

THE ROLE OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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Abstract

The study examined the role of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria: A case study of the University of Benin. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all the 300 level undergraduate students of the University of Benin who currently registered for entrepreneurial course (CED300) in the 2020/2021 academic session. The estimated population is 2,554 students; one hundred and sixty-five (165) students were selected using purposive sampling technique in view of their homogeneity. The major instrument used for this study was the questionnaire; it was validated by three lecturers in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin. The test retest method of estimating reliability was used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. An index of 0.86 was thereafter obtained. Data were analyzed using mean scores and percentage statistics. Findings of the study revealed that the university has not done much in assisting the students to secure grants from government and loan from financial institutions in order to start or fund their own businesses after graduation. It is therefore recommended that grants/loans should be provided for the students without collateral in order to make the training realizable and achievable.

Keywords: Tertiary institution, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship education, Unemployment

Introduction

The future of any nation depends on the entrepreneurial ventures founded by creative individuals. These are inspired people, risk takers who seized the available opportunities to harness and optimally use resources in an unusual manner to bring about a visible change. An entrepreneur is an individual who is willing and possess the ability to take risks, identify economic opportunities, mobilizes and organizes resources with a view to maximize profit. In other word, entrepreneurs are job and wealth creators, visionary, innovators and investors who undermining the risks lurch into the future with their money, time and other resources to achieve what others thought impossible, while entrepreneurship is the process of its actual working. It is also equated with establishment and

management of small business firms. The role played by entrepreneurship in the development of western countries has made the people of developing countries very much conscious of its importance in the programme of rapid economic development. Highlighting the importance of promoting entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution, Ademiluyi (2007) affirm that it addresses some socio-psychological problems and delinquency that arise from joblessness. Entrepreneurial skills are said to be the necessary set of skills required to be an entrepreneur. This implies that entrepreneurial skills are those necessary skills an entrepreneur needs to successfully run a business or add value to work (Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education provides the learners with basic knowledge, skills attitudes and ideas that equip the individual for self-employment. Entrepreneurship education empowers the recipients to be self-reliant, enterprising and innovative. Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. As such, it goes beyond business creation (Enu, 2012). It is about increasing student's ability to participate and respond to societal changes. This implies that entrepreneurship education prepares the individual to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his own business or that of other persons (Oduwaiye, 2009). Lack of entrepreneurial skill is no doubt a major contributing factor to the problem of unemployment of graduates and youth in Nigeria (Adebisi & Oni, 2012). According to National Bureau of Statistics (2020), 21.7 million youths were unemployed as at 2nd quarter of 2020. The report further revealed that 53.40% of youth unemployment rate was recorded in the 4th quarter of 2020. It is disturbing to acknowledge that a greater number of this percentage are graduates from Nigeria universities, colleges of education and polytechnics who roam the street and in the labour markets looking for non-existing jobs for lack of entrepreneurial skills. This high youth unemployment rate is synonymous with increased insecurity and poverty, a situation that is seen as a ticking time bomb. In a similar vein, International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) noted that unemployment in Nigeria is largely attributed to the phenomena of jobless growth, increased number of school graduates with no matching job opportunities, a freeze or embargo in employment in many public sectors and institutions and continued job losses in the manufacturing, banking and oil sectors.

According to Raposo and Paco (2011), entrepreneurship education prepares the youths to be responsible and enterprising. In a similar vein, UNESCO (2008) viewed educational

entrepreneurship as all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. Therefore, there is need to reposition and transform education in Nigeria especially the tertiary sector towards entrepreneurial drive for job creation. To achieve this, entrepreneurial drive must be through effective teaching and research and promotion of entrepreneurial education in tertiary institutions.

The cardinal purpose of the study is to investigate the role of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria: A case study of the University of Benin. However, the study intends to achieve the following specific objectives: To find out the entrepreneurial skills that can make undergraduate students of the University of Benin to reduce unemployment rate; To determine the ways university affected students attitudes towards entrepreneurship; To determine the benefits of entrepreneurial education to undergraduate students of the University of Benin; To find out the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in the University of Benin.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment is one of the most disturbing problems facing Nigerian graduates; the situation has been exacerbated by mass production of graduates and school leavers from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions without any commensurate arrangement for their gainful employment. The ugly situation has resulted in economic poverty among graduates thus requiring a way-out through entrepreneurship education transformation in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

According to FRN (2013:28), University education should make optimum contribution to national development by “making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement of all Nigeria universities”. More worrisome is the continuous increase in unemployment rate among university graduates despite the introduction of entrepreneurial skills acquisition in the University system. Could it be that the teaching and learning process is not effective? Or students do not have access to entrepreneurship training and equipment? It is in this direction the study intends to investigate the role of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to guide the study:

1. What are the entrepreneurial skills available to undergraduate students in the University of Benin?

2. In what ways has the University of Benin affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship education?
3. What are the benefits of entrepreneurial education to undergraduate students of the University of Benin?
4. What are the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in the University of Benin?

