IMPROVING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA FOR A SELF-RELIANCE IN A DEPRESSED ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East of Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses in line with the purpose of the study. The study adopted a survey research design due to the wide distribution of its’ respondents. The population for the study was 487 final year students of business education. 293 students were sampled and used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 21 – item questionnaire grouped into two sections according to the research questions. The instrument was structured using 4 – point rating scale. The questionnaire was validated by three experts and the reliability of the study was determined using Cronbach Alpha. The result of the reliability test yielded 0.78 showing that the instrument was reliable. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and t-test statistics was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that the itemized strategies under instructional approaches and institutional strategies could be used to improve entrepreneurship education among business education students in universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy. Among the recommendations based on the findings was that: business educators must ensure that their instructional delivery would ignite the spirit of entrepreneurship among the students. School administrators should update facilities for entrepreneurship education.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Business Education, Self-Reliance, Depressed Economy.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing high level of unemployment among the graduates of universities in Nigeria has created a great tension on national economic development especially in this era of economic depression. Economic depression is the suppression of economic development and activities which result in poverty and unemployment (Onyia, 2010). A depressed economy is an economy which experiences a prolonged or period of recession and prolonged down turn in the economy. The features of economic recession are declining business activities, falling prices, rising unemployment, increasing inventories, public fear, and panic.
The primary purpose of introducing entrepreneurship education according to Okafor (2009) was as a means to an end to the seemingly intractable unemployment problem. Entrepreneurship education can simply be a tool for securing youth employment and emancipation of other people through the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills for self-reliance.

Entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to people in order to acquire the skills, ideas, managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed. Akintola in Onoh (2011) defined entrepreneurship education as, that which prepares individuals to undertake the formation and or operation of small business enterprises for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service with emphasis given to the social responsibilities, legal requirements and risks for the sake of profit making in self-employment.

According to Williams (2003), entrepreneurship education has immense contributions for manpower needs on the part of the nation as well as self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-employment on the part of individuals. Entrepreneurship education comprises all learning activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurship mindsets, attitudes, skills and covering range aspects such as idea generation, start up, growth and innovation (Allan, 2002). The goals of entrepreneurship education are in four folds according to Ugocha and Odugwu (2015). They are to: foster shared responsibility for the common good for society; inculcate values such as respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals; accord respect for the dignity of labour; and build faith in man’s ability to make rational decisions.

Entrepreneurship education is pivotal in the economic development of the nation and youth employment. Moreover, entrepreneurship education in the contemporary Nigerian society is the most needed education for a functional education, technological emancipation, socioeconomic development and industrial expansion. Entrepreneurship is the process of planning business organization in order to provide useful services needed by the society (Duru, 2008). Entrepreneurship efforts are encouraged through ties linkages and associations between entrepreneurship resources and opportunities of entrepreneurial ventures. Obayi, Obi and Okafor (2012) posit that entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out an investment opportunity, establish an enterprise and make it successful. Entrepreneurship plays an important role in employment generation and in the development of the economy. Entrepreneurship education is integrated into every programme in tertiary institutions; business education is no left out. Implementing entrepreneurship education is a key to making the student’s entrepreneur job creators in the labour market after graduation. It is pertinent to note that
entrepreneurship education is needed to expose business education graduates, on needed business skills for creating and managing business enterprises for better economic development.

According to Njoku (2006), one role of business education is to empower one with employable competencies and value to perform specific functions so as to become self-reliant. Students of business education should be adequately fortified with entrepreneurship education that will make them successful entrepreneurs, business owners, and enable them to work effectively in the modern workplace. Animassnam (2011), defined business education as an area of study which has its goal as the production of manpower with the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitude for harnessing resources and bringing them into a cooperative relationship which yields the goods and services that provide the needed satisfaction. Business education assists in the development of occupational competencies, attitudes, and skills in the clerical, stenographic, bookkeeping and accounting, data processing, marketing, sales, office administration, business ownership and management field. Entrepreneurship education is necessary for training business education students in a way that the entrepreneurial skills would enable them to utilize available resources in order to create a job in any of the areas in business education when pay employment is not available. Ubulom (2006) further stated that business education is entrepreneurial in form, in that it is concerned with the acquisition of pedagogical and professional competencies in industry and education necessary for personal use, for entry into the business world as an entrepreneur (employer of employee), or self-employed and for effective participation in the educational industry as a professional business teacher.

