

INTRODUCTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AT THE BASIC EDUCATION LEVEL: TEACHERS' RESPONSE

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated into Teachers' responses towards the introduction of entrepreneurial education at basic education level. Four research questions guided the study. Cluster random sampling technique was used in choosing a sample of 33 schools with 264 teachers. Instrument used was 16 item questionnaire structured to elicit information from the respondents. The validity was assured by two lecturers, while the reliability was carried out using test-retest method. Data were analysed using mean with 2.5 as the bases for acceptance and rejection. Results indicate that teachers responded positively towards entrepreneurship into curriculum, accepted the provided methods for learning entrepreneurship, lack competencies for teaching the subject, etc. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that teachers should be given appropriate in-service teacher education programme, better material condition for teaching as well as better condition for professional development in entrepreneurship competencies.

The rapid increase in globalization and the strengthening of democratic ideals have become more pronounced in the 21st century. As nations sought cooperation, the improvement of basic life quality and learning to live together became more critical. Respect for the rule of law, basic human right, improvement of the environment, reduction of poverty, economic restricting and others are some of the issues that transcend national boundaries. Nigeria's response to these global emerging issues was the adoption and implementation of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and a new vision 2020 of education (NPC, 2010). The main pillar Of the Vision 20:2020 is to guarantee the well being and productivity of the people with education as the bedrock. And to establish a modern and vibrant system that ensures the maximum development of the potentials of individuals and promotes a knowledge driven

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society that propels the nation's development. The ability to acquire and utilize knowledge and skills effectively is the key to the growth and development that will propel Nigeria to become one of the 20 largest economies by the year 2020.

The Nigeria economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) recognizes education as the vital transformational tool and a formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. Basic education for all is a necessity and should be seen as a stepping-stone to higher capabilities and capacities. Education has gone beyond the mere acquisition of the ability to read and write or even to ensure a job. According to Yusuf and Ajidagba (2010), education has expanded to horizon of the educated beyond immediate needs so as to cover higher hierarchy needs in a sustained framework. This in effect means that education develops skill set and mind set individuals in this global economy which looks for the ability to use innovations both adaptive and productive for problem solving.

The National economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (2004) has identified that the national education system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education. It further stated that the goal of wealth creation, empowerment generation, poverty reduction and value reorientation can be effectively pursued, attained and sustained only through an efficient, relevant and functional education system.

The problem the nation is facing is the high unemployment rate and the rise in the rate of poverty despite the well structured education policy. Students who graduate from our educational institutions lack the basic qualification for the labour market. The curriculum is not tailored towards life long employable skills. The basic competencies for applied skills for job market are lacking, literacy skills remain unattained goals for many students. The best of these students struggle to acquire the scientific and specialized required for today's competitive world.

As part of the solution, and to make education attain these elements of the NEEDS, the elements of the National Policy on Education (5th edition) were informed by the need to "improve and refocus education quality and service delivery for the accelerated attainment of NEEDS' goals of social and economic transformation, wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment generation and value reorientation". This is seen in the incorporation of Entrepreneurial Capacity building into the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. The National Policy on Education (5th Edition) for Entrepreneurial studies as one of the compulsory subjects offered in the Senior Secondary Education which aims to achieve the goals of NEEDS.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

In recent times there is the belief that one of the most successful ways to promote entrepreneurship is through education. It is also believed that if learners are exposed to entrepreneurial education, it will enable them acquire practical and problem solving skills and that is why experts advocate the introduction of radical

changes in order to improve education at the primary, secondary and even tertiary levels. This makes the introduction of entrepreneurship education very important in improving the service delivery aspect of education.

