ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACQUISITION BY STUDENTS OF EASTERN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract
This paper investigated Entrepreneurship Education and Skills Acquisition by Students of Eastern Nigerian Universities. All the 51085 final year students of the selected universities made up the population. A sample of 1530 was selected through stratified proportionate representation. A 21-item, 4-point scale instrument was used to collect data for answering 3 research questions. The instrument was validated by a team of experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Port-Harcourt. A reliability of $r = 0.79$ was established using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation. The instrument was administered by the researchers. Means were adopted to answer the 3 research questions. Findings revealed that costing, business law, advertising are some of the skills students need to acquire to be self-reliant and concluded that those who want to survive unemployment must make efforts to acquire
skills and recommended that efforts be made by the various
governments to encourage skills acquisition by youths.

The starting point of all successes is the development of a mind conscious of success. Both poverty and riches are the result of the state of mind (Tracy, 2006). The state of mind that is required of students in this zone is that of entrepreneurial consciousness. Nwaogwugwu & Ugaigbe (2008) saw entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities especially through innovation, establish and run the enterprise successfully. Further, Egbo (2009) stated that entrepreneurship involves perception and identification of business opportunities, decision on the location of enterprise, response to an opportunity, risk bearing of all uninsurable risks and the management of the ongoing organization.

All over the world youths pursue different types of education for several reasons. These reasons could be political, economic, social, technological and so on. One of these types of education is Entrepreneurship Education. This is the education that seeks to provide youths with the knowledge, skills and motivations necessary to enable them make successes anywhere. It prepares them to be employers of labour, makes them able to turn ideas into action (Ememe, 2010). Recipients of entrepreneurship education could be self employed rather than roam the streets in search of jobs.

In addition, youths are equipped with skills that can lead them to sustainable living, economic growth and wealth creation (Ememe 2009). Skills are the ability for doing something well especially as gained by learning and practice. From this, it could be noted that most skills are learnt, several others are developed. The skills of entrepreneurship were originally identified by Katz (1974); and elaborated upon by Ukeje & Okorie (1990). These authorities maintained that these skills are necessary for the performance of entrepreneurial assignments. Okoh & Emehi (2008) identified major skills to include: Conceptual, Problem-solving, Influence/Power, Marketing, Enterprising, Financial Management, Time Management, Technical skills, Business skills and so on.

Entrepreneurship skills enhance job creation due to potency of making the graduates perceive business opportunity to be exploited. It provides the trainees opportunity to run their organizations successfully. Egbo (2009) stated that people fail in their entrepreneurial endeavours because of lack of necessary skills, attitude and knowledge of entrepreneurial efforts.
Entrepreneurial skills facilitate growth, profitability, and expansion of entrepreneurial outfits. Entrepreneurs by virtue of the skills acquired are able to manage their on-going businesses efficiently (Agetue & Nnamdi, 2011). Additionally, Uche, Nwabueze & Ememe (2009) posited that to succeed in business, there is need for the youths to be focused. Goals have to be reached, customers satisfied, employees motivated, have vision of where they want their businesses to be in future and be flexible that is understand that the world and the environment in which they operate are constantly changing.

Uzoka & Adetoro (2008) maintain that entrepreneurship success in the new economy requires behavioural skills such as ability to think critically, communicate well and work effectively in teams. It is emphasized that concepts like creativity, risk-taking and flexibility in the face of change are becoming increasingly important in the development of entrepreneurial education skills acquisition (Ememe, 2011).

Entrepreneurial skills and qualities needed to be possessed by these brooding entrepreneurs include: Costing, Knowledge of source of business, Sales, Sales Promotion, Sourcing of Raw materials, Pricing, Services Marketing, Merchandizing and so on. Others are: administrative skills, thinking, enterprising, leadership, risk-taking skills and information skills. Entrepreneurship is all about survival and survival is about life (Onyene, Uche & Nwogbo, 2008). All these skills are essential for the overall entrepreneurial successes.

