



IMPROVING MENTORING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN OUR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

Patricia C. Iwu (Ph.D)
*Inec, Imo State and Aifce,
Owerri*

Abstract

This study was a survey aimed at improving mentoring of Entrepreneurship Education in Tertiary Institutions. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 210 business educators from all the tertiary institutions in Enugu State. The instrument for data collection was a 22 item questionnaire (Crombach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. T-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Results revealed that there was need to improve mentoring in entrepreneurship education in order to equip the graduates of entrepreneurship with entrepreneurial skills that is capable of equipping them for establishment own business and management of other businesses. It was recommended that human and material facilities be provided enough in the tertiary institutions to prepare the students for acquisition of skills and knowledge needed in improving mentoring in entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: Improving, mentoring, entrepreneurship, tertiary institutions.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is globally recognized because of its significant nature of alleviating poverty, generating employment, initiating innovations, creating wealth and economic vitality. Entrepreneurship is man's efforts at producing goods and services and improving man's standard of living. Entrepreneurship is the act of bridging the gap between science and the market place, thus creating new businesses, bringing new products and services to the market. Entrepreneurship could also be seen as a stimulating and compelling force in human beings to achieve the need for power, financial elevation, economic empowerment, effectiveness and competency. Entrepreneurship encourages moral propaganda and it is a means of promoting business, providing capital, skill, management and organization of the market. Entrepreneurship is not necessarily an invention but it turns inventions into profitable ventures (David McClelland in Ihekwoaba, 2012). Entrepreneurship has different conceptual perspectives but has some common aspects like risk taking, creativity, independence and rewards. These commonalities will continue to be the driving force behind the notion of entrepreneurship and its mentoring perspective.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the ability to support and encourage people/students/graduates to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potentials, develop their skills, improve their performance and become what they want to be. It is an effective way of helping people progress in their careers. Mentoring in entrepreneurship education is the act of teaching and inculcating the necessary behaviour, skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship into the students/individuals. Mentoring is an organized activity most times guided by the curricular. Mentoring can be seen as offline tracing and making meaningful impact on knowledge, work or initiating business ideas. It is seen as a support from tutors, teachers, counselors, line



managers, parents, friends and work teams (Mckimm Jollie and Hatter, 2012). Mentoring is passing on a guided and organized skills and knowledge. Mentoring can also be seen as a process of using specially trained people to provide occupational guidance and advice which will help to develop the careers of individuals (Chukwumezie, 2012). Mentoring is a way of preparing graduates to establish their own businesses.

Mentoring is a two end approach; that is teaching and learning (i.e mentor and mentee). No wonder Joel (2011) stated that mentoring is a two way process of dialoguing and planning, helping some people acquire expected competency and skills for a job or employment that can sustain and stabilize his economic level. Ezeani (2014) associated mentoring with apprenticeship training, whereby an individual (mentee) acquires technical skills from the patronage of more experienced and established professionals (Mentor). Mentoring in entrepreneurship is highly needed, hence it involves a formative period of acquiring knowledge, skills and attributes for employment viability. It also allows the mentee to explore new ideas in confidence, becoming more self aware, taking responsibility for life and have a purpose for life rather than leaving it to chance. Mentoring is a powerful personal development and it is a partnership between two persons (mentor and mentee) normally working in a similar field.

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Self-Development

It is the process of transferring knowledge and information that are relevant for investment opportunities, strategies and effective pursuit of an enterprise to a successful end or level. Entrepreneurship education is a welcome development in the academic system. In recent times, it is a fast growing area in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria and world-round. It has been endorsed not only by educational institutions, governments, and corporations have adopted it. Many institutions offer at least one course in entrepreneurship and a few actually have a major concentration in the area. The number of faculties teaching entrepreneurship increases regularly. Entrepreneurship education tends to create a sustainable economic development for the entrepreneur especially on the aims, skills and values of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship exposes the prospective entrepreneur on how to obtain capital for business, how to startup, management of business, creative freedom, high self esteem, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes and overall sense of leadership and control over ones business and the lives/welfare of employees.

Furthermore, training in entrepreneurship is made up of all kinds of experiences that enable the students develop or acquire the ability and vision on how to access and transform different opportunities to business reality. It goes beyond creating a new business and dwells more on increasing the students' ability and capability in anticipating, participating and responding to societal changes, exploring and achieving their potentials (UNESCO, 2008).

