

AFRREV IJAH

An International Journal of Arts and Humanities

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Vol. 1 (2), May, 2012:246-261

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print)

ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

Strengths of the Business Plan and Industrial Collaboration Strategies in the Teaching of Entrepreneurship in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria

Okolocha, Chimezie C.

Department of Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Ile, Chika M.

Department of Vocational Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

The study was conducted to identify the strengths of business plan and industrial collaboration strategies in the teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions. The study was a survey and was conducted using 63 business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria. Two

research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A 28 item questionnaire was used. Out of the 63 copies of the questionnaire distributed, fifty three were returned and used for data analysis. Mean scores standard deviation and t-test were used in the analysis of data. The study revealed that all the 28 item statements on business plan and industrial collaboration were considered helpful in the teaching of entrepreneurship. The study recommended among others that tertiary institutions (business education departments) should organize workshops, conferences, seminars to enable business educators acquire knowledge, skills and competencies in teaching entrepreneurship education using appropriate entrepreneurial driven institutional strategies as identified in this paper.

Introduction

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document posits that government recognizes education as the vital transformational tool and a formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment. The major thrust of the new reform initiative in education is to expand access to education, improve quality and optimize relevance so that the production of education system can be marketable, employable, be independent and help to move Nigeria into the group of 20 emerging economies in 2020.

Among the strategies for achieving the educational goal according to Ojukwu (2008) is to improve the quality of education at all levels. The reform target under NEEDS is that at least 80 percent of higher institution lecturers should acquire pedagogical skills and establish an efficient institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching.

The education sector (especially tertiary institutions) described as transformation tool for development in the country is facing significant challenges in its efforts to provide youths with equitable knowledge and skills that will empower them and bring them into the mainstream of development by improving their economic status, providing them with employment opportunities and making them to be job creators.

This role has become more expedient especially now that youth unemployment globally has attained an alarming proportion with a rapid inflow of youths into various forms of crimes such as kidnapping, robbery, internet fraud among others.

The Nigerian unemployment rate according to Osamwonyi (2009) was 10.8 percent in 2003 with a 12.3 percent among urban dwellers while rural jobless dwellers stood at 7.4 percent. This situation seems to have doubled in recent times leading to multiple cases of crime of different dimensions to the extent that the rich and poor are no longer safe in the country. The crime rate and global economic crises has increased protectionism of each country making youth migration to foreign countries very difficult. The worrisome aspect of the crime and unemployment rate is that university graduates are taking active part in the criminality. Akpomi (2009) attributed it to the educational system, lecturers and their teaching methods and strategies. According to Akpomi, the focus and process of education today is too mechanistic. She frowned at a situation where wrong pedagogy (e.g. lecture method) was used in teaching entrepreneurship designed to inculcate in the youth skills that will make them self employed. The use of wrong instructional method does not encourage or promote entrepreneurship skills acquisition, attitude and behaviours. A considerable challenge therefore faces business educators in devising programmes and strategies suitable for preparing business education graduates bearing in mind the major thrust of the programme, which is education for and about business.

For education and business education in particular to be accorded its respect in our society. Udegboka (2004) noted that it must provide graduates with minimum skills that will enable them to be self-employed through entrepreneurship education. Brown (2003) opined that the principles of entrepreneurship are increasingly considered valuable for students at all levels. Entrepreneurship education could be seen as educational programme designed to prepare young people to acquire appropriate business skills, ideas and knowledge that will help them to live a fulfilled life, increase their economic status and contribute to the development of the society. The European Commission on Enterprise and Industry (2008) defined entrepreneurship as an individual's ability to change ideas into activities that involves the use of individual initiatives to create, innovate, plan, take risk and management appropriately a project aimed at achieving at set objectives. A person who achieves his set objectives through entrepreneurship is called an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur therefore could be seen as a bulldozer, an innovator a generalist and a consolidator who from nothing initiates lofty and viable ideas that consolidate environment, resources and other necessary relationships required for a business to come into existence. Successful entrepreneurs according to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development

Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) (2004) are not necessarily born but can be trained and developed. Entrepreneurial ideas and activities can be developed, learned, practiced and demonstrated in different settings using a combination of appropriate instructional strategy that is relevant, suitable and adequate for various entrepreneurship learning content, organized to infuse or inject in the students the entrepreneurial spirit, and culture that will stimulate critical thinking, greater awareness of business opportunities and skills in operating a new business or modifying existing ones based on identified business environment and conditions.

