

Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Intention among Students of Selected North Eastern Nigeria Universities

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Abstract: *This study was conducted to investigate students' perception towards entrepreneurship education among the selected universities students. And also examined the students' entrepreneurial intention among the universities students. the impact of entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students of University of Maiduguri Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. The study aimed at determining the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions among students. The study's independent variables were components of entrepreneurship education which include; attitude, entrepreneurship curricula, teaching methodologies, teaching environment and stakeholders' support system and the dependent variable is entrepreneurial intentions. Survey research design was adopted for the study and structured questionnaires were used to elucidate data from two different samples. Stratified sampling technique was used in making the selections for both groups in order to allow for fair representation of respondents from each selected universities. The collected data was analysed using both descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (ANOVA, correlation and multiple regression) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The Pearson correlation analysis indicated that there exist positive relationships between offering entrepreneurship education course and student's intention to become entrepreneurs. Attitude, entrepreneurship curricula, teaching methodologies and teaching environment were found to be predictors of entrepreneurial intentions, while stakeholders' support system failed to predict entrepreneurial intentions among students that participated in entrepreneurship education programme.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurship, Students, & Relationship*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is one of the most researched topics in the world today, this is because of its importance in the modern day industrial and business activities (Fayolle and Gailly (2008). There are many write-ups on the concept of entrepreneurship education and its role in the development of modern economies. It is because of the vital role it plays especially in the modernization and advancement of business activities in the developed economies that developing economies are given it great emphasis over other economic activities. The success of entrepreneurs is a boost to an economy, their business development is considered a vital link to an overall economic growth of a nation (Lerner, 2010). Due to population explosion, there is a need to create more jobs to the teeming youth in a society. This cannot be achieved without creativity and innovation in all facets of human endeavor. As such, entrepreneurial skills become a great concern to many scholars and researchers in order to support individuals to be self-reliant and independent.

Recent trends in industrialization are shifting to a more focus on individuals to be entrepreneurs through constant training (Kuratko (2005). The development of entrepreneurial skills should be encouraged by nations, this is because, their economic growth is highly dependent on their entrepreneurial success (Lerner (2010). Therefore, entrepreneurship education becomes necessary to meet the demand for effective human development. The impact of entrepreneurship education to the development of modern economy cannot be overemphasized (Binks, Starkey, and Mahon, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, Entrepreneurship has been considered as the activities that bring about growth and development of an individual and the nation at large, as well as means of employment. The most pressing problems facing Northeastern Nigeria is unemployment. This is due to low economic growth and the negative attitude towards Entrepreneurship. More graduates enter the job market annually but most of them remain unemployed.

It is believed that equipping students with required entrepreneurship knowledge would enhance their individual determination and perseverance, increases thoughts of encountering fewer challenges while starting a business and decreases negative thoughts on running their own businesses (Selma *et al.*, 2017). A good entrepreneurship education does not only provide theoretical knowledge but also able to assist the participants in developing entrepreneurial attitude/mindset, skills, abilities, and acquire support and intents towards entrepreneurship (Teh Yi, et al., 2014). Studies in Northern Nigeria also established entrepreneurship education is positively related to entrepreneurial attitude and employment ambitions of final year undergraduates (Umar *et al.*, 2015, Ranjana, *et al.*, 2019).

Though other studies hold a contradicting positions about the positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship mindset and intention (Osterbeek, Praag, & Ijsselstein 2010; VonGraevenitz, Harhoff, & Weber, 2010), there seem to be agreement generally, that tertiary institutions of learning facilitates entrepreneurial attitude and intention towards entrepreneurial engagement among students, through relevant entrepreneurship education (The European Commission, 2003; Franke, 2003).

Thus, the Nigerian government found it apt to introduce entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions for the development, promotion and encouragement of potential graduate to engage on venturing after their graduation. To complement the effort of the federal government in enhance entrepreneurship among the youth, the states government and the non-governmental organizations together with associations of entrepreneurs complemented set up skills acquisition centers and micro finance bank as a source of investment finance for financing entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education describes the scope of lectures, curricular or programmes that attempt to provide learners with the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, capabilities and attitudes geared towards entrepreneurial development of learners (Moses *et al.* 2017). It also refers to the conscious effort of an educator targeted at inculcating entrepreneurial competencies

and capabilities in students (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011; Moses *et al.* 2016). Fayolle Kryo & Ulijn (2006) in their presentation defined entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical programme associated with inculcating entrepreneurial abilities and competencies as well as personal qualities in learners. This suggests that the goal of entrepreneurship programmes in Nigeria should not be exclusively hinged on the immediate creation of new businesses but also the entrepreneurial development of students.

Beyond the conventional roles of institutions, which include motivating economic growth and development through research and development, building entrepreneurial capabilities and competencies has become an added task and important role put on tertiary institutions by the society (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014). This saddles institutions with more responsibilities to meet up with the entrepreneurial needs of students in order to motivate entrepreneurial development potentials (Wong, 2007, Ifedili & Ofoegbu, 2011). Specifically, salient components related to the entrepreneurial development of university and polytechnic students encompasses the development of critical thinking capabilities, business idea generation competencies and a commitment towards the achievement of entrepreneurial goals and aspirations at graduation (Caloghirou, Protogerou, & Deligianni 2013; Gafar, Kasim, & Martin, 2013). Therefore, it is expected that the contents of the entrepreneurship curriculum in North Eastern Nigerian polytechnics should motivate these identified components of entrepreneurial development. This will not only enhance the development of salient entrepreneurial competencies by polytechnic students but also increase the likelihood of students' engagement in entrepreneurial pursuits at graduation.

