INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON CAREER INTENTIONS OF STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CENTRAL ZONE OF PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses. The research design used in this study was descriptive survey. The primary data was generated by means of a structured questionnaire on Likert scale using stratified and random sampling. The population of the study comprised of 3,915 students in tertiary institutions domiciled in the central zone of Plateau State. A sample size of 1,101 from the study population of 3,915 students was used in this investigation. The results showed that while teaching methods and the infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State had no significant influence on the entrepreneurial career intentions of the students, institution-industry synergy had significant influence on their entrepreneurial career intentions. The study recommended, among others, that well-funded or equipped entrepreneurship center should be established and institution-industry synergy be sustained in all the tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau state.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Students, Career Intentions, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Unemployment in Nigeria today has assumed an alarming proportion, even when at a point in time Entrepreneurship Education was introduced in tertiary institutions as a means of reducing it. In the 1960s and 1970s, unemployment in Nigeria was not pronounced among graduates of tertiary institutions as at that time, mainly due to desperate need for human resources, public and private organizations would visit tertiary institutions and grant employment to graduating students in advance (Odidi, 2013; Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019; Aneke, Aduaka & Ezeh, 2022). In that period, it was even reported that organizations with vacant positions would jingle the bell around the host community requesting qualified candidates to apply for the said positions. The rosy employment situation for Nigerian university graduates however began to change in the 80s, which kept on worsening from that time to date (Aliyu, Ismail, Abdulrazaq, Jibrin & Olusegun, 2018).

As part of the efforts towards reducing unemployment in Nigeria, most tertiary institutions in Nigeria, including those in Plateau State have initiated entrepreneurship education in their curricula (Ekundayo & Babatunde, 2014). The Federal Government of Nigeria established another means to inculcate self-employment (entrepreneurship) culture in university students through the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) to include entrepreneurial studies in the curriculum of Nigerian Universities with the hope of reducing unemployment among fresh graduates (Aja-Okorie & Adali, 2013). This was later extended to other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Presently, entrepreneurship education is being offered in all universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019). The

teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions became of paramount interest to all stakeholders (Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019). The introduction of the entrepreneurship education in the universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria is an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment, self-reliance and poverty reduction. Where appropriate skills, attitude and knowledge accompanied with appropriate practical work are taught to the students, they would on graduation become self-employed and employers of labour (Oboreh & Nnebe, 2019).

In relation to the above, entrepreneurship education is seen as a distinct social institution that seeks the establishment and maintenance of a functional economy through job creation with a wide range of interest put into consideration especially with regards unemployment reduction (Ekundayo & Babatunde, 2014). As a result, various governmental and non-governmental organizations have initiated policies through support agencies such as National Directorate for Employment (NDE), The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials and Development Council (RMRDC) to address the problems of unemployment among Nigerian citizens (Olayinka, 2010; Emmanuel & Daniel, 2012; Akhuemonkhan & Sofoluwe, 2013).

Importantly, a number of studies relating to entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention have reported that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intention. This has however been ascribed to the fact that most of such researches have been focused on developed rather than underdeveloped economies like Nigeria (Ekpo & Edet, 2013; Akundayo & Babatunde, 2014). It was also reported that most students were not very confident about their intentions due to fear of capital, failure and lack of experience in business management (Akundayo & Babatunde, 2014). According to Agada, Fems and Lucky (2022), little attention has been given to the study of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education teaching techniques and other key performance indicators used in the measurement of success of entrepreneurship education in influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions.

There is no general acceptable definition of entrepreneurship that is considered as accurate enough. Hisrich, Janice and Sharon (2007) conceived entrepreneurship as the way towards creating something new with value by allocating the vital time, energy and getting the benefits of monetary and personal fulfilments. UNDP (2009) defines entrepreneurship as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential while Reitan (2014) depicted entrepreneurship as the dynamic procedure of making incremental wealth. To Shane and Venkataraman (2016), entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur, which can be define as one who undertakes innovations, finances and displays business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic good. On the extreme, it is a term used broadly in connection with the innovation of modern industrial business (Akanni, 2018). Entrepreneurship is thus the state or act of being in business or self-reliant and an employer of labour.

Fayolle and Gailly (2004) defined entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical programme associated with inculcating entrepreneurial skills and qualities in learners.

Similarly, Oduwaiye (2009) and Ooi, Selvarajah, and Meyer (2011) separately describe entrepreneurship education as the scope of lectures, curricular and programmes that attempt to provide students with the necessary entrepreneurial competences, knowledge and skills, geared towards the pursuit of a career in entrepreneurship. Albert, Sciasca and Poli (2014) describes entrepreneurship education as the structured formal communication of entrepreneurial competences, which consists of skills and mental awareness employed by individuals towards the expression of entrepreneurial behavior and action. Entrepreneurship education is thus any academic or training programme that is geared towards inculcating skills and qualities in learners for the purpose of self-employment or becoming employers of labour.

