

MANAGEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS' SKILL ACQUISITION IN UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

In view of the evolution of the high level of unemployment in Nigeria, the entrepreneurship education as established in the universities in order to curb it and surmount its attendant effects. This study therefore aimed at investigating the ways the management of the universities is executing this noble programme. Two research questions were posed and two hypotheses formulated. Survey research design was adopted. The sample was 3,366 academic staff and students in the Entrepreneurship Centres of the Universities. Rating scale was used for data collection. Mean was used to answer research questions while z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed among others that while the management is making some efforts, a lot are still needed to be done to ensure a better management of the entrepreneurship education that will benefit the society. Recommendations included among others that the school management should make frantic efforts to ensure a better management of the entrepreneurship education programme that will benefit the society.

Keywords: *Education, Management, Entrepreneurship Education, Skill Acquisition, Unemployment*

Introduction

The significance of education in the developmental strides of both the individual and society can not be over-emphasized. It is the instrument for change par excellence both in the life of individuals and development of a nation. Constantly, the educational system is being subjected to changes (reforms) to suit the ever changing needs of time. The reform that brought entrepreneurship education into focus was necessitated by the rising wave of unemployment of school graduates, (Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu, 2013). The faith of the school graduates in white collar jobs as the only type of jobs befitting to them can no longer stand the taste of time. Paid jobs are not readily available, probably because of increase in human population without equal increase in job opportunities coupled with the global economic meltdown that caused the closedown

of many small and medium scale enterprises.

An entrepreneur is any person that creates or perceives business opportunities and take advantage of available scarce resources, as well as use them profitably. He alone bears the non-insurable risks as he directs the human and natural resources at his disposal to achieve his business goals. Thus, not all businessmen are entrepreneurs. To qualify as an entrepreneur therefore entails that one must possess some latent traits that could be evolved through organized training. It is not sufficient just to be a business man. An entrepreneur must be an originator of profitable business ideas and must have the ability to perceive viable business opportunities (Okafor, 2014). He should have the ability to combine available resources in such a way as to guarantee success and most of all should be an employer of productive labour. These attributes are therefore expected to be

nurtured through the study of entrepreneurship in the institutions of learning. The proper management of this programme is therefore very essential and needs to be taken care of by the institutional heads.

Usually, the head of an institution who is the school administrator takes specific areas of role or tasks to function as the chief executive of the institution. In this sense, the management of entrepreneurship education in universities that is geared towards reduction of graduate unemployment, is the operational function of the Vice-Chancellor and his management team. There are a number of administrative task areas available for the Vice-Chancellor to adopt in the full realization of the stated educational objectives specifically for entrepreneurial skill acquisition studies. Four administrative tasks out of the six discussed by Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2011) are relevant to the background of this study. Those tasks relevant to this study include: Administration of instructional programmes, personnel administration, financial management and facilities management. Similarly, Njoku (2005), sees Entrepreneurship as the identification of a new business

opportunity and the mobilization of Economic resources to initiate a new business or regenerate an existing business under the conditions of risks and uncertainty, for the purpose of making profits under private ownership which is an instrument to fight against poverty created by unemployment.

On the other hand, Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu (2013) stated that entrepreneurship education is an empowerment strategy deliberately designed to provide career information to students to enable them relate interests, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities. In universities programmes entrepreneurial studies are taught as general compulsory courses to all students regardless of their individual programmes. Today the present management of Entrepreneurship Education seems not to be yielding the desired objective for which it was set up because it has not been able to reduce unemployment of graduates (Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu, 2013). Entrepreneurship education stresses not just knowing but doing and the curriculum is packaged to do the following:

- a. Teach essential skills for daily creative living;
- b. Reduce unemployment by generating employment through self-sufficiency;
- c. Reduce poverty, illness and promote good health;
- d. Steady supply of qualitative manpower made possible through human development;
- e. Develop private sector (Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu, 2013).

