

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN ENTREPRENURESHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess the extent of implementation of the University of Benin based entrepreneurship training programme. The study specifically examined the nine major components of the training programme, namely, ways of starting a business, conducting market surveys, legal procedures for starting business, the entrepreneur and the law, financing, marketing, record keeping, business planning and strategies. Two hundred and fifty students who registered for the 2003/2004 academic session were randomly selected for the study. A self structured questionnaire was designed and administered to the selected subjects for the study. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The results of the study showed that about 56% of the instructional components of the entrepreneurship training programme were taught in the University. The numbers of lecturers engaged in the training programme were found to be inadequate. The study revealed that the instructional resources for the implementation of the training programme were inadequate with the consequence that the training was not effectively carried out. The major problem found to be militating against the implementation of the programme was the lack of interest in the programme by the students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the University of Benin authorities should provide the necessary instructional materials for the implementation of the programme and the entire University community sensitized to the importance of entrepreneurship training.

KEY WORDS Implementation, entrepreneurship, instructional components, curriculum

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In a recent University of Benin Senate resolution, entrepreneurship training course was made mandatory for all University of Benin students especially those in their penultimate year. This course is expected to be taught using the course system hence the students in the University are expected to register for the course in either the first or second semester. One of the cardinal objectives of the course entails the training of students to become creative in terms of establishing their own business outfits upon graduation. This is sequel to the need to address the huge problem of unemployment that many of the students contend with immediately after their graduation. In addition, the idea to introduce the entrepreneurship course was based on the notion that the students will not only create jobs for

themselves but also for others, thus on the long run, the students will be able to contribute to the national gross productivity level (GDP) as well as help to eradicate the problem of poverty and unemployment pervading the country.

As a matter of fact, the University's Senate decision to approve this course has being commended by many students and staff of the University because the course was considered to have far reaching implications on the lives of the students on one hand and on the other, the Nigerian economy (Osagie, 2004). Similarly, many criticisms have being advanced to counter the rationale for the introduction of the entrepreneurship course and one of such criticisms is that business ideas are innate, a natural phenomenon that unfold on its own and that great business moguls such as Bill Gates never went to a business school (Igwe, 2004).

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In spite of the several criticisms against the business training programme, Irikefe (2004) opined that the business training programme if adequately implemented in the University, it has the capacity to equip the students with the best business ideas and that it will enable the students to tap from the investment opportunities that abound in the country.

Nigeria is a great country with a lot of economic resources such as bitumen, crude oil and a lot of mineral deposits (Ogbeide 1995), but one of the problems of the country is that the economic resources have not been fully tapped or harnessed due to the problems of ignorance, bad leadership and corruption. In a preliminary survey of the enrolment status of students of the University of Benin for the entrepreneurship training programme, about 54% of the entire students population in the University have enrolled for the entrepreneurship training programme (Tafamen, 2004), a positive indication that the students are interested in the course and are willing to acquire the necessary skills to set up their own business empires, after graduation.

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the level of implementation of the entrepreneurship training course in the University. The effort was motivated by the need to see that the programme achieve the broad objectives behind its introduction in the University. The conceptual framework of this study was derived from Okpala (1995) study. Thus in the study Okpala had initially called for assessment of entrepreneurship training programmes in Nigeria in order to ascertain their relevance or usefulness.

The following research questions were developed to enable a critical study of the level of implementation of the University business training course:

1. Are the various instructional components of the entrepreneurship training

programme adequately implemented in the University of Benin?

2. Are the available instructional materials adequate for the implementation of the entrepreneurship training programme?
3. What are the perceived problems militating against the implementation of the entrepreneurship programme?

METHODOLOGY

(a) The Design of the study

The descriptive survey research method was used for the study. The basis for choosing this method is due to the fact that descriptive survey research enables the collection of detailed and factual information which describes existing phenomenon; it also justifies current conditions and practice, (Ulin et al. 2002).

(b) The Population of the study

The population of this study consisted of all the Faculties, Institutes and Colleges in the University of Benin and all full-time students that enrolled for the entrepreneurship programme in the 2003/2004 academic session.