An entrepreneurial intention is the disposition of entrepreneurs towards entrepreneurship mind set (Akande & Raheem, 2021).This simply refers to the concrete evidences of translation of entrepreneurship implementation intentions into a process that may lead to a new business venture which consist of five major steps: generation of a business idea, identification of market opportunity, development of a business plan, business start-up, and innovation (Aneke, Aduaka & Ezeh, 2022). Edelman, Brush and Menolova (2013) had concluded that such entrepreneurship actions like generating a business idea, identification of marketing opportunity and other follow-up actions associated with the entrepreneurship process obviously stand out as concrete evidences of one's intentions or aspirations to embark on entrepreneurship behaviors or activities sooner or later. Kourilisky et al. (2015) argue that for any entrepreneurship programme to achieve its intended objectives, it must meaningfully equip its students with the requisite knowledge, skills, and competences that are capable of motivating to initiate actions in service of their respective entrepreneurship goals, intentions or aspirations while in school. Oguntimehin and Olaniran (2017) described intention as the best predictor of entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurship intention is thus the desire, backed by motivation to establish a business.

Studies on the influence of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria exist but differ in study population, institutions and locations. Ekundayo & Babatunde (2014) examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian undergraduates in Kwara State and found that entrepreneurship education influences students' intentions of becoming self-employed but their confidence was lessened by fear of capital, failure, and lack of experience in business management. This study is similar to the present investigation but differ in study area, study population and scope.

Jacob and Ariya (2015) examined the teaching of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions and the disposition of social Studies students towards self-reliance in Plateau State. The study revealed that practical demonstrations are abysmally used in the process of teaching the course. Equally, the linkage between industries and entrepreneurship education is also very low. The study strongly recommended among others that a well-funded model entrepreneurship center should be established in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, where practical exposure and functional skill acquisition will be well emphasized. This study is related to the present investigation but it is narrow in scope.

Aliyu, Ismail, Abdulrazaq, Jibrin and Olusegun (2018) studied the influence of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students in Katsina State, Nigeria. Their findings revealed that entrepreneurship education has a significantly positive influence on the students' entrepreneurial mind set. This study is similar to the present study but differs in study area, study population and scope.

Akande and Raheem (2021) studied the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions of tertiary institutions students in Nigeria. The results of this study revealed that entrepreneurship education significantly influences students' entrepreneurial intentions. It was recommended that entrepreneurship education should be practical-oriented and that authorities of higher institutions should collaborate with outside professionals for better transfer of knowledge, skills and attitude among the students. This study is similar to the present one but differs in study population, study area and scope.

Aneke, Aduaka and Ezeh (2022) studied the effect of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions and aspirations of students of tertiary education institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education has significant influence on the career intentions of the students. This study is similar to the present one but differs in study area, study population and scope.

Agada, Fems and Lucky (2022) studied the effect of entrepreneurship education on tertiary students' entrepreneurial career intentions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. It was found that entrepreneurship education has significant influence on the career intentions of the students. The study recommended that entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory in our tertiary institutions and that it should be adequately funded. This study differs from the present in study area, population and scope. The present study was designed to examine the influence of entrepreneurship education on the career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State.

Objectives of the Study

The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the extent to which teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State influence the number of business plans established by their students.
2. To find out the extent to which institution-industry synergy adopted in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State influence the number of business plans established by their students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent does the teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Plateau central zone of Plateau state influence the number of business plans or start-ups established by their students?
2. To what extent does institution-industry synergy adopted in tertiary institutions in Plateau central zone of Plateau State influence the number of business plans or start-ups established by their students?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The teaching method adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Plateau central zone of Plateau State has no significant influence on the number of business plans or start-ups established by their students
2. Institution-industry synergy adopted in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Plateau central zone of Plateau State has no significant influence on the number of business plans or start-ups established their students

Methodology

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey, which deals with collection of data from a sample of individuals through their responses to question items (Check & Schutt, 2012). The primary data was generated by means of a structured questionnaire on 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1), which was developed for the respondents to respond to.

The population of this study comprised of students offering entrepreneurship education courses in Federal University of Education (FUE), Pankshin (1,500 NCE and 631 degree students); College of Education (COE), Gindiri (1,114 NCE students) and Plateau State University (PLASU), Bokkos (670 degree students), making a total of 3,915 students in tertiary institutions domiciled in the central zone of Plateau State. A sample size of 521 NCE and 124 degree students from FUE, Pankshin; 323 NCE students from COE, Gindiri and 133 degree students from PLASU, Bokkos, making a total of 1,101 from the study population of 3,915 students was used in this investigation.

