

THE PERCIEVED RELEVANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Education as a factor affects the lives of a nation and it determines the success of the citizens and to a large extent, the rate of development of the country. This is the thrust of the study, to ascertain the relevance of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of tertiary institutions. Also, it examines how entrepreneurship education can serve as a catalyst to national development. This study combines a descriptive survey design as well as the use of questionnaires to source for the requisite primary information. A sample of three hundred (300) students was drawn from a university, a polytechnic and a college of education situated in Delta state, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study by using simple percentage and the chi-square statistical technique. The results reveal that entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution is needful and effective in building students entrepreneurial skills with the aim to equipping and inculcating self reliant skills. The implication of this is that every student in tertiary institutions should have at least a relevant skill, but the reverse is the case today, as most tertiary institutions still lack the basic infrastructures and requisite facilities to groom students in the needed entrepreneurial skills. The paper concludes by recommending a practical and not just theoretical head knowledge but demonstrative skills. This is the underpinning philosophy behind entrepreneurship education that can serve as a sine qua non to development through tertiary institutions.

Introduction

The present state of the economy is unstable coupled with an increasing rate of youth unemployment and underdevelopment. It is therefore imperative for students in tertiary institutions to be well equipped with sound academic background saddled with relevant entrepreneurial skills before leaving the system. This is not only to enable them stand out among their equals but also to institute developmental revolution in our society. Today, the reverse is clearly the case where lot of young graduates are ill-equipped to face the hurdles that come with life after school. In Nigeria, the importance of tertiary education is gradually becoming an increasing enterprise, judging by the rise of private and public tertiary institutions being licensed without given much credence to the quality of graduates they aim to produce. Thus, playing down on the fact that the success of a nation highly depends on the type and quality of education given to her citizenry. One primary purpose of tertiary institutions should be geared towards developing entrepreneurial capabilities and mindset of the individuals as stipulated among the goals

of the Nigerian tertiary education in the National Policy of Education. Particularly, some of these goals are highlighted as follows:

- To acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; and
- To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004, p.30).

Although, tertiary institutions have contributed to increasing the number of the educated Nigerian youths, it has not been able to prepare these graduates for self-employment and business entrepreneurship in the absence of paid employment in the country. Ekong (2008) posits that institution of higher learning in Nigeria have concentrated more on the theoretical and abstract instructional deliveries focusing only on the cognitive development and consequently turning out non entrepreneurial skilled graduates into the labour markets. With an army of unemployed graduates roaming the streets everyday looking for government employments that are in most cases not readily available, it is observed that majority of them not employable. This is due to the lack of core technical knowledge of their discipline as well as lack of entrepreneurial skills to be self-employed. Therefore, one begins to wonder and raise questions on how far tertiary institutions in Nigeria have contributed to the socio-economic growth and development of the country.

This calls for an education that will re-orient and change the mindsets of the youths toward job creation and poverty alleviation. It becomes very necessary that tertiary institutions be redesigned to incorporate not only the philosophy of self-reliance but also studies oriented towards skill-acquisition. Entrepreneurial development will advance the economy of the nation and thereby reduce unemployment as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) as well as other stake holders emphasizing the need to inculcate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Although there are traces of entrepreneurial studies in some Nigerian universities, its introduction with regard to acquisition of relevant skills have been basically more theoretical than practical. Hence, the question "to what extent has the impact of entrepreneurial skills through entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions been achieved?" This study is aimed at providing a solution to the aforementioned question.

Research Objectives

The study is geared toward ascertaining:

- the relevance of introducing entrepreneurship education into tertiary institutions;
- the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions.

Reviewed Related Literature

Basically, entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual or a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption (Nwangu, (2009); Ojeifo, (2013)). According to Omolayo, (2006); Baba (2013), entrepreneurship is the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make profit through the educational skills acquired. Solomon (2007) also sees entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunity to establish and run enterprises successfully. Evidently, an entrepreneurship spirit is required for the overall growth of a nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. The concept of entrepreneurship is however associated with a number of activities as it does not occur in a vacuum. It requires the presence of an entrepreneur and an enabling environment for it to occur. As applied field in education, Adiele (2010) notes that it is a form of education which inculcates into the individual learners concepts, skills and knowledge on how to start a new business, manage it and make profit. To Lee and Wong (2008), entrepreneurship education by its scope is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society. UNESCO (2008) also stated that entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experience that gives students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different types. Entrepreneurship education goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. It is a training which allows students to develop and use their creativity, take initiatives, responsibilities and risks.