Entrepreneurship has been severally defined by different writers. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) saw entrepreneurship as the process through which opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited. Timmons (2004) saw entrepreneurship as a process through which all the functions, activities and actions associated with recognizing opportunities and taking concrete actions to implement new ideas. This, in today's conception goes beyond establishment of a business. It is the acquisition of skills, ideas, competencies for the sake of creating employment for self and others. According to Akpomi and Amadi (2010) "Entrepreneurship is the acquisition of relevant competencies that enable an individual seek and run enterprises successfully. This is the acquisition of competencies and knowledge which enable the learner to make use of available resources to produce goods and services.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and transform opportunities of different kinds. It is about increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. It goes beyond creation of business. It is that education and training which allow the learner to develop and use their creativity to take initiative responsibility and risks. In effect, it is that type of education that develops the creative mind, skill of positive thinking and reflective mind. Hindle (2004) listed some objectives of entrepreneurship education as follows;

1. To create and harness the power of entrepreneurship in an individual in order to turn out a new generation of students who can start new enterprise or renew existing business.
2. To nurture and develop entrepreneurial characteristics in an individual and encourage that individual to become an entrepreneur while acknowledging that not all individuals exposed to entrepreneurship will become entrepreneurs or establish a business.
3. To develop innovation in young people and to develop their skills to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal and community business and work opportunities of which being self employed is one.

Statement of the Problem

These objectives simply tend to clarify that the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the National Policy on Education for UBE is aimed at encouraging and building the skill that would propel the individual for economic development of himself , his environment and become self reliant. What then forms the bases for achieving this?

This broad based policy cannot be realized without inculcating the entrepreneurial skill competencies in the teachers who are the main organs to transmit the skills. The

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teachers have glaringly become the point of emphasis and the need therefore arises to investigate Universal Basic Education teachers' readiness to implement the entrepreneurial policy in Imo State

Purpose of the Study

This study is specifically aimed at;

- a. Finding out how UBE teachers view inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the curriculum of the Universal Basic Education in Nigeria.
- b. Find out the competencies UBE teachers possess as to implement the entrepreneurial policy in UBE.
- c. Find out how UBE teachers will best learn the entrepreneurial concepts and practices to teach the students.
- d. Find out the aspects of training UBE teachers perceive to be the most useful for them.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- a) How do UBE school teachers view the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the basic education curriculum?
- b) What competencies do UBE teachers possess as to implement the entrepreneurial education policy?
- c) How would UBE teachers' best learn the entrepreneurial concepts and practices to teach the student?
- d) What aspects of training do UBE teachers perceive to be most useful for them?

Methodology

This study confined to the Owerri Val Zone of Imo State. There are 410 UBE schools in the zone. The reason for selecting Owerri was based on the consideration that it will fully represent the picture of a homogeneous group in terms of economic environment. The study is a descriptive survey study a four point Likert scale questionnaire was used for data collection.

Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to choose 33 schools and 264 teachers for the study. The questionnaire was made up of 16 items that sought teachers' views on introduction of entrepreneurship into the basic education curriculum. A total of 198 copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned by the teachers used for the study. The instrument was validated by a curriculum expert and an expert in measurement and evaluation. Reliability of the instrument was carried out using test-retest approach and computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient, giving reliability coefficient of 0.75.

Data were analysed using mean with 2.5 as the bases for acceptance and rejection.

Results and Findings

The first research questions were on how the teachers view the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the UBE curriculum. Results are presented on the tables below.

Research Question 1: How do UBE teachers view the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the basic curriculum?

1: Mean Response of Teachers on the Inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in the UBE Curriculum.

Options	SA	A	D	SD	SX	Means	Decision
Entrepreneurship should first be conceptualized.	264	120	80	52	516	2.6	Accepted
We are not ready for the implementation of the curriculum.	256	210	80	4	550	2.7	Accepted
It should be taken as an extra curricula activity.	112	180	160	30	482	2.4	Rejected
Entrepreneurship should be taught as a cross curricula module.	160	160	180	14	514	2.5	Accepted
Average					10.2	2.55	Accepted

Data above shows the teachers' positive opinion to the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the UIBE curriculum. With an average mean of 2.55, they view the introduction very positively.

Table 1 above shows that the UBE teachers responded positively to the provided parameters except the third option with the mean of 2.4 which is below 2.5 showing that they view the introduction of entrepreneurship education into the UBE curriculum positively.

Research Question 2 What competencies do teachers possess to implement the entrepreneurship education curriculum?

Table 2: Mean Response of Teachers on the Competencies they Posses to Teach Entrepreneurship Curriculum.