An entrepreneur is a person who already possesses the capacity and capability of combining the necessary resources, labour, men and materials to run or establish a business. An entrepreneur is one who introduces change, innovations and a new order (Ohakwe Chukwumezie Onoh Raphael Oparaku 2012). The entrepreneur is moved or



driven by certain compelling forces towards attaining a particular need. It could be a need to experiment, to accomplish a particular task or the need to escape from a particular authority of others. An entrepreneur is an innovator, a discoverer, a risk-taker, and absolver. An entrepreneur is one who runs a business at his own financial risk. An entrepreneur as the innovating individual who successfully thinks or conceives of a new business concern, organizes or initiates actions and manages its actions with its initial problems and struggles for survival until the action stabilizes, (Ogundele, 2010). Invariably, entrepreneurs start the business, manage and run the business with its challenges and move the business forward and sustain the business. Sustaining strong entrepreneurial culture can boost individual, collective economic and social success on local, national and world wide scale. Entrepreneurship graduates are expected to possess the ability to turn ideas into action.

Finally, entrepreneurship is one of the new areas in education incidentally; educational philosophers and educators see it as one of the challenges of the society. This challenge needs to be addressed through responsive curriculum content. Thus, it is a recent change and emerging trend. No wonder Ogunkunle (2009) stated that global changes in recent times call for curriculum innovations in order to close any gap in curriculum content of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education exposes the prospective entrepreneur on creative freedom and high self esteem. Training in entrepreneurship is made up of all kinds of experiences that can enable the graduates develop or acquire the ability and vision on how to access and transfer different opportunities to business reality. The curriculum of entrepreneurship education is expected to transmit to learners at all levels the domains of skills, values and attributes of entrepreneurship.

Statement of the Problem

It is disturbing that the universities are turning out graduates, who are supposed to be employed and be productive as a result of skills and knowledge acquired. Instead of becoming economically stable and contribute to the economy, these graduates rather join the employment cue and become a burden to their parents and the society due to insufficient viable employability skills. Furthermore, there is a doubt that the entrepreneurship curriculum has enough viable skills needed for opening of new ventures.



Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to assess means of improving mentoring in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which entrepreneurship skills are taught in tertiary institutions in Enugu State.
2. Find out the extent to which the skills taught prepare students in establishing own businesses and management of business opportunities.

Research Questions for the Study

The following research questions guided the study;

1. To what extent are entrepreneurship skills taught in the tertiary institutions?
2. To what extent do the entrepreneurship skills taught prepare the students to establish their own businesses and manage other business opportunities?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Male and female business educators in the tertiary institutions in Enugu State do not differ significantly in their ratings on the entrepreneurship skills taught in the tertiary institutions.

Method

The survey design was used for this study to elicit information to the research questions. The population for the study was 210 business educators in all the tertiary institutions in Enugu State. It included 83 male and 127 female business educators. There was no sampling because the population size was manageable. A structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher as the instrument for data collection. The instrument has a four point rating scale of Very Great Extent (VGE) 4, Great Extent (GE) 3, Low Extent (LE) 2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1. The questionnaire was validated by two business educators from ESUTEC in Enugu State. A reliability index of 0.85% was obtained with Crombach Alpha reliability coefficient. The data generated were analyzed and answered using mean statistics.

Result:

Research Question 1

- 1) To what extent are entrepreneurship skills taught in the tertiary institutions?

Table 1

Respondents mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurship skills are taught in the tertiary institutions.

S/No	Entrepreneurship Skills taught	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Ability and courage to take risks	2.1	0.8	LE
2.	Ability to recognize viable business opportunities	2.25	0.80	LE
3.	Ability to generate in-depth knowledge of a particular choice of business	1.98	0.88	VLE
4.	Ability to manage and grow a new venture	2.41	0.75	LE
5.	Ability to know the factors that support or hinder business management	2.01	0.77	LE



6.	Ability to adjust to change and manage situations in the running of business	2.19	0.80	LE
7.	Ability to raise funds and financial planning and management	2.38	0.81	LE
8.	Ability to possess inter-personal relationship skills	3.37	0.69	VGE
9.	Ability to account for all actions and finance in the organization	2.24	0.60	LE
10.	Ability to determine causes of failure of similar businesses	2.20	0.82	LE
11.	Ability to control the activities in business organization	2.64	0.75	GE
		2.35	0.78	LE

Table 1 shows a mean score of 2.35 which is lower than the positive cutoff point. The implication of the result is that the necessary entrepreneurship skills are not taught adequately and to a reasonable extent in the tertiary institutions. This invariably affects the graduates' participation in the operation of own businesses.

Research Question 2

To what extent are entrepreneurship skills taught in tertiary institutions prepare the graduates to establish their own businesses and manage other business opportunities?

