100.0
2	Self-employment as a befitting occupational status	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	74	53.2
	No	65	46.8
	Total	139	100.0
3	Respondents' view on people that works for private or public firms	Frequency	Percentage
	Positive	60	43.1
	Negative	32	23
	Indifferent	47	33.9
	Total	139	100.0
4	On whether self-employment ideology is rampant among undergraduates	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	51	36.7
	No	61	43.9
	I don't know	27	19.4
	Total	139	100.0
5	On whether people that are self-employed enjoy better life	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	85	61.2
	No	31	22.3
	I don't know	23	16.5
	Total	139	100.0

Source: Researcher's Computations using SPSS version 17.0

Table 2 focused specifically on measuring the dependent variable of the study; that is the self-employment orientations of the students that have been exposed to entrepreneurial education. Item 1 on the Table shows that 67 (48.2%) of the respondents claimed they do not plan to own a personal business after graduation while 72 (51.8%) of the respondents claimed that they are planning on setting up their own business after graduation. This distribution of responses on the question revealed that many of the students that are exposed to

entrepreneurship education do not have the plan of becoming self-employed after graduation. Item 2 on Table measured respondents' opinion on whether self-employment is befitting enough as an ideal occupation; the distribution of the responses shows that 74 (53.2%) of the respondents held the view that self-employment status is a befitting occupational status, while 65 (46.8%) of the respondents held contrary opinion. When asked about their perception on paid employment, 60 respondents (43.1%) held positive view about self-employment, this is in contrast to 32 (23%) of the respondents who posit that they held negative feelings about self-employment and 47 (33.9%) of the respondents are indifferent about it. This implies that majority of the respondents have sympathy for paid employment over self-employment.

When asked about the rampancy of self-employment ideology among undergraduates, 51 (36.7%) of the respondents thought self-employment ideology is rampant among undergraduates, however 61 (43.9%) of the respondents do not subscribe to the fact that self-employment ideology is rampant amongst the undergraduates and 27 (19.4%) held neutral notion on the view. One of the implications of this observation is that majority of undergraduates do not imbibe self-employment ideology despite their exposure to entrepreneurial education. On the level of who enjoy better life between those in paid employment and self-employment, item 5 of table 2 revealed that 85 (61.2%) of the respondents believed that self-employed people live a better life than those who work in private and public firms; however, 31 (22.3%) of the respondents posited that self-employed people do not live better lives when compared to people of the public and private workers and 23 (16.5%) of the respondents held neutral view. What could be inferred from the directions of the responses is that, majority of the undergraduates sampled believed that those that are self-employed enjoy better life than those that work in either private or public firms.

Test of Hypotheses

In order to fulfill the principle of empiricism further in this study, hypotheses were raised purposively to ascertain the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables of the study. To this extent, simple regression analysis was used to achieve this objective.

Hypothesis One: Undergraduates' conception of Entrepreneurship Education curriculum and their Self-employment Orientation

In this section, the hypothesis tested considered one independent variable and one dependent variable which are views about entrepreneurship curriculum and self-employment orientation. Table 3 presents the statistical result of the hypothesis tested

Table 3: Summary of Simple Regression Test of Significance between undergraduates' View of education Curriculum and their Self-entrepreneurship employment Orientation

Variables	Co-efficient	Standard Error	T-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.269	0.103	12.277	0.000
Conception on entrepreneurship education curriculum	0.011	0.059	0.191	0.849
R ² : 0.000		No of observation: 139		
Adjusted R ² : 0.007		R: 0.016		
F-statistics: 0.036				

Source: Researcher's Computations using SPSS version 17.0

Interpretation of Findings

Table 3 shows that $R = .016$; in other words, 1.6% of self-employment orientations is effected by undergraduates' view about entrepreneurship curriculum. The analysis further revealed that the undergraduates' view about entrepreneurship curriculum is not a determinant that may likely affect self-employment orientations,

4.2 Hypothesis 2: Undergraduates' conception on priority given to Entrepreneurship education and their Self-employment Orientation

Table 4: Summary of Simple Regression Test of Significance between Priority Placed on Entrepreneurship Courses and Self-employment Orientation

Source: Researcher's Computations using SPSS version 17.0

In this section, the hypothesis tested considered the one independent variable and one dependent variable which are students' conception of entrepreneurship education and self-employment orientation respectively. Table 5 presents the statistical result of the hypothesis tested

Variables	Co-efficient	Standard Error	t-statistics	P-value
Constant	1.375	0.079	17.391	0.000
Conception on seriousness of entrepreneurship education	-0.032	0.026	-1.268	0.207
R ² :	0.012	No of observation: 139		
Adjusted R ² :	0.004	R: 0.108		
F-statistics:	1.608			

