

IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATION AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF TWO NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES.

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of entrepreneurship education programme on inclination to entrepreneurial amongst undergraduates of two Nigerian Universities. The two Nigerian University are Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, which were established at different times and located in the North Central and South Western Nigeria respectively. The study adopted a survey design. A sample of 330 students was selected from a population of 3000 final year undergraduates. Three hypotheses were formulated and X^2 statistic was used to analyze the data. Findings from the study are that the exposure to entrepreneurship education strongly inclined undergraduates to entrepreneurship. Also, the programme enriched their knowledge on starting, running and owning businesses. Likewise it changed their negative perceptions about skill acquisition and self employment. The study recommended among others that the spirit of entrepreneurship should be properly nurtured through appropriate pedagogical approached, curriculum and intenship programmes.

Higher education in Nigeria has experienced tremendous increase as there was only one university in 1948-University of Ibadan. Today there are over one hundred and twenty-three universities (Federal, State and Private) and more are being proposed (Fapohunda, 2014). The growth is in response to the high demand for admissions. As many students are enrolled in these universities for different courses of study, so are they graduated into the labour market that is bereft of commensurate employment. This then demands for appropriate training of the students to be gainfully employed or self employed.

However, the curriculum operational in institutions of higher learning is fashioned after the British education system. This was devoid of scientific knowledge, vocational, and technical skills. Technical education for self employment was made to look inferior to liberal education which kept many away from it. So, as many candidates have admission into and are enrolled in courses such as; public administration, history, linguistics, biology, physics, and so on, without government employment on graduation, it was difficult for these graduates to be self-employed, thereby exploding the labour market with an army of unemployed youths to a rate as high as 70.14 percent in 2008 (Yoloye, 2008). This has since risen to as high as 80 percent in 2013 (Bakare, 2013)

Before now, 1948 to 2008 efforts were made by the governments to ensure that a curriculum which reflects Nigerian aspirations was put in place. Such efforts include the national curriculum conference of 1969 that paved way for the National Policy on Education of 1977. The fall out of the policy brought about skill training for self – employment by instituting the 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1980. The system of education was to inculcate in the students relevant scientific knowledge, technical and vocational skills for self employment. The hope being that, by the time the products of the system leave school, they would be gainfully employed or self employed.

Another programme with similar intention was the National Directorate of Employment of 1989, with the aim to train graduates and non-graduates for skill acquisition as a way of enabling them to be self employed. These programs, as laudable as they were, suffered deficiency in their implementation due to lack of political will and commitment to education, poor funding, political exigency, apathy to anything vocational training by youths, parents, teachers and another stakeholders and over politicization of education (Kolawole, 2011). These problems, in addition to lack of well-motivated and qualified teachers, made a mess of the policy and system of education. Thus, the country has not fully benefited from the well-thought-out education system. As a result of the

curriculum challenge therefore, the country has not effectively attained the federal government's developmental programmes such as the "7-point agenda", and "vision 20-2020".

As the curriculum in schools was fashioned after schools in America and Europe, particularly those of Britain the colonial master of Nigeria still affect our educational training despite the curriculum conference of 1969 (Aladekomo, 2004). Despite that, the conference was held to fashion out a new curriculum for Nigeria where vocational and technical skills acquisition are given priority. However, the influence of liberal studies such as administrative studies, office work rather than practical skill subjects erode strongly on Nigeria youths' minds contributing to the rise in the rate of youths unemployment to as high as 80 percent if not more" (Bakare, 2013).

To respond to the high rate of underemployment among graduates of our tertiary institutions, the federal government through the vice –chancellors, rectors and provosts met and identified the importance of introducing Entrepreneurship Education into the Nigerian tertiary institutions' curricula. This, they believed would curtail the rate of youths/graduates unemployment in the country. This among other challenges gave birth in 2006 to Entrepreneurship education in Universities including the federal University of Agriculture (FUAM), Makurdi, Benue State, and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-ife, Osun State.

The introduction of the programme is a welcome development; however, several programmes of similar design introduced in the past in the educational system met with inferior to liberal studies. Example of such programmes include: 6-3-3-4 system of education of 1980 and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) of 1989. These programmes were meant to train the youths to acquire skills both in Vocational, Technical Skills and scientific knowledge for self-employment or skilled employment. Apart from apathy, the programs suffered deficiency of implementation greatly. For Entrepreneurship education which is seen as a panacea for youth's unemployment, one wonders if the youths themselves would show enthusiasm and participate fully in it since practical training is embedded in its curriculum content.