The study used stratified sampling technique (Research Advisor, 2006) to select the NCE and degree students. Simple random sampling was used for each category of students or stratum. The data generated from the study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Chi-square was analyzed the hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1 To what extent does teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education influence the number of business plans of students in tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State?

Table 1.

Responses on the Extent to which Teaching Methods adopted and Infrastructure used in Entrepreneurship Education in tertiary Institutions in the Central Zone of Plateau State Influence the Number of Business Plans by their Students.

S/N	Research Questions	Mean	SD	Remark
	To what extent do the teaching method and infrastructure for Entrepreneurship Education in your institution influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?			
1	To what extent do the methods of teaching influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	2.63	0.48	Disagree

2	To what extent does the curriculum content covered influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	2.46	0.61	Disagree
3	To what extent do lecturers'' competences influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	2.36	0.74	Disagree
4	To what extent do classroom facilities influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	2.36	0.64	Disagree
5	To what extent does equipped workshop influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	2.46	0.41	Disagree
	TOTAL	**2.45**	**0.58**	**Disagree**
	Criterion Mean	**3.00**		

Data on Table 1 shows the responses of students on the extent in which teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State influence the number of business plans or start-ups by their students. The results show that teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education has mean score of 2.45, which is less than the criterion mean of 3.00. This means that Entrepreneurship Education has no influence on the career intentions of students in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau State. Thus, the null hypothesis 1, which is a statement of no influence is accepted (Table 1). This means that teaching method adopted and infrastructure used has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial career intentions of the students in tertiary institutions in central zone of Plateau

Table 2.

Responses to research question 1, on the extent in which institution-industry synergy adopted in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State influence business plans established by their students.

S/N	Research Questions	Mean	SD	Remark
	To what extent does institution-industry synergy for Entrepreneurship Education programme in your institution influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?			
1	To what extent does access to industrial/factory facilities influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	3.72	0.51	Agree
2	To what extent does the attitude/expertise of supervisors in the industry/factory influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	3.91	0.49	Agree
3	To what extent does the attitude/expertise of supervisors from your institution influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	4.18	0.81	Agree

4	To what extent does the attitude of industry/factory customers influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	3.91	0.41	Agree
5	To what extent does the adequacy of industry/factory facilities influence the number of business plans or start-ups by you?	4.27	0.38	Agree
	TOTAL	**4.00**	**0.52**	**Agree**
	Criterion Mean	**3.00**		

Data on Table 2 shows the extent in which institution-industry synergy adopted in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State influence business plans or start-ups established by their students. The results show that the institution-industry synergy used in entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions in plateau central has a mean score of 4.00, which is more than the criterion mean of 3.00. This means that institution-industry synergy used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State has a significant influence on the number of business plans or start-up established by the students. Thus, the null hypothesis 2, which is a statement of no influence is rejected and instead, the alternative hypothesis 2, which is a statement of significant influence is accepted.

Discussion

The results in table 1 on research question 1 and hypothesis 1 revealed that teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institution in plateau central zone of Plateau state has no significant influence on the number of business plans or start-ups by their students, implying that it does not influence their entrepreneurial career intentions. This result agrees with findings by Jacob and Ariya (2015) who found that practical demonstrations are abysmally used in the process of teaching entrepreneurship education in some selected tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State. It also agrees with reports by Goyin, Micah and Obeta (2019) who found that one of the constraints to entrepreneurial activities in central zone include infrastructural deficiencies and the challenge of inadequate training.

The results in Table 2 on research question 2 and hypothesis 2 revealed that institution-industry synergy used in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in plateau central zone of Plateau State has significant influence on the number of business plans or start-ups by their students, implying that it has positive influence on their entrepreneurial career intentions. This disagrees with the null hypothesis 2, which is a statement of no influence. The result agrees with reports by Akande and Raheem (2021) who found that collaboration of tertiary institutions with outside professionals in entrepreneurship education has significant influence on the entrepreneurial career intentions of tertiary students in Nigeria. This result is however, at variance with findings by Jacob and Ariya (2015) who reported that linkage between industries and entrepreneurship education is very low in the

central zone of Plateau State. This means that such a synergy has improved and has become more effective presently compared to what it was in the zone.

Conclusion

The teaching methods adopted and infrastructure used in entrepreneurship education in the tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau State has no significant influence on the career intentions of the students. However, the institution-industry synergy in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in the zone has significant influence on the students' career intentions.

Recommendations

1. The government should establish a well-funded or equipped entrepreneurship center in all the tertiary institutions in the central zone of Plateau state or where available, it should be improved upon infrastructure-wise and more funding should be made available by government to boost infrastructure.
2. Entrepreneurship education should be practical-oriented and that authorities of higher institutions should collaborate or synergize with outside professionals for better transfer of knowledge, skills and attitude among the students.

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