Improving entrepreneurship education among the students of business education in Federal and State Universities in a depressed economy is imperative as the nation is struggling with recession, youth unemployment and low price of oil in the global market. Public universities need to identify the strategies to ensure that implementation of entrepreneurship education and its practicum is effectively carried out in all programme of study. Accordingly, it is imperative to note that instructional strategies adopted by business educators could be used to improve the teaching of business education for entrepreneurship development among the students. Okafor (2012) opined that functional education is a key for effective practical skill development, intellectual capacity, development and innovative strategies that bring about job creation. It is not just enough to identify the benefits of improving entrepreneurship studies but also the strategies for implementing this type of education. Onoh (2011) is of the view that entrepreneurship education trains individual who tries to do or struggles to carry an innovation, creates new activities from old ones in a new way. Improving entrepreneurship education is important in order to eradicate unemployment and also stimulate economic development.
education would produce job seekers, without the willingness and abilities to innovations or identify business opportunities. Upon this background, it is crucial to determine the strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East of Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A depressed economy is an economy which experiences a prolonged or period of recession and prolonged downturn in the economy. The major features of a depressed economy are declining business activities, falling prices, increasing inventories, public fear and rising unemployment. In business education, students/graduates are expected to acquire business skills and become entrepreneurs. But on a contrary, some of them have little or no skill and are dependent on the society instead of being self-reliant.

The extent to which entrepreneurship education programme is implemented in universities in the South East, Nigeria calls for revalidation as graduates of business education are in the bondage of unemployment. The researchers are worried about the danger and wonders if entrepreneurship programmes are implemented to achieve its objective, especially in a depressed economy. This needs to be investigated to reduce the problem of unemployment and job creation in the society. The problem of improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy form the crux of the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to determine the strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy. Specifically, the study sought to determine thus:

1. Instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education Students University in the South East Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.


RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy?
2. What are the institutional strategies for entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of federal and state university students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state university students on the institutional strategies improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

METHOD

The study adopted a survey research design. A survey research design according to Nworgu (2015) is one in which, a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The area of the study was the South Eastern states of Nigeria.

The population of the study was 487 final year students of business education in the 10 public universities offering business education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 3 states with 2 federal universities and 3 state universities (they are Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu State). The selected universities have final year business education students. The sample size was 293 students of business education in the universities of the selected states. No further sampling was carried out due to the manageable six of the population.

A 20 item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers after an extensive literature review was used to collect data for the study. It was divided into two clusters according to the two research questions that guided the study. Cluster A had 10 items on the instructional measures for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students and cluster B had 11 items on the institutional measures for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities. The instrument was validated by three experts and the comments and their contributions guided the modification of the final instrument used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and the coefficient of the pilot test conducted in Imo State yielded 0.78 indicating that the instrument is reliable. The
instrument is a four point response category of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the numerical value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 assigned to them respectively. The instrument was administered and collected by the researchers and 3 trained research assistants. Out of 293 copies of questionnaire distributed, 271 copies were properly filled and returned for data analysis representing 92.49 percent return rate. Mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis and the decision was based on the principle of upper and lower limit of the mean rating. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. Where the t-value obtained is less than the critical value the null hypothesis is not significant, otherwise, the null hypotheses will be significant.
RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East for self-reliance in a depressed economy?