Table 2: Respondents mean ratings on the extent of entrepreneurship skills taught, prepare graduates to manage own businesses

S/No	Entrepreneurship Abilities Inculcated	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Ability to communicate orally	3.05	0.68	VGE
2.	Ability to set goals and plan ahead	2.07	0.86	LE
3.	Ability to manage men and materials in an organization	1.71	1.11	VLE
4.	Ability to discover new markets or strategies for competitive marketing	1.91	0.96	VLE
5.	Ability to monitor the business environment	2.23	0.78	LE
6.	Ability to build networks amongst business partners/clients	2.64	0.51	GE
7.	Ability to identify the threats and weaknesses of a business from other competitors	2.17	0.94	LE
8.	Ability to differentiate between profitable business opportunities from non-profitable business opportunities	2.43	1.10	VLE
9.	Ability to identify the needs of the customers in the business	2.23	0.78	LE



10.	Ability to identify needed labour force for the business operation	1.95	0.80	LE
11.	Ability to identify the right location for a business	2.46	0.75	LE
		2.23	0.84	LE

Table 2 indicates a mean value of 2.23 which is less than the cutoff mean. This implies that the entrepreneurship skills taught in the tertiary institution cannot prepare the graduates enough to establish own businesses and manage business opportunities for others.

Discussions of Findings

The data shown in **Table 1** provided answers to research question one and the findings indicated a mean rating of 2.35 meaning that, there is need to update and improve the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education to provide/equip the graduates of tertiary institutions with the entrepreneurial skills. **Table 2** indicated a mean of 2.23 which is less than cutoff mean. The implication is that the entrepreneurship skills taught cannot prepare the graduates to establish and manage own businesses. These findings are in line with view of Baron (2008) which states that “the teaching/learning of entrepreneurship should focus on the perceivable purposeful environmental patterns which require improvement of human and material facilities in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. Bemabo and Ndiomu (2010) indicated that lack of adequate teaching facilities hinders the proper acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by the graduates. Hypothesis tested indicated no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators in tertiary institutions in Enugu. The reliability of the instrument showed 0.85% indicating that the instrument is suitable for the research work.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is a step into establishing self-owned businesses and management of other business opportunities. It is that education that enables the acquisition of skills for business management. If there is inadequate provision for the acquisition of the required management skills during teaching/learning process, it most likely that the graduates may be constrained with lack of skills required for the operation of self-oriented businesses and management of other business opportunities. In this case, graduates will end up joining the large unemployed, frustrated and dispersed individuals in the society. This situation can only be remedied through inculcating into the students the habits, the initiatives and skills to be self-reliant. The students also need the entrepreneurship skills and attitudes to operate and manage other business opportunities. This will go a long way to alleviate the unemployment problem.

Recommendation

It was recommended that:

1. Enough human and material facilities should be provided in the tertiary institutions to prepare the students for the proper skills and knowledge expected of entrepreneurship education.



2. Entrepreneurship curriculum in the tertiary institutions should be reviewed and restructured to accommodate enough entrepreneurship content that will enable the students acquire the entrepreneurship skills for self employment, curb unemployment and improve the economic situation for self and the society.

References

- Baron, A.R. (2005). Opportunity Recognition as Pattern Recognition: How Entrepreneurs Connect that dots to Identify New Business Opportunities. *Academy of Management Perspective*, 20(1), 103-117.
- Bemabo, E. and Ndiomu K. (2010). Developing the Nigerian Economy through Strategies Entrepreneur at Education in Tertiary Institutions: The Bayelsa State Experience. A Paper Presented at the 23rd Annual Conference of the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria held at Osiele Abeokuta.
- Chukwumezie, F.C. (2012). Empowering and Developing Youths Economic Life for National Survival through Entrepreneurship Education. *Business Education Journal*: 8(1), 33-47.
- Ezeani, N.S. (2014). Business Education Practices: Mentoring and Technology Alignments. *ABEN Journal* 1(3), 182-199.
- Joel, C. (2011). Coaching and Mentoring for System Change: ESD 392: *Technology Policy Organization Journal*: 6(3), 84-91.
- Mckimm, T. Jollie C and Hatterm (2012). Mentoring: *Theory and Practice; (Revised Edition)*. Preparedness to Practice Project, Mentoring Scheme, NHSE/Imperial College, School of Medicine.
- Ohakwe, S.N., Chukwumezie, F.U., Onuoha, N., Obuseh, R. and Oparaku, P.N. (2012). Entrepreneurship Development. Owerri: XS Grafix.
- Ogunde, O.J.K. (2010). Introduction to Entrepreneurship Development: Corporate Governance and Small Business Management. Lagos: Molafin Nominees.
- Ogunkunle, J.C. (2009). Curriculum and Wealth Creation. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Organization of Nigeria (CON)* 19(2), 85-93.
- UNESCO (2008). Promoting Entrepreneurship Education in Secondary Schools. Final Report of UNESCO Inter-Regional Seminar on Proper Presentation in Bangkok, Thailand. Pg 7-11.