Methodology

The area of study is University of Benin. This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all the 300 level undergraduate students of the University of Benin who currently registered for entrepreneurial course (CED300) in the 2020/2021 academic session. The estimated population is 2,554 students. The data for this study was obtained through the use of questionnaire. One hundred and sixty-five students were selected using purposive sampling technique. The items in the instrument were structured using the modified Likert scale comprising four levels of measurements. It was validated by some lecturers in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, University of Benin. The test retest method of estimating reliability was used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the instrument. In this regard, copies of the research instrument were given to twenty (20) respondents. After two weeks interval, the instrument was re-administered on the same subjects and their responses on each occasion were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical Formula to determine the correlation index. A correlation index of 0.86 was thereafter obtained. This shows that the instrument was reliable. Data were analyzed using mean scores and percentage statistics. Any mean score from 2.50 and above was regarded as "Agree" while mean scores below 2.50 were tagged "Disagree".

Results

Research Question One

What are the entrepreneurial skills available to undergraduate students of the University of Benin?

Table 1: Mean responses on the entrepreneurial skills available to undergraduate students of the University of Benin.**N = 165**

S/N	Items	qX	% of positive response	Remark
1.	Electrical Installation	3.09	70%	Agree
2.	Barbing	3.50	78%	Agree
3.	Tailoring	3.71	82%	Agree
4.	Catering (native foods)	3.80	85%	Agree
5.	Photography	3.01	68%	Agree
6.	Crocheting	2.71	61%	Agree
7.	Graphic Design	2.82	64%	Agree
8.	Makeup Artistry	3.06	68%	Agree
9.	Hair Dressing	3.70	81%	Agree
10.	Event Planning	3.00	67%	Agree
11.	Wood Works	2.70	60%	Agree
12.	Welding & Fabrication	2.60	56%	Agree
13.	Confectioneries	2.80	62%	Agree
Grand Mean		3.11		Agree

The analysed data in Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents agreed to all the items in the table. This is clearly seen in the mean scores which are above 2.50 and the percentages which are above 50%. With a grand mean of 3.30, the answer to research question one is that the following entrepreneurial skills are available to undergraduate students of the University of Benin; electrical installation, barbing, tailoring, catering services, photography, crocheting, graphic design, makeup artistry, hair dressing, event planning, wood works, welding & fabrication and confectioneries.

Research Question Two

In what ways has the University of Benin affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship?

Table 2: Mean responses on ways the University of Benin has affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship.**N = 165**

S/N	Items	qX	% of positive response	Remark
14	Creating awareness on the advantages of being an entrepreneur	3.40	78%	Agree
15	Making entrepreneurship an attractive career	3.21	75%	Agree
16	Encouraging students to start their own businesses	3.68	80%	Agree
17	Assisting the students to secure grants from government	2.80	58%	Agree
18	Assisting the students to secure loan from financial institutions	2.68	54%	Agree
Grand Mean		3.15		Agree

A cursory look at Table 2 above shows that the majority of the respondents agreed to all the items in the table. This is reflected in the mean scores which are above 2.50. The percentages of respondents who agreed to the items are also seen to be above 50%. With a grand mean of 3.15, the answer to research question two is that the University of Benin has affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship by creating awareness on the advantages of being an entrepreneur, making entrepreneurship an attractive career, encouraging students to start their own businesses, assisting the students to secure grants from government and assisting the students to secure loan from financial institutions.

Research Question Three

What are the benefits of entrepreneurial education to undergraduate students of the University of Benin?

Table 3: Table 3: Mean responses on the benefits of entrepreneurial education to undergraduate students

N = 165

S/N	Items	qX	% of positive response	Remark
19	It enables students to develop interest in self-employment.	3.30	79%	Agree
20	It enables students to develop entrepreneurial skills.	3.10	70%	Agree
21	It broadens students' horizon by being creative.	3.15	75%	Agree
22	It enhances job creation in the society with rising unemployment	3.45	84%	Agree
23	It equips students for future career development.	3.20	77%	Agree
Grand Mean		3.24		Agree

The data analysed in Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents agreed to all the items in the table. This is manifested in the mean scores which are above the criterion mean of 2.50 and the percentages which are above 50%. With a grand mean of 3.24, the answer to research question three is therefore concluded that the benefits of entrepreneurship education for undergraduate students of the University of Benin include: enabling students to develop interest in self-employment, enabling students to develop entrepreneurial skills, broadening students' horizon by being creative, enhancing job creation in the society with rising unemployment and equipping students for future career development.