The real essence of entrepreneurship education therefore is to ensure the improvement of educational quality by equipping the young ones with the basic skills that will make them functional and productive in the society. According to Paul (2005); Ojeifo (2013), Entrepreneurship education should be structured, aim at achieving the following objectives to:

1. offer functional education with adequate training that will enable individuals to be self-employed and self-reliant;
2. provide the young graduates with adequate training to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities;
3. serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development;
4. offer students in tertiary institutions as well as graduates with adequate training in risk management so as to make certain bearing feasible;
5. reduce high rate of poverty and encourage independency;
6. create employment;
7. reduce of the rural-urban migration;
8. provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized business;
9. inculcate the spirit of perseverance in youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on; and to
10. create a smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Tertiary education is a formal, non-compulsory education that follows secondary education. These institutions which include Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities play a key role in promoting the talents of students, graduates and researchers. What distinguishes institution of higher education from other institutions in the society is their role in creating knowledge and producing high-potential graduates and researchers. According to Downs (2011), higher education plays a central role in the development and prosperity of local economies and may offer a competitive advantage to countries in terms of development. Akpomi (2009) also says that for any country to foster genuine economic growth and development, its educational system must be considered as the bedrock of any meaningfully development. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, offers the chance to develop knowledge that is intensive to high-growth enterprises for all academic disciplines and not just the technical ones. Tertiary institutions can teach students how to start and grow enterprises in ways that benefit the society and also create an environment that fosters entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and behaviours. Therefore, tertiary institutions play a pivotal role in the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria while acting as a resource hub, connecting researchers, students, entrepreneur, companies and other stakeholders. It becomes necessary to inculcate entrepreneurial education in Nigeria curriculum especially at the entry level for college and university students.

According to (Yahya 2011; Gabadeen and Raimo 2012), the inclusion of entrepreneurship education into the curricular of Nigerian tertiary institutions is a development dating back to 2006. This inclusion can help spur some of the students into venturing into entrepreneurship practices as students and well beyond graduation. Students who are well grounded in entrepreneurship skills could be self-employed or become employers in their own capacity.

Hypothesis

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis were formulated:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in delta state.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of students in higher and lower levels on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in delta state.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of students of different socio-economic status on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in delta state.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design in its execution. The population for the study comprises of higher and lower level students of tertiary institutions in Delta State, a

stratified random sampling technique was used to choose three (3) out of the Twelve (12) functional tertiary educational institutions in delta state, a total of three hundred (300) students were sampled, drawn from one(1) university, one(1) polytechnic and one(1) college of education consisting of one hundred and forty(140) males and one hundred and sixty(160) females. A questionnaire consisting of two sections was used to get data for this study; the first section contains the student's bio-data and the second section contains items related to the research topic on a 4-point likert type scale. Pre-testing of the instrument was done to ascertain its reliability using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was gotten.

Result and Discussion

To derive useful meaning to the data generated, simple percentage and chi-square statistical techniques were used in the analysis with 0.05% level of significance. Two hundred and fifty four (254) copies representing 84.67% of the total administered questionnaire were completed and retrieved while forty-six (46) copies representing 15.33% were not retrieved.

Table 1: Shows the Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	122	48.03%
Female	132	51.97%
Total	254	100%

Table 2: Shows the Levels of the Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Higher level	111	46.70%
Lower level	143	56.30%
Total	254	100%

Table 3: Shows the Socio-Economic Status of the Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	21	8.27%
Average	167	65.75%
Rich	66	25.98%
Total	254	100%

Table 4: Responses of 254 Students to Opinion Questionnaire on the Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education