However, to eradicate poverty, youth's restiveness and lack of jobs in Nigeria only the teaching of courses with practical skills can help. This will guarantee self-employment or massive employment of graduates. Another good thing is that the teaching of entrepreneurship education in the educational system will erode the biased view held that practical skill courses are inferior to liberal education. There is therefore, the need to properly articulate ways to implement the programme so that it will enable graduates start and own their businesses unlike the 6-3-3-4 system of education and the NDE. This then, requires understanding of the factors in the programme that will facilitate its acceptability by the youths and undergraduates to fully participate in it. That is what this study has done, to examine the impact of the programme on entrepreneurial inclination of undergraduates in two Nigeria Universities.

Statement of the Study

The Nigerian peoples' attitude to skills training policies and programmes especially in the educational sector leaves much to be desired. Therefore, the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria Universities even as commendable as it is, one remains very doubtful about its acceptability by the society, parents, and students. Though, the subject of entrepreneurship has continued to attract interest from both academicians and policy makers to the extent that many business schools in the universities have included it as part of their undergraduate and graduate curricula, (Obisanya, 2010).

Similarly, empirical research studies exploring the extent to which entrepreneurial education influence the decision to become an entrepreneur are steadily increasing. Such studies including those of Kennedy, Drennan, Renfrow and Watson (2003), Franke and Luthje (2004), and Tounes(2006). However, in Nigeria not much research is done in this direction. Therefore to reiterate Kennedy (2003), if programmes and policies are to be developed to enhance entrepreneurial behavior, then a keen understanding of the factors that influence and shape an individual's intention to go entrepreneurial are critical.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Entrepreneurial education does not significantly influence undergraduates' inclination to entrepreneurship.
2. The curriculum content of the entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence undergraduates' inclination to entrepreneurship.
3. Pedagogical approaches or instructional methods of entrepreneurship education do not significantly influence undergraduates' inclination to entrepreneurship.

Research Design

The research design for the study is survey design. This is considered appropriate by the researchers, since one of the objectives for undertaking the study was to assess the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention of undergraduates of the two Nigeria Universities. The variables were measured after the education stimulus. Survey approach was regarded as appropriate for the study of this nature for capturing data on opinions and behavioral change after a stimulus (Kazi & Khalid, 2012).

Variables studied include: entrepreneurial inclination, entrepreneurship curriculum content, the pedagogical approaches (instructional methods), entrepreneurship internship programme, the university's role to promote entrepreneurship education and the university entrepreneurship supportive environment (physical facilities). Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance and research questions answered.

Population

The target population consisted of 3000 final year undergraduate students from the two selected Universities which are, Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (UAM) Benue State with a population of 1550 while Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife, Osun State, with a population of 1450. Who have had undertaken courses in entrepreneurship education for over 2 academic sessions 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 at the main target of conducting this study. And as final year students, they were due to face the realities of the world of work where jobs are either limited or not available at all. The two Universities were chosen because of their geographical locations. One University in the West covering Eastern and Southern regions, while University of Agriculture Makurdi, takes care of Northern region. The two Universities have made up the coverage of all Nigerian universities.

Sample and Sampling.

Two departments from each of the two selected universities were purposively chosen for the study on the basis that their students have been exposed to entrepreneurship education for a consistent period of time (200 and 300 levels) respectively. A sample of 300 undergraduate was selected from the target population of 3000 students of the two universities who were in their final year (2014/2015 Session). To calculate the sample size that is fairly representative of the target population, the Yaro Yamane (1976) formula as cited in Udofia (2011) was. After which, random sampling method of hat and draw was used to pick the sample from the two Universities in the ratio of 52:48 giving a figure of 184 for Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi and 166 for Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife respectively. Emaikwu (2008), opined that, the method of hat and draw uses balloting either with or without freplacemt.

Instrumentation

In order to operationalize the variables, entrepreneurship intention questions were adopted from Linan and Chen (2006) and modified for use while entrepreneurship education questions were designed based on literatures reviewed. The instrument termed "Entrepreneurship intention Questionnaire" (EIQ) has two sections, A and B. Section A consisted of demographic data: age, sex and degree programme. While section B consisted of indicators that measure Six (6) constructs of entrepreneurship education (EE). The constructs included: entrepreneurship inclination, entrepreneurship curriculum content, the pedagogical approaches, internship programme, the University's role to promote entrepreneurship and the university's entrepreneurship supportive

environment amongst students. The rating scale for the instrument was based on a 5-point Likert-scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5 strongly Agree).