Research Question Four

What are the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in the University of Benin?

Table 4: Mean responses on the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in the University

N = 165

S/N	Items	X	% of positive response	Remark
24	Insufficient funding of the programme	3.75	87%	Agree
25	Less emphasis on practical knowledge	3.40	83%	Agree
26	Lack of interest on the part of the students	2.90	68%	Agree
27	Time frame for supervision and evaluation	3.00	70%	Agree
28	Inadequate facilities/equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses	3.40	83%	Agree
Grand Mean		3.29		Agree

A cursory look at Table 4 above shows that the respondents agreed to all the items in the table. This is shown in the mean scores which are above 2.50. The percentages of respondents who agreed to the items are also seen to be above 50%. With a grand mean of 3.29, it is agreed that the challenges facing entrepreneurship education in the University of Benin are; insufficient funding of the programme, less emphasis on practical knowledge, absence of self-confidence on the part of the students and inadequate facilities/equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings in research question one revealed that the following entrepreneurial skills are available to undergraduate students of the University of Benin; electrical installation, barbing, tailoring, catering services, photography, crocheting, graphic design, makeup artistry, hair dressing, event planning, wood works, welding & fabrication and confectioneries. This implies that the University of Benin is actually providing entrepreneurial skills to her students for the purpose of economic transformation and self-reliance. This finding is in agreement with Salami (2020) who opined that the special entrepreneurial skills offered by the University of Benin will no doubt help students to become economically valuable and self-reliant in the absence of white collar jobs.

Findings from research question two revealed the different ways the University has affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship, such as making entrepreneurship an attractive career, encouraging students to start their own businesses, among others. It becomes pertinent for the university to affect students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship development as a result of the fact that many employers of labour are now laying off workers, while in public service; embargo on employment is yet to be lifted. What this means is that university graduates upon graduation will find it difficult to secure non-existent jobs. It has therefore become imperative to train undergraduates to acquire special entrepreneurial skills while still in school. However, the mean scores from items 17 and 18 revealed that the university has not done much in assisting the students to secure grants from government and loan from financial institutions in order to start or fund their own businesses after graduation. Obidiegwu and Erharuyi (2020) supported this view when they asserted that entrepreneurial education programmes provide skills and training for women, girls and youths to enable them utilize their potentials and capabilities to the fullest for improvement of life and to solve their immediate and general problems. Such skills acquired can enhance gainful employment and also promote self - employment among the people.

The result of the findings in research question three revealed that entrepreneurship education has so many benefits to undergraduate students such as enabling students to develop entrepreneurial skills, broadening students' horizon by being creative, enhancing job creation in the society with rising unemployment and equipping students for future career development. This implies that entrepreneurship education prepares a platform for the youths to transform opportunities to business ventures and to manage those ventures to become a medium for job creation for themselves and others. This result agrees with OECD (2017) which opined that entrepreneurial education helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in the society. Similarly, Oduwaiye (2009) opined that entrepreneurial education helps individual to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills which could be used to manage his own business or that of other persons.

Findings from research question four revealed that the problems of entrepreneurship education in the university are; insufficient funding of the programme, less emphasis on practical knowledge, time frame for supervision and evaluation, lack of interest on the part of the students and inadequate facilities/equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses. Possible reasons for these challenges could be attributed to Government insincerity in funding academic programmes in the universities and lack of genuine commitment by those saddled with the responsibility of overseeing such programmes in our institutions. The findings of this study is in line with Oboreh and Nnebe (2019), who posited that emphasis on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge, political instability, inadequate finance and lack of access to credit/loan are challenges faced by Nigerian graduates in entrepreneurial education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that several entrepreneurial skills are available to undergraduate students of the University of Benin. The University has therefore affected students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship, such as making entrepreneurship an attractive career, encouraging students to start their own businesses, among others. The University has also unveiled the benefits of entrepreneurship to the students such as enabling them to develop entrepreneurial skills, enhancing job creation in the society with rising unemployment and equipping them for future career development. The study also unveiled some major challenges to entrepreneurial education which could be attributed to Government insincerity in funding academic programmes in the universities

and lack of genuine commitment by those saddled with the responsibility of overseeing such programmes in our institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since white collar jobs are no longer guaranteed by the government, there should be more investment on entrepreneurial education so that our youths can economically be valuable and self-reliant.
2. Access to grants/loans should be provided without collateral in order to make the training realizable and achievable.
3. Starter packs should be given to graduates from entrepreneurial training so as to immediately set up a choice business as this will arouse the students' interest in the programme.
4. The authorities concerned should allocate more funds to this programme in order to acquire relevant facilities/equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses.

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