There are currently 10 faculties, three institutes and three colleges in the University of Benin. The student population is about 50,000 for both full-time and part-time undergraduate programmes. However, only students in the 10 faculties are currently engaged in the entrepreneurship programme

(c) Sampling Techniques

The population was stratified into different faculties in the University and seventy percent of students in each lecture hall/classroom were then randomly selected to provide proportional random representation.

Breakdown of the subjects per Faculty is stated below.

S/N	Faculty	Level	Number of students randomly selected (70%)
1	Faculty of Agriculture	300	15
2	Faculty of Arts	"	21
3	Faculty of Education	"	75
4	Faculty of Engineering	"	35
5	Faculty of Law	"	25
6	Faculty of Life Sciences	"	15
7	Faculty of Management Sciences	"	25
8	Faculty of Pharmacy	"	11
9	Faculty of Physical Sciences	"	22
10	Faculty of Social Sciences	"	06
Total			250

Description of Research Instrument

The major instrument for this study was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The use of questionnaire for summary research was supported by Bowling (1999) as the best instrument for collecting data since surveys are carried out in natural settings increases in external validity and acceptance are assured.

(d) Validity of Instrument

Content validity was made of the instrument used for the study. Two Professors assisted in the validation of the main instrument used. One of the Professors is in the area of business administration and the other in the area of measurement and

evaluation. Their comments and criticisms were used to modify the instrument.

(e) Reliability of Instrument

The Test-retest technique was applied to the process of determining the reliability level of the instrument. 50 students were pre selected and the instrument was administered to them. After one week interval, the instrument was readministered and a coefficient of 0.71 was obtained and this was considered relatively high to ensure reliability of the instrument.

Administration of the Instrument

Copies of the questionnaires were administered through the aid of research assistants. Administration of questionnaire lasted for two weeks.

FINDINGS

Table one: Percentage Distribution of Implementation of the various components of the Entrepreneurship Training Programme.

(N = 250)

S/N	Instructional Components	Number and Percentage of Respondents Indicating "Taught"	Number and percentage of respondents indicating "Not Taught"
1	Ways of starting a business	123(49.2)	127(50.8)
2	Conducting market surveys	173(69.2)	77(30.8)
3	Legal procedures for starting business	105(42)	145(58)
4	The entrepreneur and the law	156(62.4)	94(37.6)
5	Financing	92(36.8)	158(62.2)
6	Marketing	163(65.2)	87(34.8)
7	Record keeping	135(54)	65(26)
8	Business planning and strategies	178(71.2)	77(30.8)
9	Culture ideas and business	133(53.2)	117(46.8)
	Overall average percentage	55.9%	44.1%

Data in table one shows the number and proportion of students who indicated that a particular unit has been taught or not taught. The overall average percentage recorded indicated

that the instructional components of the entrepreneurship training programme were not uniformly taught or adequately implemented.

Table two: Problems militating against the Implementation of the Entrepreneurship Training Programmes

(N = 250)

S/ N		YES	%	NO	%
1	Does the school administration make supervision of instruction?	173	69.2	77	30.8
2	Lack of lecturers to handle the entrepreneurship course	156	62.4	94	37.6
3	Lack of textbooks	135	54	115	46
4	Lack of pamphlets	151	60.4	92	36.8
5	Lack of posters	77	30.8	137	54.8
6	Lack of interest in the course	127	50.8	123	49.2

Results in table two shows that about 58% of the respondents indicated that the University administration made supervision of the entrepreneurship programme, while about 42% did not agree with this view. On the issue of lack of lecturers to handle the instructional components of the programme, 87% of the respondents indicated "Yes" while 13% of the respondents indicated "No" meaning that lack of lecturers affected the adequate implementation of the entrepreneurship programme. Furthermore, about 64% of the respondents indicated that lack of textbooks affected the implementation of the programme. In similar trend, over 70% of the respondents indicated that lack of interest in the course is a problem that influenced the implementation of the entrepreneurship training programme.

DISCUSSION

The data in table one indicate that the implementation of the various instructional components of the entrepreneurship training programme across the faculties are not uniform. The pattern of implementation ranged from some topics been emphasized more than others to the outright non teaching of the specified topic or units. This is a reflection of the ad hoc approach to instruction in the University. The critical need to implement all the instructional components of the entrepreneurship training programme is contingent on the need for economic

development and self emancipation (Chin 1999). The implementation of the entrepreneurship curriculum will mean recruitment of qualified lecturers of appropriate quality and quantity, provision of instructional and infrastructural facilities as well as the teaching of all the instructional components. Until these are achieved, the current entrepreneurship curriculum status in the University remains unacceptable.