This paper therefore intends to investigate Entrepreneurship Education and Skills Acquisition in Students of Eastern Nigerian Universities.

Statement of Problem

In Nigeria today, there is massive unemployment rate as against in the past when employers of labour went to the respective institutions of higher learning to recruit their choice of staff. Additionally, higher education in Nigeria has failed to equip the recipients with adequate skills making them over dependent on non-existent white collar jobs. Higher education has been growing; education policy makers and planners have failed to match employment with paper qualifications. Again, is the inability of educational planners to integrate the acquisition of sellable job creation skills in the curriculum that has given rise to graduates whose accomplishments are more on paper qualification and cannot cope with life outside the University.

Self reliance which is a major issue in Nigerian education philosophy appears to be a mirage in the face off competing unemployment challenges. Acquisition of entrepreneurship skills appears to be the solution to these problems.
Purpose of the Study
This paper;
1. determined the adequacy of Financial skills students are exposed to in the course of their entrepreneurial education programmes in higher education institutions.
2. examined the adequacy of Marketing skills students are exposed to in the course if their University entrepreneurial programme.
3. determined the adequacy of Business skills students are exposed to in the course of their University entrepreneurial programme.

Research Questions
The following research questions were posited:
1. How adequate are the financial skills students were exposed to in course of their University Entrepreneurship Programme?
2. How adequate are the Marketing skills students were exposed to in course of their University entrepreneurial education programme?
3. How adequate are the Business skills students were exposed to in course of their University entrepreneurial education programme?

Methodology
This paper adopted the descriptive survey research. All the 51,085 final year students of six (6) selected universities made up the population of the study. A sample of 1, 530 representing 3% of the population was selected through the stratified proportional representation sampling technique.

A 21-item, 4-point rating scale instrument was used to collect data to answer 3 research questions. The instrument was validated by a team of experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt using face and content validities. The reliability of instrument was established using 50 students of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture who are not part of the sample. After the re-administration of the instrument 2 weeks later, the 2 sets of scores were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation that yielded an $r = 0.79$. A total of 1530 copies of the questionnaire were administered to members of the sample. Data from the 4-point scale were accorded weights of 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Weighted mean was used to present findings on research questions.

Results
Research Question 1
How adequate are the financial skills students were exposed to in course of their University Entrepreneurship Programme?
Table 1
Adequacy of Financial Skills Students were Exposed to in Course of Their University Entrepreneurial Education Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Adequacy of Financial Skills</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Costing</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ability to know source of business</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Knowledge of Business Law</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Knowledge of Insurance</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Knowledge of how to obtain loans</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sales Marketing</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster mean</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher the mean score of each skill, the higher the adequacy as perceived by the students. In relation to financial skills, students felt that they were adequately exposed to the entrepreneurship education. They weighted them thoroughly in ascending order: Knowledge of Business Law (2.88), Knowledge of insurance (2.89), how to obtain loans and market services (3.00 for each skill), Pricing (3.10) while the ability to know the source of business and costing rated the highest means of 3.26 and 3.40 respectively.

Based on the data analyzed in research question 1, the financial skills adjudged adequate are: costing, ability to know the source of business, knowledge of business law, how to obtain loans, knowledge of insurance, pricing and service marketing.

Research Question 2
How adequate are the Marketing skills students were exposed to in course of their university entrepreneurial education programme?
Table 2  
Adequacy of Marketing Skills Students were Exposed to in Course of their University Entrepreneurial Education Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Adequacy of Marketing Skills</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Salesmanship</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sales Promotion</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Budgeting &amp; Forecasting</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Wholesaling</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Warehousing</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster mean</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in table 2 indicate that student’s acknowledgement of marketing skills adequacy came as follows: Sales and salesmanship were rated as 3.44 and 3.10 respectively while budget and forecasting, advertising and sales promotion were assessed as 3.26, 3.18 and 3.30 respectively. Wholesaling and warehousing skills were scored 2.92 and 3.21 respectively.