Through entrepreneurship education the students are challenged to become employment generators rather than job seekers. They are meant to become entrepreneurs in their own right. They are prepared to make bold to trust and believe in themselves, trust their capabilities and create a niche through which they make positive impact in the society (Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu, 2013). All that it takes is for the students to change the long standing belief in the government jobs and learn to cultivate favourable dispositions towards entrepreneurship to start their own business.

The introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria tertiary institutions, is an assurance that the vision of students is sharpened in such a way that the average student can translate visions into economic and commercial activities that are capable of enhancing the wellbeing of the entire citizenry. With that, they can be enabled to identify feasible and viable business opportunities and have special activities in assembling and organizing the necessary resources to exploit the opportunities at a profit (Epemgban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu, 2013).

A graduate is one who has passed through a formal institution and passed some prescribed tests which in turn enabled him/her to receive credentials equivalent to that level of education. Therefore graduate unemployment occurs in the economy if there are people who are capable of working and who are qualified by age, law, custom and other factors to work but who cannot find jobs. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy, the higher the poverty level and associated welfare challenges (Fajana, 2000).

On the other hand, management is a very complex activity encompassing a variety of approaches, techniques, strategies and modalities. The two most common are management process and management functions. Management process are activities performed by majority of individual managers in order to transform resources for example planning, organizing, staffing and decision making while management functions are distinct areas of management practice which involves only a fraction of all managers for example marketing, operations, human resources and finance (Nwankwo, 2014).

As a matter of fact, the human relation movement approved social organization like the school to operate a combination of the classical bureaucracy and human relations styles of management. In the university Education the Vice-Chancellor is the leader involved in the production of graduates, similar to the output of the educational industry. Production is the transformation of resources into goods or services that people need or want which is applicable to skilled graduates. There

are three common terms in leadership which include influencing, motivating and relating (communicating) with people towards specific goals, (Nwankwo, 2014). In the management of Education, planning may be examined as a function or as a process. The overall essence of planning whether as a function or as a process are three fold: Desired goal, use of resources and optimum results and minimal unproductive time and waste (Nwankwo, 2014). Therefore, in order to actualize the much desired goals in Education, these stakeholders in Education, the Vice-Chancellors, Provosts, Rectors, Principals, Teachers, parents, Students and other lovers of education are to team up and refocus on the management of entrepreneurship education to really give our graduates skill that will keep them self employed and reduce unemployment (Nwankwo, 2014).

In a related development, Ofor (2014) stated that skills are not acquired in a vacuum, they are acquired through life experience. Skills are learned and lack of employable skills is the reason for unemployment of school graduates which is a direct indictment of the

nations educational system. The essence of education is to acquire skills that will enable one to be relevant in the society in which he or she belongs. The present rate of rising wave of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria poses unanswered questions, whether these graduates actually acquired skills while in school. Without skills unemployment will be on the increase since the paid jobs are not readily available.

Education in Nigerian higher institutions has been identified to be grossly deficient and ineffective (Gabadeen and Raimi, 2012) on account of poor funding, teaching method, inadequate textbooks and inadequate experienced lecturers and other serious challenging factors. Finally, Ijaiya (2014) diagnosed these challenges hindering success in Entrepreneurship education and linked it to lack of right skills that could make one employable. These challenges agitated the mind of the researcher to ask the question, whether the introduction of entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition in universities is being managed properly to attain the

objectives for which it was set up is the gap the study seeks to fill.

The theory that guides this paper is the Entrepreneurship Development Theory of Poverty Reduction which was propounded by Schumpeter in 1934. To him entrepreneurs in the market usually utilize the advantage provided by the market conditions and the environment to come up with brilliant ideas, creativity and innovations to make new products.

This theory is related to this study because it sees an entrepreneur as an innovator and as the prime mover of economic development and this depicts the need for the proper management of the programme that yields the entrepreneurs. Investigating the processes involved in its management is therefore needful.