Table 1: Mean rating with standard deviation of the federal and state university students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students in South East, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Strategies</th>
<th>Federal n = 150</th>
<th>State n = 143</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical teaching should be implemented for effective skill development.</td>
<td>3.34 0.69</td>
<td>3.33 0.71</td>
<td>3.34 0.70</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business educators need to relate their teaching to challenges of unemployment in the society.</td>
<td>3.44 0.66</td>
<td>2.75 0.77</td>
<td>3.10 0.72</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into business education programme.</td>
<td>3.08 0.91</td>
<td>3.29 0.74</td>
<td>3.19 0.83</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be encouraged to undertake practical projects.</td>
<td>3.20 0.73</td>
<td>3.19 0.72</td>
<td>3.19 0.73</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities for entrepreneurship skill development should be put to use by business educators.</td>
<td>3.15 1.03</td>
<td>3.49 0.71</td>
<td>3.32 0.89</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical exercise by teacher and students should be properly funded.</td>
<td>2.86 0.97</td>
<td>2.92 0.96</td>
<td>2.89 0.97</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be encouraged to innovate in their area of interest.</td>
<td>3.20 0.79</td>
<td>3.12 0.82</td>
<td>3.16 0.81</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The theory of entrepreneurship education should aim at developing the desired mindset.</td>
<td>3.40 0.66</td>
<td>3.25 0.75</td>
<td>3.33 0.71</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business educators should be retrained on the entrepreneurship instructional delivery.</td>
<td>3.30 0.73</td>
<td>3.19 0.75</td>
<td>3.29 0.74</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational packages should be used to encourage and stimulate the student's interest.</td>
<td>3.28 0.72</td>
<td>3.52 0.54</td>
<td>3.40 0.63</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster mean and SD</td>
<td>3.23 0.79</td>
<td>3.21 0.75</td>
<td>3.22 0.77</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data analyzed in table 1 show that the overall mean rating ranges from 2.89 to 3.40 indicating that, the respondents agree to the itemized instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students. The cluster mean of 3.22 and standard deviation of 0.77 further indicate acceptance. The low cluster mean of 0.77 signifies that the respondents have consensus opinion in their responses.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the SouthEast, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy?
Table 2: Mean rating and standard deviation on the institutional strategies for improving functional entrepreneurship education among business education students in universities in South East.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Strategies</th>
<th>Federal n = 150</th>
<th>State n = 143</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\bar{x}$</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>$\bar{x}$</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University administrator should support entrepreneurship with adequate fund</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be properly supervised in practical entrepreneurial work</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision should be made for adequate power for the machines</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of functional business centres</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern facilities for entrepreneurship development should be supplied by the school administrators</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative teaching methods should be adopted for developing multiple skills for students</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging entrepreneurship education centre to be controlled by business educators</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing the curriculum of the school in implementing entrepreneurship programme</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsoring business education students in industrial and business market visitations</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting government support in entrepreneurship development of business education students</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring the implementation of business education entrepreneurship projects by students</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster mean and SD</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 revealed that the overall mean rating ranges from 3.12 to 3.49 indicating that the 11 items were accepted by the respondents as the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of Universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy. The overall cluster mean was 3.28 indicating agreement. The low cluster standard deviation of 0.79 shows that the respondents had similar views on all the items as institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

HYPOTHESIS 1

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State University. Students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students in south – east for self-reliance in a depressed economy.
Table 3: t-test result on the mean responses of federal and state university students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students in a depressed economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-tab</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>1.968</td>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in table 3 show that the calculated t-value, at 0.05 level of significance and 291 degree of freedom is 0.195. This invariably means that there is no significant difference between the mean response of federal and state university students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Federal and State University students on the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean ratings of federal and state university students on the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in South Eastern states of Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-tab</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>0.968</td>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value for 11 items at 0.05 level of significance and 291 degree of freedom is 0.684. Since the critical value of 1.968 is more than the t calculated value of 0.684, the hypothesis is therefore not significant to these items. This implies that no significant difference existed between the mean rating of federal and state university students on the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South Eastern states of Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.
SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the data analyzed the following were found:

1. The itemized instructional strategies are needed for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of federal and state universities students on the instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

3. Institutional strategies are needed for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

4. No significant difference exists in the mean rating of federal and state university students on the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students of universities for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the study with respect to research question one revealsthat the 10 items in instructional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students in universities in the South East, Nigeria were accepted by the respondents. Some of the instructional strategies include relating their teaching to the challenges of unemployment, integrating entrepreneurship education into business education courses, encouraging students to undertake practical projects among others. The findings of the study are in agreement with Okafor (2012) that teacher’s instructional approaches can serve as a means for improving the development of entrepreneurship among the students. Obi and Omeje (2010) asserted that instructional planning in schools should be used to improve entrepreneurship skill development in the learners. The null hypothesis was no significant noting that the respondent’s opinions did not differ remarkably.

With respect to research question two, the result of the study indicated that all the 11 items under institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship education among business education students were all agreed. Some of the items are; university administrators should support entrepreneurship with adequate funds, students should be properly supervised, adequate and alternative power should be provided for the use of entrepreneurship education on others. The findings are in agreement with Obi and Omeje (2010) that entrepreneurship education is best promoted by school administrators that have interest. The result of null hypothesis showed no
significant difference, which implies that there is no remarkable difference in the opinion of federal university students and state universities students on the institutional strategies for improving entrepreneurship among business education students of universities in the South East, Nigeria for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurship education is a key for sustainable youth employment and economic development; therefore there is a need for it to be improved by the teachers through their instructional delivery and school administrators. It helps the students to develop the willingness and ability to undertake business risk and marshal out resources to make a profit in it. Business education and other programme of study in the university need to promote entrepreneurship for it to achieve its mandate. It is on this note that the lecturers and school administrators need to do everything within their powers to improve entrepreneurship education in universities for self-reliance in a depressed economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Business educators must ensure that their instructional delivery would ignite the spirit of entrepreneurship among their students.
2. Instructional procedures should be backed up with necessary practicals to produce the desired results in entrepreneurship education.
3. School administrators should update facilities for functional entrepreneurship development.
4. Adequate support should be provided in training the students through functional entrepreneurship development.
REFERENCES