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

Hypothesis One

Entrepreneurship education does not significantly influence inclination of undergraduate students to entrepreneurship.

To test this hypothesis, the Chi-square (X^2) statistics used to test their level of significance relationships. The results are shown in Table1.

Table 1: Mean, Standard deviation and Chi-Square test to what extent entrepreneurial education incline undergraduates to entrepreneurship

VARIABLE	X	δ	X^{2-cal}	$X^{2-critical}$	df
Entrepreneurial Inclination of Undergraduates to entrepreneurship	4.71	.22	107.61	9.01	3

P < .05; N = 330

The results in Table1 show that the calculated X^2 - value (107.61) is higher than the critical X^2 – value (9.01) at .05 level of significance with 3 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that entrepreneurial education significantly influences inclination of undergraduates to entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis Two

Entrepreneurship curriculum content does not significantly incline undergraduates to entrepreneurship

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Chi-Square test on to what extent Entrepreneurship Curriculum content incline undergraduates to entrepreneurship

VARIABLE	X	δ	X^{2-cal}	$X^{2-critical}$	df
Entrepreneurial Inclination of Undergraduates to entrepreneurship	4.72	.27	218.44	5.05	5

P < .05; n = 330

The results in Table 2 show that the calculated X^2 - value (218.44) is higher than the critical X^2 – value (5.05) at .05 level of significance with 5 degree of freedom. This implies that entrepreneurial Curriculum contents significantly impacted undergraduates’ entrepreneurial inclination. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted meaning that the entrepreneurship curriculum content significantly inclines undergraduates to entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis Three:

Pedagogical approaches of Entrepreneurship Education do no significantly incline undergraduate students to entrepreneurship.

To test this hypothesis, the observed and expected mean frequencies of the respondents were computed and Chi-square (X^2) statistic used and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean, Standard deviation and Chi-square test on to what extent Pedagogical approaches incline undergraduates to Entrepreneurship

VARIABLE	X	δ	X^{2-cal}	$X^{2-critical}$	df
Entrepreneurial Inclination of Undergraduates to entrepreneurship	4.49	.4	158.39	9.01	3

P < .05; n = 330

The results in Table 3 show that, the calculated X^2 - value (158.39) is higher than the critical X^2 – value (9.01) at .05 level of significance with 3 degree of freedom. This means that the pedagogical approaches of entrepreneurship education significantly influence the entrepreneurial inclination of undergraduates. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted meaning that pedagogical approaches impacted undergraduates inclination for entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that, entrepreneurship constructs significantly influence undergraduates' propensity and inclination for entrepreneurship. The constructs includes; internship programme which has the strongest impact on entrepreneurship inclination, followed by entrepreneurship curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, the university entrepreneurship supportive environment, and the university's role to promote makers, stakeholders, donor agencies and the society should ensure that entrepreneurship education is given its rightful place in the university education curricula. This will generate self awareness amongst youths and thereby increase their inclination to entrepreneurship and reduce youth's restiveness. It will also enhance economic development and growth in the nation, as entrepreneurship was the engine driving the economy of the nations throughout the world

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

1. The spirit of entrepreneurship should be well nurtured through adequate curriculum contents in the universities, such curriculum should incorporate topics as; fund sourcing, marketing strategies, starting and running a business.
2. Internship programme should be given high priority as it is hands-on-experience programme. This will enhance and reinforce practical skills in undergraduate during and after training.
3. The pedagogical approaches should be such that are different from the traditional method of teaching (lectures series) but involve brainstorming, question and answers sessions and the use of seasoned entrepreneurs as guest lecturers. This will enhance attitudinal change among the undergraduates and facilitate better appreciation of the programme.
4. The university should rally support from entrepreneurs such as in the establishment of the business incubators for the training of undergraduates while in the school. Also identify sources of funds and facilitate undergraduate access to them to start their own business even while in the school. For this will encourage them to continue after leaving school.
5. The university's role to promote entrepreneurship should be such that encourage dialogue between undergraduates themselves and with the management of the university. This will build confidence in the undergraduates while in and after leaving school.

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