Empirically, Hodgetts and Kuratko, (2019) conducted a study on the impacts of entrepreneurship education and the results revealed that entrepreneurship education develops the knowledge of a process whereby an individual or a group of individuals who use organized efforts and means to pursue opportunities to create value

and growth by fulfilling wants and needs through innovation and uniqueness, and that the process has the tendency of maintaining curriculum. Smith and Peterson, (2016) on the other hand, conducted a research on entrepreneurship education and development of skills, and found that entrepreneurship education focuses on the development of skills or attributes that enable the realization of opportunities, where management of education is focused on the best way to operate existing hierarchies.

Statement of Problem

The researcher speculated a highly growing rate of unemployment and its attendant negative characteristics in recent times. This is equally evident in the reported cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, drug addiction, youth restiveness, prostitution etc. Series of efforts have been made to minimize the level of graduate unemployment and one of such is entrepreneurship education. The introduction of entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course at the tertiary level

of education since 2006 for skill acquisition is meant to solve the problem of graduates unemployment. It is believed that achieving the objectives of entrepreneurship education will automatically resolve the problem of unemployment and its attendant negative characteristics. This however, seem not to be the case as many graduates are still seen roaming the street in search of non-existing government jobs. The questions agitating the minds of many including the researcher are; what is the relevance of the introduction of entrepreneurship education? How is the entire program managed in universities to achieve the desired goals?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the management of entrepreneurship education for skill acquisition among students in universities in Imo State..

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. identify the extent to which the university administrators manage entrepreneurship

- education instructional programmes;
- ii. Ascertain the extent to which the university administrators manage entrepreneurship personnel;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent do university administrators manage entrepreneurship education instructional programmes?
- ii. To what extent do university administrators manage entrepreneurship personnel?

Method

The design of this study is a descriptive survey, it deals mainly with opinions where rating scales are used to reduce incidences of faking..

The researcher used proportionate random sampling for the five universities in Imo State with academic staff and students as respondents. The population is 31,413 while sample size is 3,366 comprising academic staff and students in the Centers of

Entrepreneurship studies in the five universities in Imo State. This research used proportionate stratified random sampling because it ensured greater representativeness of the students. The instrument for data collection is a four-item rating scale constructed by the researcher tagged Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition Likert Rating Scale (ESALRS). Section 'A' deals with the demographic data of the respondent while section 'B' contains twelve (12) items that address the research questions which are grouped under two clusters. Cluster one deals with administrative task statement on how university administrators manage instructional programmes, cluster two is on how university administrators manage personnel administration,. It has a respondent options of VGE = Very Great Extent (4pts), GE = Great Extent (3pts) LE = Low Extent (2pts) and VLE = Very Low Extent (1pt). The instrument was validated by three specialists from the Department of Management and Planning Department of Imo State University and two specialists from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of the same University. A

reliability test was carried out which yielded 0.84, indicating that the instrument is reliable. Data was collated and presented on Frequency Tables according to the Research Questions. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Decisions were taken by the use of mean scores 2.50 and above for Great Extent and less than 2.50 for Low Extent to answer the Research Questions.

Table 1

Ways University Administrator Manage Instructional Programmes Organized at the Entrepreneurship Centres

S/N	ITEM	Staff		Students	
		\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>
<i>REMARK</i>					
1.	University administrators in Imo State usually offer qualitative entrepreneurship programmes	2.07	1.13	2.90	1.06
2.	They mount relevant programmes which will benefit the society	1.70	0.90	3.00	1.00

3.	They release examination results promptly to improve skill acquisition studies	1.79	0.89	2.96	1.03
4.	Administrators usually determine And implement educational needs To achieve Desired educational goals	2.55	1.04	2.97	1.00
5.	University administrators usually Identify areas of improvement by Assessing and evaluating teaching And learning programmes	2.79	0.99	2.82	1.07
6.	They maintain continuity in Curriculum so as to attain educational objectives.	1.86	0.98	1.65	0.81
Total		2.13	0.99	2.72	1.00

Table 1 above shows that the responses in items 1,2,3 and 6 for staff and that of 6 for students had mean below 2.50, while items 1,2 and for students had mean above 2.50. this indicates that majority of the staff disagreed on the notion that university administrators offer qualitative entrepreneurship programmes, mount programmes that benefit society, promptly release examination results and maintain continuity

in curriculum. While students agreed to all of them except that of maintaining continuity in curriculum.