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Sx	Means	Decision
Cognitive skill.	108	180	100	31	419	2.1	Reject
Problem solving skill.	48	252	120	42	462	2.3	Reject
Experiential career awareness skill.	160	102	154	50	366	1.8	Reject
Capacity to act occupationally in an entrepreneurial setting.	80	120	100	100	376	1.9	Reject
Average						2.04	Reject

In table 2 above, the analysis of the teachers' responses indicates a negative response to the research question. With an average mean of 2.04 which is below 2.5 and the response is hereby rejected.

Question 3: How best would UBE teachers learn the entrepreneurship concepts and practices to teach the students?

Table 3: Mean Response of UBE Teachers on the Best Methods to Learn Entrepreneurship Education Concepts and Practices.

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Sx	Means	Decision
Reading case study of successful innovative entrepreneurs.	264	180	84	30	558	2.8	Accept
Through teacher re-training programmes in the mastery of entrepreneurial knowledge.	236	210	60	39	545	2.7	Accept
Organizing in-house training programmes.	220	180	100	33	533	2.6	Accept
Application of new teaching methods.	220	204	100	25	549	2.7	Accept
Average					10.8	2.7	Accept

Data in table 3 above shows that all the options were accepted by the respondents. Again the average mean is 2.7 which indicate a positive response.

Question 4: What aspects of training do teachers perceive to be most useful for them to acquire entrepreneurship education competencies?

Table 4: Mean Response on The Aspect of Training UBE Teachers Perceive as the Most Useful to Implement the Entrepreneurship Policy.

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Sx	Means	Decision
Training in the mastery of entrepreneurial competencies.	304	120	104	30	559	2.8	Accepted
Training in teaching skills and application of new teaching methods.	266	138	88	33	519	2.6	Accepted
Training in communication skills. Training in the development of Teaching materials.	188 252	189 153	108 100	34 34	519 539	2.6 2.7	Accepted
Average					10.7	2.6	Accepted

Data in Table 4 above shows that the UBE teachers accepted all the options on the questionnaire by scoring above the mean of 2.5 with the score of 2.6. This indicates that all the parameters provided are very useful to implement the entrepreneurship policy.

Discussion of Findings

The results in the study indicate that the basic school teachers agree that Entrepreneurship Education should be included in the UBE curriculum. This is because of the many benefits the individual learner would get if exposed to the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of entrepreneurship in the face of growing unemployment. This finding is in line with Yusuf and Ajidagba (2010) who observed that graduates from basic education are not qualified for the labour market. The positive view of the teachers is a reflection on the life long education in keeping with the provisions of the National Policy on Education which advocates respect for dignity of labour.

The finding also shows that the teachers have little or no competencies in entrepreneurship education. The research findings indicate that certain prerequisite entrepreneurial education competencies for pedagogical implementation of the entrepreneurship curriculum at the Basic Education level are lacking in the teachers. Competencies in entrepreneurship identified as the ability to command all levels of thought from the most abstract thoughts to the most concrete instances and details (Seet and Seet, 2006). This they identified as the main driving force for creativity and drive to achieve. In

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other words, cognitive ability or skill is the main driving creative ability. This is required for success in any teaching and learning environment.

Finding also shows a positive view on choice of the best method to learn entrepreneurship concept and practise. Reading the aspects of training, they rated training in the entrepreneurial knowledge, followed by training in teaching skills and application of new teaching methods. Baranovic and Stibic (2010) found in a study on development of entrepreneurial competence in teachers of elementary schools, that majority of teachers have not had any formal training in entrepreneurial education at all.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The purpose of this paper is to find the views of Basic Education teachers on the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the UBE curriculum. The study has shown that teachers are actually not ready to implement the policy. Among their fears is that they have had no previous training in entrepreneurship skill, its mode of presentation in a pedagogical setting. The study also revealed that Basic Education teachers are desirous to adopt the innovation if retrained and equipped.

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that appropriate in-service teacher education programmes, better material conditions for teaching in general and better condition be given to teachers to enhance their personal development in entrepreneurial competencies.

It is also recommended that entrepreneurship skills and competences be introduced into the pre-service teacher training programmes for class and subject teachers. Specific professional development programmes aimed at developing further skill in teaching entrepreneurship competencies should also be developed.

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