

STRENGTHENING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A STRATEGY FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education has been described as a great tool for job creation. With unemployment on the rise, this paper examines how strengthening entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions can bring about job creation and sustainable development. The study was descriptive survey in nature. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The population of the comprised all the entrepreneurs (registered business owners in Imo State) and entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors in the 6 tertiary institutions in Imo State. The sample size of the study comprised 60 entrepreneurship lecturers/instructors and 50 entrepreneurs selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a validated researcher designed questionnaire tagged "Strengthening Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development Questionnaire (SEESDQ)". A reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Method to test the reliability. Data collected were analyzed using weighted mean. The finding of the study shows that more practically based entrepreneurship instruction, allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction and specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education equip graduates with self-sufficient skills for sustainable development. It was recommended among others that practical oriented skills of teaching entrepreneurship education should replace the traditional method of teach-and-listen.

Key Words: *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Job Creation, Sustainable Development*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been linked with economic development of many countries. It is seen as one of the key drivers of economic development. According to Harshana, (1994) and Thurik, (2003), countries that encourage entrepreneurship will not be disappointed because of its ability to reduce unemployment through job creation. Many countries have recognised the great importance of entrepreneurship education to national development and sustainability and have since been involved in entrepreneurship education and training (Asiyai, 2013). Countries like United Kingdom, United States of America, China and recently the Asian Tigers are greatly involved in entrepreneurship education and have continuously revised their curricular to their advantage. Also, research has shown that in both developing and developed countries, evidence supports a positive and significant relationship between education and entrepreneurial performance. This is not minding whether performance is measured in terms of growth, profit or earning power of the entrepreneur (Dickson, Solomon & Weaver, 2008).

Views of scholars differ as to what constitutes the concept of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has been described in terms of the ability to take risks in innovations while creating value. According to Schumpeter (1934), entrepreneurship is a driving force for innovation and also an engine for economic development. Entrepreneurship is also described in terms of the willingness and human capacity to identify investment opportunities or ideas which lead to the establishment of a successful enterprise (Ikeme and Onu, 2007; Eze, 2010). The Commission of the European Communities (2003), described entrepreneurship as the mindset and process for the creation and development of economic activity by combining risk, creativity and/or innovation with sound management, within a new or existing organisation. Emphasizing its complexity, Filion (2011) observed that entrepreneurship is a complex concept involving activities that are technical, human, managerial and entrepreneurial characteristics, the performance of which requires a diverse set of skills. Entrepreneurship thus refers to the processes involved in the creation of value for profit purposes.

Entrepreneurship education on the other hand is seen as the training that enables students develop the entrepreneurial spirit and talents that are necessary to function effectively in an environment filled with complex market forces and people issues (Arvanites, Glasco, and Stumpf, 2011). Entrepreneurship education is expected to equip the perspective entrepreneur with skills and knowledge for entrepreneurial success. In a similar vein, Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary schools) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial ideas in a variety of ways. From the foregoing it should be noted that a well-implemented entrepreneurship education would lead to job creation and economic

development. It prepares individuals for organizing, owning and managing their businesses. Thus, entrepreneurship education seeks to achieve the following objectives among others:

5. To create avenue/environment for the youth for self employment and self reliance.
6. To make the graduate to be innovative and creative.
7. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
8. To provide adequate training in risk management.
9. To reduce poverty
10. To create employment.
11. Reduce rural-urban migration.
12. To give graduates functional training to establish small and medium sized businesses.
13. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths for survival (Paul, 2005).

Unemployment has been on the rise in Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2016), youth unemployment is at an all time high of 24 percent. There is a seeming general decline in the ability of both the public and private sectors to employ tertiary education graduates. This has been adduced to a number of reasons such as rapid population growth, low standard of education, corruption and a rapid increase in the supply of educated manpower (Adebayo, 1999 and Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). However, most of the graduates are referred to by employers of labour as unemployable due to their lack of work related skills. Furthermore, unemployment in Nigeria has been linked to poor provision for job creation in development plans and the desire to obtain a university degree without regard for the 'course and the contents' (Okafor, 2011), with the intention of obtaining white collar jobs on graduation. This made the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), introduce Entrepreneurship Education (EE), which is aimed at equipping tertiary students with entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and competences in order to be job creators. This is to improve the economic, technological and industrial sectors of the nation (Adekunle & David, 2014).

