

Assessment of Entrepreneurship Education Programmes in Nigerian Universities

P. N. Uzomah and M. E. Okoye

Faculty Of Education
Imo State University, Owerri

Abstract

This paper focused on determining the extent to which the objectives of entrepreneurship education programme organized by Nigerian Universities are so far being achieved. The survey research was carried out in two geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Two out of the eleven states in the south-south and south-east zones were randomly selected. A total of 600 undergraduate students constituted the sample of the study. An 11-item question was used to collect data to answer the three research questions posed for the study. The results indicated that the entrepreneurship education acquired by the students has prepared them to be self-employed, employers of labour; equips them to take risks in job creation, enables them to face challenge and become creative entrepreneurs. The recommendation include among others that university administrations and the government should collaborate in organizing more entrepreneurship programmes for graduates as a follow up to the training they received at undergraduate level.

Keywords: assessment, entrepreneurship, education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

A University as a segment of the knowledge production industry in a nation is concerned with the highest level of education. The knowledge produced, disseminated and acquired in the university is at its highest level. Universities are therefore formal institutions set up by the society as centers for the highest level of learning where rich ideas, knowledge, skills, competencies and ideals are imparted. As such, Benjamin (2001) views universities as ivory towers where instruction is given and received without harassment and undue influence from the outside world. Universities are supposed to be committed to promoting society's corporate wellbeing and advancement by redefining the ability of its members to explain the development and function of man as part of the natural world through researches.

From the foregoing, universities are expected to produce highly skilled and proficient individuals who constitute the human resources as a basis for national development because it is the quality of human resources that determines the level of development in a nation. The utilitarian value of university education remains the major reason for the high enrolment figures seeking admission annually. Nigerian university curricula for decades failed to provide for functional skills, and competencies that would enable the recipients to be self-sustaining and independent outside a white collar job. Entrepreneurship skills, creative skills, technical, mechanical skills and competencies are often lacking. Yusuf (2000) therefore observed that most Nigerians are being educated out of context

Concurring, Inegbengor (2005) points out that universities have paid very little attention to the changing labour market conditions in spite of promptings by public officials. Researchers have observed that Nigeria's youth population is about 80 million. Of this youthful population, 85% are unemployed while about 12% are under employed. Bolaji and Nwamkpa (2012) pointed out that this enormous unemployment situation is not as a result of non-availability of jobs alone rather, it is due mainly to the unemployability of the youths who lack functional skill and competencies.

Nigerian universities operated strictly theoretically, abstract professionally oriented curricula that are devoid of entrepreneurial studies and skills. Consequently, students who would have been able to make a difference in a world of work and self-employment with their creativity and innovativeness remain unemployed, under employed or unemployable in the labour market.

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic and social process where individuals alone or in collaboration identify opportunities for innovation and act thereby, transforming ideas into practical targeted activities whether in a social, cultural or economic context (European Commission 2000). Given the prevailing unemployment situation among university graduates, Nigerian government saw the need to boost employment through entrepreneurship education in the undergraduate programmes. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and the Ministry of Education have also issued relevant policies to provide a favourable environment for students. Hence those concerned with the provision of tertiary

education have complied with the directive for entrepreneurial education in their institutions.

The teaming numbers of people who are not gainfully employed are tempted to resort to crime, terrorism, violence and act as political thugs. With the continual dependence on oil economy and neglect of the youthful population who incidentally are untapped, ill-harnessed yet, most lucrative resource of the country, an unpredictable and devastating situation will result in the nearest future and that future is already with us. Research report by the world bank reveals that the causes of Nigeria’s current job unemployment crises are lack of jobs, lack of skills, experiences, mismatch between supply and demand for labour and other numerous barriers to youth entrepreneurship (National Bureau of Statistics2011). This situation can however be improved by quality education received within the walls of the institutions.

The goals of entrepreneurship education include among other things making individuals self-reliant, having innovative and creative ideas, catalyst to economic growth and reduction in rural-urban migration. (Paul 2005).This study therefore sets out to determine the extent to which the entrepreneurial education acquired by university undergraduates under the General study unit and other programmes they went through prepare them for entrepreneurial ventures on graduation.

The study specifically sought to:

- a) Find out if the educational programmes on entrepreneurship education in universities arouse the students’ interest in being self-employed and/or employers of labour on graduation.
- b) Appraise the extent to which the education programmes on entrepreneurial studies encourage graduates to take risk in establishing an enterprise.
- c) To determine if the programmes stimulate entrepreneurial creativity in the students.

METHOD

Three research questions guided the study. Survey research design was also adopted. The instrument used for collecting data was questionnaire. The study was carried out in the two out of six geographical zones in Nigeria namely South-East and South-South zones. These zones comprise of a total of 11 states with each state having at least one public university. Two states were randomly selected from each zone. The universities in the two selected states were stratified according to federal and state public universities. One university each was selected from each stratum of the universities from the two selected states. So a total of four (4) universities constituted the sample for the study. One hundred and fifty (150) undergraduate students from each of the four universities were selected through the simple random sampling technique. A total of 600 undergraduate students constituted the sample of the study. These students were selected from those who must have completed their second year in the university and must have taken the general studies course of entrepreneurial education.