From the forgoing, marketing skills adjudged adequate include: Sales and Salesmanship, Sales Promotion, budget and budget forecasting, advertising, warehousing and wholesaling.

Research Question 3
How adequate are the Business skills the students were exposed to in the course of their University entrepreneurial education programme?
Table 3
Adequacy of Business Skills Students were Exposed to in Course of Their University Entrepreneurial Education Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Adequacy of Business Skills</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Business Ownership</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Steps involved in Starting Business</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sourcing of Raw Material</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>How to determine employee wages</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>How to hire employee</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Retailing</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Merchandizing</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster mean</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 3 shows that Business skills students rated in ascending order are: How to hire employees and steps involved in starting a business were each scored 3.22; followed by Retailing (3.16), Business ownership (3.13), merchandizing (3.09) while how to determine employee wages and sourcing of raw materials were scored 2.93 and 2.90 respectively.

When table 1, 2 and 3 were holistically viewed, it could be discerned that there is a strong acknowledgement of the adequacy of entrepreneurship education skills the programme exposed the students to. The highest aggregate mean were rated for the group of skills under marketing (3.20), followed by business skills (3.09), financial skills (3.08)

Summary of Findings
Data analyzed exposed the following Findings:
The University entrepreneurship education programmes adequately exposed students to the following entrepreneurial skills:

1. Financial skills such as costing, ability to know the source of business law, how to obtain loans, knowledge of insurance, pricing and service marketing.
2. Marketing skills such as sales and salesmanship, sales promotion, budget and budget forecasting, advertising, warehousing and wholesaling.
3. Business skills such as business ownership, steps involved in starting a business, sourcing of raw materials, determining employee wages, how to hire employees, retailing and merchandizing.

Discussion of Results

Findings in table 1 indicate that costing, knowledge of business law are some of the financial skills found adequate. These are perfectly in agreement with the findings of Elechi (2007) and Odedokun, Udokaogu & Osuji (2002) who maintained that costing is an essential skill which aids in establishing selling prices. Business law is important to enable the entrepreneur have a balanced knowledge of contracts and agreements that are legally binding.

Results in table 2 indicate that sales and salesmanship constitute very important skills brooding entrepreneurs should have adequate knowledge of. This was why Bunnet (1984) described them as interaction of sellers and buyers for them to include the act and purpose of facilitating exchange to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. In support of the above, Anyanwu (2000) believes that sales involves salesmanship which is the ability to interpret product and sales.

Findings in table 3 show that business ownership, sourcing of raw materials are adequate business skills young entrepreneurs need to possess. These are supported by the works of Anyanwu & Onuoha (1999), Odedokun (2002) who noted that starting a business may be suicidal unless there is genuine knowledge of business ownership, business knowledge and adequate knowledge of source of raw materials. All these knowledge definitely portend a great success for the young entrepreneur who wants to make entrepreneurial career.

Conclusions

The era of government employment is gradually becoming over except in certain vital skills. Those who want to survive unemployment in this country must make efforts to acquire adequate skills that will make them self employed, self reliant and job providers.

Judging from the enthusiastic responses to the acquisition of adequate entrepreneurship skills as revealed by the results of the study, inspite of the myriads of challenges facing the programmes in Nigeria where there is unfavourable entrepreneurial climate, it can be concluded that recipients of these skills are capable of being self reliant, able to create wealth and capable of providing jobs for themselves.
Recommendations

From the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Efforts should be made by government to encourage these young entrepreneurs establish their own business by providing them with the initial soft loans. This will enable the young entrepreneurs kick-start their own business.

2. Efforts should be made by government to make entrepreneurship environment very friendly to enable young entrepreneurs delve into the business of entrepreneurship.

3. Recipients of these skills should be made to exhibit their products to younger generation to inspire them. This will enable them see them as role models.

4. Efforts should be made by the various governments to encourage skills acquisition by youths.

References


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Nigeria (APSHON), Held on the 22nd June, 2011 at Kolpin Society Auditorium, Umuahia