S/N	Statement	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1	All students should have a skill before graduating.	130(45.28%)	113(44.49%)	16(6.30%)	10(3.94%)
2	Every student in tertiary institutions should learn a skill.	111(43.70%)	127(50%)	7(2.76%)	9(3.94%)
3	The class room creates entrepreneurial skills in students.	78(30.71%)	23(9.06%)	93(36.62%)	60(23.62%)
4	The students truly learn skills from entrepreneurship courses.	136(53.54%)	84(33.07%)	24(9.45%)	10(3.94%)
5	Entrepreneurship education is very effective in building students entrepreneurial skills.	133(52.36%)	108(42.52%)	12(4.37%)	1(0.39%)
6	Skills acquired in school will help students to become job creators or great entrepreneurs when they graduate.	114(44.89%)	115(45.28%)	18(7.09%)	7(2.76%)
7	There are enough tutors in every area of entrepreneurial skills in tertiary institutions.	73(28.74%)	24(9.54%)	94(37.01%)	63(24.80%)
8	There are good infrastructural facilities in tertiary institutions for teaching entrepreneurship skills.	64(25.20%)	16(6.30%)	113(44.49%)	61(24.02%)
9	Learning a skill with your academic work is a distraction.	50(19.69%)	14(5.51%)	118(46.46%)	72(28.35%)

From the above table, the research statements reveal that entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is very effective in building students entrepreneurial skills and as such every student in tertiary institutions should learn a skill while in school before graduating. It was also observed that learning a skill alongside their academic work will not distract them and students will truly learn skills from entrepreneurship courses. However, to a very large extent, tertiary institutions still lack good infrastructural facilities and manpower for grooming the students and inculcating the best and needed entrepreneurial skills in them.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in delta state.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test Analysis showing the Perception of Male and Female Students

Sex	N	DF	χ^2 Calculated	χ^2 Tabulated	Level of Significance
Male	122	3	3.46	7.82	0.05
Female	132				
Total	254				

An analysis of the first hypothesis was based on item 5 of table 4. Calculated chi-square value of 3.46 was gotten and chi-square table value is 7.82. The null hypothesis is accepted since the χ^2 calculated is less than χ^2 table value. Hence there is no significant

difference in the perception of male and female students on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in building students entrepreneurial skills.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of students in higher and lower levels on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in delta state.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Analysis showing the Perception of Students from Higher and Lower Levels

Level	N	DF	χ^2 Calculated	χ^2 Tabulated	Level of Significance
Higher	111	3	3.53	7.82	0.05
Lower	143				
Total	254				

An analysis of the second hypothesis was based on item 6 of Table 4. A calculated chi-square value of 3.53 was obtained as against a chi-square tabulated value of 7.82. The null hypothesis is accepted since the χ^2 calculated value is less than the χ^2 table value. Hence there is no marked difference in the perception of higher and lower level students on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. They were of the same opinion that skills acquired while in school from entrepreneurship education will help students become job creators and great entrepreneurs when they graduate.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of students of different socio-economic status on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Delta state.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test Analysis showing the Perception of Students from Different Socio-Economic Status

Status	N	DF	χ^2 Calculated	χ^2 Tabulated	Level of Significance
Poor	21	6	4.13	12.59	0.05
Average	167				
Rich	66				
Total	254				

An analysis of the third hypothesis was based on item 1 of table 4. Calculated chi-square value of 4.13 was gotten and chi-square table value is 12.59. The null hypothesis is accepted since the χ^2 calculated is less than χ^2 table value. Hence there is no significant difference in the perception of students of different socio-economic status on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions. They all agreed that all students should have an entrepreneurial skill before graduating.

Conclusion

In this study, it is noted that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is highly relevant as it aims to inculcating in students the needed entrepreneurial skills. This will enable them to be self-reliant, employable and useful to the society when they finally become graduates. It was also observed that despite the vast advantages of introducing entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions, a lot of challenges still abound. Some of which are;

- Lack of good infrastructures/ facilities;
- Non availability of funding as well as diverse types of entrepreneurial skills;
- Poor maintenance of existing entrepreneurial facilities and structures;
- Shortage of good entrepreneurial tutors and a host of other factors.

Recommendations

With regard to the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Entrepreneurship education should involve seminars, commitment, internships, field trips, mentorship programs, industrial tours, funding, desire, inventiveness etc.;
- Experts with good practical experiences of entrepreneurial skills in diverse fields should be engaged at either full-time or part-time capacities in the higher institutions;
- Students should be encouraged to have first-hand experiences by operating necessary machineries, engaging in extensive practical work, demonstrating their practical abilities from acquired knowledge;
- The government, heads of institutions, non-governmental organizations and other relevant enterprises should be either directly or indirectly involved in this cause, and also invest massively in infrastructural facilities that boost entrepreneurial studies in higher institution.

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