The questionnaire has the response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree with respective points of 4, 3, 2, 1 as all the items in the questionnaire are positive to the measure being assessed.

The questionnaire was validated by 3 lecturers in entrepreneurial studies department. Cronbach alpha technique was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded a coefficient of 0.87. Four (4) research assistants one from each university helped in the administration and collection of the instrument.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent has the entrepreneurial education programme in universities prepared the students to become self-employed and/or employers of labour?

TABLE 1: Students’ Mean Statuses On Their Capability To Be Self-Employed Or Employers Of Labour On Graduation.

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean status	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1.	On graduation I can be self-employed.	321	215	33	31	3.38	0.81	Accept
2.	I can employ some other people on graduation.	240	287	39	34	3.22	0.80	Accept
3.	I can do something to help the economy of my country.	267	291	12	30	3.3	0.75	Accept
		828	793	84	95	3.31	0.79	Accept

The data presented in Table 1 shows the students accept that the entrepreneurial education programmes they received in the university is preparing them to be self-employed. This is so, given that the mean responses on the above three items are well above the item mean of 2.5

ranging from 3.22 to 3.38. The overall mean is 3.31. The standard deviation of 0.75 to 0.81 responses are very close to each other and invariable close to the mean.

TABLE 2: Students’ Mean Statuses On Risk Management Skills Acquired From The Entrepreneurial Program.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	The programme trained me to manage risk.	147	150	213	90	2.59	1.01	Accept
2	I am prepared to engage in jobs no matter the risk involved.	125	177	205	93	2.56	0.54	Accept
3	I can comfortably face challenges in the job market.	191	207	213	89	2.5	0.92	Accept
4	Running my own business is a lower risk compared to working for somebody.	143	213	153	91	2.68	1.00	Accept
		506	153	784	363	2.58	0.98	Accept

Table 2 shows that all the items are accepted as skills the students possess which they hope to put into practice on graduation. The mean responses of all the four items listed above range from 2.5 to 2.68 which are all accepted given that they are either equal to or greater than the acceptable item mean of 2.5. The

standard deviations are also within the range of 0.54 to 1.01 which shows that the students’ responses are all close to the mean responses. The overall mean acceptability level is 2.58 with a standard deviation of 0.98.

TABLE 3: Students’ Mean Responses On Ability To Be Creative In Establishing An Enterprise.

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	Training has prepared me not to mind working in a rural community.	87	151	241	121	2.34	0.96	Reject
2	Training as undergraduate has prepared me to set up business in rural or urban community.	62	327	149	62	2.65	0.80	Accept
3	Training helped me to be able to propose new solutions to current challenges.	115	239	153	93	2.63	0.42	Accept
4	Based on my programme I am ready to offer creative ideas.	176	263	123	38	2.96	0.87	Accept
		440	980	666	314	2.64	0.93	

Table 3 indicated that the students accepted three out of the four items i.e. the students will be able to set up business in any part of the state (urban or rural) and also able to propose solutions to challenges in life as well as offer creative ideas. They however rejected that the programme prepared them to be able to settle in urban or rural area.

result of inadequate exposure to job-training schemes prior to graduation.

The standard deviations of the responses are however small ranging from 0.42 to 0.96 which shows that their response statuses are close to the mean statuses.

The study also suggests that students accept the fact that the programme of entrepreneurship education they underwent helps in improving on their risk management skills in areas of setting up business and challenges in the job market. This will however help curb the problem of lack of jobs and lack of skills and experiences as contained in National Bureau of statistics (2011).

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the undergraduate students believe that the entrepreneurship education programme they received at school has prepared them to be self-employed, able to employ others and therefore help in the economic growth of society. This shows that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the education programme of the university system about three years ago will help solve the problem of unemployability of university graduates as opined by Agbonna and Ajidagba (2009) that sustained percentage of Nigerian graduates are unemployable especially in the business sector as a

The study further revealed that the educational programme in entrepreneurship is preparing the students to be creative in face of challenges and also enhancing their creative ability. The students however, opined that although the programme has prepared them to set up business in either rural or urban community, they can however not work in the rural areas. These results give credence to the partial achievement of the goals of entrepreneurship education as cited earlier by Paul (2005).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Given that the programme of study at the various levels of education in Nigeria has been reviewed to include entrepreneurship education and other

technical courses, the study revealed that the introduction of the former into university education is now preparing the undergraduates to face the world of work as employers of labour rather than looking forward strictly towards the usual white collar jobs of the government.

The students are also being prepared to take risks in establishing their own businesses and also being creative at job creation. There is therefore, the need for university administrators to involve more expert hands in handling the entrepreneurial courses. The Nigerian government should also help in providing infrastructure and social amenities in the rural areas to curb the rural-urban migration and therefore, encourage entrepreneurs to set up businesses and reside in the rural areas.

The Nigerian government in collaboration with the university administrations should organize more training programmes for graduates to beef up the ones they gained in the universities in the area of entrepreneurial education.

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