The new revised National Policy on Education (2004) has indicated that quality of teaching materials in our nation's schools will not be compromised. As a matter of fact, the policy specifically mentioned that the success of any school curriculum is dependent on availability of adequate teaching materials. The feasibility of this depends largely on government's bold steps to supply schools teaching materials and the innovations of teachers to improvise instructional materials. The importance of instructional materials in any school system cannot be undermined hence Urevbu (1997) posited that effectiveness of communication between teachers; the school and programme implementation should be viewed in the context of availability of teaching materials. In order that the teacher's functions may be discharged effectively, provision of teaching materials is required in adequate numbers and quality. Adequacy is relevant to outcome. Adequacy of instruction facilities has been variously defined. Bowling (1999) defined it in terms of whether the

expected goals meet the expected outcome and Salia-Bao (1989) considered adequacy of instructional materials as processes that leads to improvement of teaching and the achievement of educational objective, thus instructional materials and effective instruction are inextricably linked.

Table two indicates that the entrepreneurship training programme in the University contends with problems related to lack of lecturers to handle the entrepreneurship courses. The teacher student ratio in the University is 1 to 150. In recent times, there is a high enrolment rate in Nigerian Universities and this situation of things has reached an alarming proportion (Munzali, 2003). Other problems include, lack of textbooks, lack of pamphlets and lack of posters.

What appears to be the most disturbing finding arising from this study is the lack of interest in the entrepreneurship training programme, on the part of students. Lack of jobs in the country has being traced to the dependence on government to provide jobs and government is over burdened with so many social responsibilities. Individuals can set up their own businesses provided they have the initiative to do so. Fighting the disease of poverty in the society is a collective responsibility and the earlier people understand this, the better for the society.

Implications for Curriculum Development

It is pertinent to mention that the entire educative process should work harmoniously and effectively towards the attainment of set goals. This view, according to Frankham (1998) will lead to the fulfillment of an ideal society and he asserted "the school curriculum must be constantly evaluated and improved so as to ensure the fulfillment of the mission of the rising generation". The end product of the educative process is the curriculum. There are different types of curriculum, these include

The Planned Curriculum

This is a series of choices made at the various levels of curriculum development. The various choices are made after answering some pertinent questions. According to Tyler (1949) these questions involve what topics/issues to be taught in the school, when to teach them and how to teach them. The Joint Committee on Education Standards (1995) classified the hidden curriculum into three, these are paraphrased below:

1. The society of the school, that is the social climate and processes of groups

living and the interactions among the school family.

2. The managerial and organizational apparatus and arrangements of the school.
3. The images and situation of the students with regard to teachers and the schools as an institution and of teachers with regard to the students.

Implemented Curriculum

Once the planned curriculum gets into the hands of classroom teachers whatever happens to it varies from one class to the other. However, implementation of the curriculum involves the interaction of the teacher and the learner as well as the curriculum. At the implementation stage, the educational objective to be achieved would have been identified, the curriculum to help attain these objectives have been planned, factors that may affect the extent to which the curriculum is implemented would have been examined, as these efforts would on the final analysis help to actualize the objectives, so identified (Waxweiler, Harel and O'Carrol, 1993)

Owie (1981) posited that the task of translated the curriculum into the operational curriculum is the joint effort of the teachers, students and other agencies responsible for implementation. Again, the Joint Committee on Education Standards (1995) stated that teachers should adopt the appropriate teaching techniques and materials to guide students learning, students on their part are to be actively involved in the teaching and learning processes.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with a view to effective implementation of the entrepreneurship training programme in the University of Benin.

1. The University of Benin administration should provide the necessary instructional materials for the implementation of the programme. These instructional materials include, modern and up to date, textbooks, pamphlets, posters and other instructional technology.
2. The entire University of Benin community should be sensitized to the need for entrepreneurship training. It is envisaged that when these recommendations are taken into consideration by the University authorities and the entire University

community, a lot of impact would have been made to establish the culture of self-reliance which is pivotal to economic development.

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