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Interpretation and Findings

The table above shows that $R = .108$; in other words, 10.8% of desire to be self-employed is influenced by undergraduates' conception of entrepreneurship courses. The analysis further revealed that the undergraduates' conception of entrepreneurship courses is not a determinant that may likely influence the desire to be self-employed, where the R square = .012; which shows undergraduates' conception of entrepreneurship courses has 1.2% influence on desire to be self-employed. This is also proven in the coefficient analysis ($\beta = -.108$; $p > 0.05$). In other words, students' conception of entrepreneurship course has no influence on undergraduates' desire to be self-employed.

Conclusion

The study was conceived to assess the conception of entrepreneurship education and self-employment orientation of undergraduates with the specific objectives of understanding how undergraduates conceived entrepreneurship education and the influence such conception on their self-employment orientations. Generally, the findings emanating from the hypotheses raised and tested in the study implied that undergraduates' conceptions of entrepreneurship education have negative implications on their self-employment orientations. In other words, undergraduates' conception of entrepreneurship education weighed against its laid down objectives of spurring self-employment spirit in the students. This further implies that the way and means in which entrepreneurship education is managed in the study setting is not likely to make them choose self-employment as their occupation

after school. Thus, it could be concluded that one of the reasons why many undergraduates still find passion in seeking for paid employment after their graduation is as a result of the fact that lots of them do not conceive of entrepreneurial education as stimulating and vibrant enough to spur entrepreneurship spirit in them and that explanation for the refusal of teeming population of Nigerian graduates to take on self-employment activities is as a result of the way they conceive entrepreneurship education they are exposed to while in school.

Inferring from the findings of this study, there is the need to make practical recommendations aimed at making undergraduates develop positive conception of entrepreneurship education in order to make them develop positive mindset towards self-employment.

- I Majority of the undergraduates, whose views were sampled reported that the pattern in which entrepreneurship education is been taught is not innovative enough, in this regard, this study recommended that Unit saddled with entrepreneurship education in the university should make frantic effort improve on the quality and contents of teaching the course. This could be achieved by the unit conducting dedicated research on students views on how the contents of the syllabus could be improved, the unit could achieve this feat by also looking outward at other entrepreneurship education units in other universities across the country, around Africa and other countries in the world that have at one time had the problem of transmitting entrepreneurship education, by studying the models in other climes, the unit can advise the university management accordingly on how such laudable feat could be achieved.

ii General outlook of the nature of entrepreneurship education in the centre as well as other entrepreneurship related courses in the university revealed that the pattern of teaching the course is theoretical, as such, theoretical mode of teaching the course might make it not too appealing to the students as it has been argued that '... learning entrepreneurship is like learning how to ride a bicycle which one cannot learn by reading a book'. In other words, there is the need for the unit saddled with transmitting of entrepreneurship education in the university to make concerted effort at making entrepreneurship teaching purely practical this could be achieved by modifying the curriculum for entrepreneurship education that is, it should contain practical demonstrations of the activities been taught on the programme and assessment should also be practical as well. Thus, efforts should be put in place to address the curriculum for entrepreneurship education and place great emphasis on practical skills rather than theoretical exposition. Meanwhile the normal class room lectures could be converted to vocational skills teaching where the students can learn skills such as crafts, graphics, software and hardware installations etc. as these could be a ground for the establishment of business to the students during and after school. Hence, there is an urgent need for Universities to review and align entrepreneurship education curricula by linking it to real-world business challenges

This if considered could go a long way in making entrepreneurship education vibrant enough to spur positive self-employment orientations in the students during their studies and after graduating from the university. Furthermore, there is the need for the university

administration to make frantic efforts at giving higher priority to entrepreneurship education, this could be attained by bringing out entrepreneurial elements in each disciplines. For instance, a student studying sociology as his/her major should be made to see several entrepreneurial opportunities and possibilities in the course, this will be in addition to the general entrepreneurship education courses the student is receiving generally. By so doing, students will be bombarded with entrepreneurship dynamics both in their courses of study and at the general level.

Universities should identify and partner with businesses to strengthen the practical component of the training. Apart from the internship components, business executives should be invited to deliver lectures on key areas of business challenges in the Nigerian context. By so doing the universities will be able to incorporate the experiences of professionals and guest lectures from the business world – This 'value-added element' is invaluable and teaches more than classroom texts, this programme and others such as workshop, seminars, conferences and exhibition as these events will help the students to develop more interest in entrepreneurship through the exposure that they have derived from those programmes.

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