Research Question Two: To what extent do university administrators manage entrepreneurship personnel?

Table 2

Ways University Administrators Manage Personnel Administration

S/N	ITEM	Staff		Students	
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
REMARK					
1.	University Administrators work with academic staff and other administrative officers to achieve educational objectives of their institutions	2.85	0.93	1.68	0.79
2.	University Administrators work with academic staff to succeed	2.93	0.99	1.90	0.98
3.	Administrators value competencies and abilities of academic staff in the achievement of skill acquisition programmes	2.64	1.05	1.77	0.85

4. University Administrators usually assign duties to academic staff who possess other professional skills to make the programme successful	3.00	0.99	2.22	0.92
5. Administrators recruit qualified academic staff who make the achievement of desired educational objectives possible	2.91	0.99	2.74	0.90
6. University administrators motivate staff by sending them on training so as to make them efficient in service delivery	2.25	1.21	1.63	0.79
Total	2.76	1.03	1.99	0.87

Table 2 shows from the mean responses, that the staff agreed that university administrators work with academic staff and other administrators to achieve educational objectives. They also work with academic staff to succeed and they value competencies and abilities of academic staff. They usually assign duties to academic staff who possess other professional skills and recruit qualified academic staff who make the achievement of educational objectives possible, but did not agree that they motivate staff by sending them on training. On the other hand, the

students did not agree in all the items, but only agreed that Administrative staff recruit qualified academic staff.

Discussion of Findings

Ways University Administrator Manage Instructional Programmes Organized at the Entrepreneurship Centres

The study revealed that majority of the staff disagreed that university administrators offer qualitative entrepreneurship programmes, mount programmes that benefit society, promptly release examination results and maintain continuity in curriculum. While

students agreed to all of them except that of maintaining continuity in curriculum. This shows that students believe that the entrepreneurship programmes organized for them are qualitative which can benefit the society and that the results are released promptly, but that there is non-continuity in curriculum. While the staff who are more experienced are not of the same view. It can therefore be said that, while the management is making some effort, a lot are still needed to be done to

ensure a better management of the entrepreneurship programmes that will benefit the society. This finding therefore, does not fully support that of Hodgetts and Kuratko, (2019) who conducted a study on the impacts of entrepreneurship education and the results revealed that entrepreneurship education develops the knowledge of a process whereby an individual or a group of individuals who use organized efforts and means to pursue opportunities to create value and growth by fulfilling wants and needs through innovation and uniqueness, and that the process has the tendency of maintaining curriculum.

Ways University Administrators Manage Personnel Administration

Findings of this study also revealed that the staff agreed that university administrators work with academic staff and other administrative staff to achieve educational objectives, work

with academic staff to succeed and value competencies and abilities of academic staff, assign duties to academic staff who possess other professional skills and recruit qualified academic staff who make the achievement of educational objectives possible, but did not agree that the administrators motivate staff by sending them on training. On the other hand, the students did not agree in all the items, but only agreed that Administrators recruit qualified academic staff. Since the staff are the personnel being talked about and having agreed that the management cooperate and utilize their services in the realization of the administrative goals of the universities, it can be said that there is a smooth collaboration between the management of these universities and their staff in terms of personnel administration. This therefore supports the finding of Smith and Peterson, (2016) who

conducted a study on entrepreneurship education and development of skills, and found that entrepreneurship education focuses on the development of skills or attributes that enable the realization of opportunities, where management of education is focused on the best way to operate existing hierarchies.

Conclusion

Basted on the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that while the management is making some effort, a lot are still needed to be done to ensure a better management of the entrepreneurship programmes that will benefit the society and that there is a smooth collaboration between the management of these universities and their staff in terms of personnel administration.

Recommendations

1. The School Management should make frantic efforts to ensure a better management of the entrepreneurship education programmes that will benefit the society.
2. The School Management should endeavor to be sending the staff on training.

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