Investment in entrepreneurship education is very important as it has been identified as a means of enabling our graduates innovate and start up businesses for their immediate sustenance and profitability. Entrepreneurship education however faces a number of challenges even though it has the capacity to bring about sustainable development. Factors such as lack of adequate skilled, manpower to teach entrepreneurship, lack of infrastructure and poor funding inhibit the educational

process (Nwekeaku, 2013). Describing entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria as very challenging, Igbeka (2008), stated that its pedagogical content in many higher institutions in Nigeria is very traditional with little or no room for practical training. Furthermore, Ayodele (2006) outlined the following challenges as being responsible for the low ebb of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. They include irrelevant education that is mainly theoretical and has white collar job orientations, unhealthy macro environment, inadequate capital, fear of failure to take risk in entrepreneurial activities and an unstable political environment. The thrust of this paper therefore is to critically examine the existing entrepreneurship education programme and how it can be strengthened in order to make youths and graduates seize opportunities in the marketplace. This therefore, made the study to seek to:

- h)** Find out whether more practical entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institutions would bring about job creation and sustainable development.
- i)** Examine whether allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institutions would bring about job creation and sustainable development.
- j)** Investigate whether specialisation of student in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions would bring about job creation and sustainable development.

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated to guide the study:

1. Does more practically based entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institutions bring about job creation and sustainable development?
2. Does allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institutions bring about job creation and sustainable development?
3. Does specialisation of student in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions bring about job creation and sustainable development?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the entrepreneurs (registered business owners in Imo State) and eighty three (83) entrepreneurship education lecturers/ instructors in the 6 tertiary institutions in Imo State, which include Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State University Owerri, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, Federal Polytechnics Nekede, Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo and Federal College of Land Resources Technology Oforola. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and ten (110) respondents: sixty (60) entrepreneurship

education lecturers/instructors and fifty (50) entrepreneurs (registered business owners in Imo State). The instrument for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire tagged “Strengthening Entrepreneurship Education for Sustainable Development Questionnaire (SEESDQ)”. SEESDQ contained 15 items structured in a modified 4-point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Both face and content validity of the instrument were established by experts in Educational Research, Measurement and Evaluation and Entrepreneurship units of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri. A reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Data collected were analyzed using weighted mean. A mean score of 2.50 and above on a four rating scale was considered accepted, while mean scores below 2.50 was considered not accepted.

Results

The results were presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: *Does practically based entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution bring about job creation and sustainable development?*

Table 1: Mean rating of the responses on research question one

S/N	<i>Practically based entrepreneurship instruction lead to job creation and sustainable development through:</i>	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Translation of the objectives of entrepreneurship education into practical realities during the process of policy implementation.	41 (164)	56 (168)	08 (16)	05 (05)	3.20	Agreed
2	Replace practical entrepreneurship instruction with the traditional approach	47 (188)	59 (177)	03 (06)	01 (10)	3.38	Agreed

	of teach-and listen-methods.						
3	Establishment and funding of entrepreneurship resource and knowledge centre of every institution.	45 (180)	58 (174)	05 (10)	02 (02)	3.32	Agreed
4	Balancing theory with practical in entrepreneurship instruction.	43 (172)	48 (144)	17 (34)	02 (02)	3.2	Agreed
5	Support learners through industrial tour, professional talks from successful business owners and execution of business project while in schools.	42 (168)	53 (159)	12 (24)	03 (03)	3.21	Agreed

Table 1 show whether practically based entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution brings about job creation and sustainable development. The table revealed that all the items had a mean rating above 2.50 by both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs. This therefore shown that practically based entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution will bring about job creation and sustainable development.

Research Question 2: *Does allocation of significant time for entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution brings about job creation and sustainable development?*

Table 2: Mean rating of the responses of research question two

S/N	<i>Adequate time period for entrepreneurship instructions leads to job creation and sustainable development through:</i>	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Allocation of adequate time to	47 (188)	53 (159)	08 (16)	02 (02)	3.31	Agreed

	accommodate entrepreneurship practical teaching.						
2	Introduction of entrepreneurship education at every level of undergraduate programme in order to prepare them for industrial and commercial standard.	41 (164)	48 (144)	17 (34)	04 (04)	3.14	Agreed
3	Earmark time period for industrial tours to successful entrepreneurship in the students' choice of skill.	40 (160)	56 (168)	13 (26)	01 (01)	3.23	Agreed
4	Increase entrepreneurship teaching hours from 2 to 4 hours in a week to sustain the learners' skills.	37 (148)	51 (153)	17 (34)	05 (05)	3.09	Agreed
5	Incorporate periodical industrial training in entrepreneurship instruction.	38 (152)	47 (141)	18 (36)	07 (07)	3.05	Agreed

Table 2 shows whether allocations of significant time for entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution bring about job creation and sustainable development. The table revealed that all the items had a mean rating above 2.50 by both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs. This therefore, shows that allocation of significant time for entrepreneurship instruction will bring about job creation and sustainable development.