Various empirical studies within and outside the Nigerian context have examined the effects of the contents of an entrepreneurship curriculum on the entrepreneurial development of tertiary institutions students from different perspectives. The study of Bodnar Renee & Besterfeild-Scacre (2015) showed the provisions in entrepreneurship curriculum content have implications for entrepreneurial development of tertiary students mainly by motivating critical thinking abilities and competency for business idea generation in students. In the same vein, the study of Mahajar & Yunus (2012) showed that the role of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurship development of students is hinged on the provision of entrepreneurial curriculum contents that significantly affects students' inclination towards development of critical thinking competencies. In a similar research carried out by Gafar Kasim & Martin (2013) the findings of the study showed that entrepreneurship curriculum in the tertiary institutions affects entrepreneurial development of students by motivating undergraduates to develop innovative business ideas. In the Nigerian tertiary institutions context, findings from the study of Ebringa, Ewenwa, & Ebringa (2015) suggests that entrepreneurial development of university students involves the engagement of students in practical and collaborative entrepreneurial extra curricula activities and mentoring by experienced entrepreneurial minded academic which equips students with critical thinking competencies favourable to entrepreneurial venturing upon graduation.

Conversely, the findings from the work of Caloghirou, Protogerou, & Deligianni (2013) which focused on entrepreneurial development among students and young graduates showed that an entrepreneurship curriculum content that does not motivate entrepreneurial actions and real

life simulations of the process of entrepreneurship would negate the drive and commitment of young graduates in terms of setting up entrepreneurial ventures. In a similar work by Papadimitriou (2017), the results of the research showed that entrepreneurial curriculum contents were insignificant in influencing the commitment of business students to pursue a self-employed career, which is considered averse to the entrepreneurial development of tertiary students. In a related research by Bilic, Prka & Vidovic (2011), the findings from the research suggest that there is a low correlation between the entrepreneurship curriculum and the entrepreneurial orientation of students at graduation. According to the authors, this may be because of the inability of the curriculum to stimulate entrepreneurial development in students.

A critical review of extant empirical studies on the entrepreneurial development of students reveals that studies such as Bodnar, Renee and Besterfeild-Scacre (2015), Ebringa, Ewenwa, and Ebringa (2015), focused on critical thinking and business idea generation as components of entrepreneurial development. Other studies such as Caloghirou, Protogerou, and Deligianni (2013); Papadimitriou, (2017) focused on commitment towards achievement of entrepreneurial goals at graduation as the salient component of entrepreneurial development. Therefore, it suggests that there is a paucity of research within and outside the Northeast Nigerian polytechnic context, on the effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intention among students with emphasis on integrating all three identified components of entrepreneurship education.

Methodology

Research Design

To address the research problem, survey research design was adopted for the study. This type of design is most preferred because it is concerned with the statistics that result from data collected from a number of individual/groups cases (John & Kahn, 2008). Under this design, the study employed cross-sectional survey, which according to Asika (2009) is geared towards collecting data to answer research questions or explain the relationship among variables. In a cross-sectional survey, data is collected at one point in time from a sample to depict a population (Babbie, 1990). This is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) who argued that cross-sectional survey is useful to identifying “the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomena. Thus, the analytical tool employed for this study include descriptive statistics, 5-point Likert scale, logit regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA). According to Creswell (2009), the survey design allows the use of statistical tools to test the relationship between the study’s independent variables (perception, intention based on gender, factors influencing the intention, and entrepreneurship curriculum content) and the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intention).

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprise of all the selected universities students. The target population were final year students of the selected universities.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

In determining the sample size for this study, the researcher employed the Yaro Yamane's formula for the determination of a research sample size for each of the university. The formula is presented below.

Where: n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Level of significance = 5% = 0.05

1 = constant (Yamane, 1969)

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire. Data was generated through primary source. The data obtained from the final year Students of the selected universities. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher in accordance with the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, A, B, C, D and E. Section A covered demographic data of the respondents. Section B covered the relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' perception towards entrepreneurship. Influence of entrepreneurship education entrepreneurial intentions of students was assessed in Section C. Section D determine if entrepreneurship education develops desire for entrepreneurial intentions among the universities students and finally, section E determined if the content of entrepreneurship education curriculum motivates the universities students towards the achievement of entrepreneurial goals. A five points Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA=5), Agree (A=4), Strongly Disagree (U=3), Disagree (D=2) and Undecided (SD=1) was used in designing the items for each section excluding the demographic section. This enables the respondents indicate their degree of agreement to their opinions to each item easily. It also helps in keeping the respondents focus, and minimizes likelihood of misinterpretation.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that descriptively, the students agreed that the exposure to entrepreneurship education course led to the development of their entrepreneurial intention and it also help them make decision in favour of starting their own businesses before or after graduation. The Pearson correlation analysis indicated that there exist positive relationships between offering entrepreneurship education course and student's intention to become entrepreneurs. Attitude, entrepreneurship curricula, teaching methodologies and teaching environment were found to be predictors of entrepreneurial intentions, while stakeholders' support system failed to predict entrepreneurial intentions among students that participated in entrepreneurship education programme.

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