Research Question 3: *Does specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution bring about job creation and sustainable development?*

Table 3: Mean rating of the Responses of Research Question three

S/N	<i>Specialization in an aspect of entrepreneurship education leads to creation and sustainable development through:</i>	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Designing of specialized and all round training programme on a particular skill of students interest	45 (180)	59 (177)	05 (10)	01 (01)	3.34	Agreed
2	Guide and direct students on their self developed skill that bring about self sustainability.	42 (168)	56 (168)	09 (18)	03 (03)	3.38	Agreed
3	Development of teacher guide, instructional manual and students' handbook on their different skills of interest.	37 (148)	43 (129)	19 (38)	11 (11)	3.16	Agreed
4	All round training in entrepreneurship skill embraced by the student.	42 (168)	51 (153)	12 (24)	05 (05)	3.19	Agreed
5	Exposing learners to relevant and quality entrepreneurship mindset/spirit toward job creation and	47 (188)	52 (156)	10 (20)	01 (01)	3.31	Agreed

	sustainable development.						
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Table 3 shows whether specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution brings about job creation and sustainable development. The table revealed that all the items had a mean rating above 2.50 by both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs. It shows that specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution will bring about the creation and sustainable development.

Discussion

Research question one in table 1 sought to find out whether more practically based entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institution will bring about job creation and sustainable development. From the results, both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs agreed that practically based entrepreneurship instruction will bring about job creation and sustainable development. This finding agrees with that of Rae (1997) who maintains that the skills traditionally taught in business or conventional schools are necessary but not adequate to make successful entrepreneur. To him, more attention needs to be paid to the development of the learners' entrepreneurial practical and creativity skills. It is also support Davies and Gibb (1991) who criticize the use of traditional methods like lecturers, written exams, etc which emphasize primarily on theory and a didactic approach which are inappropriate in entrepreneurship education. According to them the students of entrepreneurship program should be encouraged to cope in new ways with the real world by emphasizing learning by doing.

Research question two in table 2 sought to find out whether allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction in tertiary institutions will bring about job creation and sustainable development. From the results, both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs agreed that allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction will bring about job creation and sustainable development. This finding corroborates the findings of Kirby (2004) who emphasizes the importance of allocation of significant time in teaching entrepreneurship education, since the modes of teaching entrepreneurship education vary noticeably from lectures, practical, group discussion, simulation and games and case study.

Research question three in table 3 sought to find out whether specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution will bring about job creation and sustainable development. From the results, both entrepreneurship education lecturers/instructors and entrepreneurs agreed that

specialization of student in an aspect of entrepreneurship education will bring about job creation and sustainable development. This finding is in consonance with that of European Commission (EC. 2002) who opined that teaching and learning about entrepreneurship involve developing knowledge, skills, attitude and personal qualities appropriate to the age and development of the students. It also in support of Brown (2002) who noted that entrepreneurship needs of the learners in relations to their skill must be defined and adequately taking care of in the classroom instructions.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that more practically based entrepreneurship instruction, allocation of significant time in entrepreneurship instruction and specialization of students in an aspect of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution will produce a graduate with self-sufficient skills for sustainable development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- vi. Practically oriented skill of teaching entrepreneurship education should replace the traditional method of teach-and-listen approach of entrepreneurship instruction.
- vii. Establishment of entrepreneurship resource and knowledge centre at different institutions needed to inculcate the required practical skill in the students.
- viii. Translation of the objectives of entrepreneurship education into practical realities during the process of policy implementation.
- ix. Allocation of adequate time to accommodate practical teaching of entrepreneurship education.
- x. Introduction of entrepreneurship education at every levels of undergraduate programme in order to prepare students for industrial and commercial standards.
- xi. Designing specialized and all round training programme, teacher guide, instructional manual and student handbooks on their different skill of interest.
- xii. Tertiary institution students should be exposed to relevance and quality entrepreneurship mindset necessary to start and run a business successful.

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