Entrepreneurship education according to Okoye (2007) can fail among graduates if the educational system fails to turn out graduates that are trained on the basis of the prevailing circumstances on the environment. The use of business plans and school-industry link as teaching strategies will help to match our teaching-learning process to our local business environment. In line with this, Odu (2010) opined that a good school-industry collaboration will lead to effective entrepreneurship education. He defined school-industry collaboration as the combination of formal education with a meaningful work experience. John (1986) sees business plan as a document written by the prospective entrepreneur that details the nature of the business, the product or service, the customers, the competitors, the production and marketing methods, the management; the financing and other significant aspects of the proposed business ventures.

The aim of various governments to eradicate poverty and increase the standards of living of citizens through the establishment of poverty reduction programme have failed due to lack of entrepreneurship skills by graduates of the education system. Odu (2010) observed that while millions of people from among the educated are unemployed, millions of jobs are awaiting to be done because people with the right education and training cannot be found. This corroborates the result of a study carried out by the National Universities Commission (NUC) as reported in Mebane (2006). The findings of the study revealed that university education do not adequately prepare graduates to be self-reliant. This ugly situation seems to occur because of lack of linkage between the school and the industry where students can obtain hands-on business experience. In this direction, the United States National Foundation for teaching entrepreneurship education as reported in Nelson and Johnson (2008) advised that the teaching of entrepreneurship education should be matched with adequate entrepreneurial network.

The application of this involves the use of available instructional strategies. Nicholas (2000) saw strategies as a general framework that provides guidance for action to be taken and at the same time is shaped by the actions taken. In the context of this work, instructional strategies are chains of activities planned by business educators to be used in improving and injecting in the students the entrepreneurial spirit, culture and skills they need in order to survive in a business environment. Instructional strategy when properly matched with the teaching objectives of a lesson will help to stimulate students active learning through reflective thinking in areas of discussion, listening, seeing, reading, writing and doing as they go through the course content with the teacher who acts as the facilitator.

The above scenario calls for business educators to think out suitable instructional strategies that will help to improve the teaching of entrepreneurship education. To buttress this, Yabani (2003) stated that institutions of higher learning should speed up actions on best ways to train their graduates to be creative in visualizing business opportunities and exploiting same using entrepreneurial skills and knowledge acquired while in school. When graduates are properly prepared in entrepreneurship, they will definitely generate employment, overcome poverty and become useful members of the society (Ile and Umezurike, 2007).

Statement of problem

Education is seen as an engine house that pilots the affairs of a nation. It is the key that triggers off the engine and a propeller that puts development in motion. The level of a country's industrialization, economic status, development and individual independence is characterized by the level of their education. It is in recognition of this all important role of education that the federal government of Nigerian in recent times embarked on educational reforms aimed at making the system more functional and relevant to both the citizens and society at large, especially in this period of economic crises and unemployment syndrome that have caused most of the Nigerian youths especially the graduates from tertiary institutions to roam about the streets and involve themselves in all manner of crime-kidnapping, robbery, internet fraud among others.

Government in a bid to redress this problem has established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) under which entrepreneurship education was set up to encourage and train graduates of educational system to take up self-employment ventures since white collar jobs cannot be guaranteed to

all. To show government commitment in equipping the youth with skills that will help them to be self-reliant, entrepreneurship education was introduced in tertiary institutions. This paradigm shift in the approach and policy implementation of strategy to provide youths with relevant skills needed for the job market and their development needs and society at large has been observed by Ikeme (2007) as a step in the right direction.

Despite government's effort to equip graduates with skills in order to reduce unemployment rate, the unemployment syndrome seem to have multiplied on daily basis. This might be attributed to graduates' lack of entrepreneurship skills and competence in setting up new businesses. Tertiary institutions and their lecturer also do not help matters. Some tertiary institutions implement government directives on the teaching of entrepreneurship by teaching it as a general course with little or no time for demonstration of skills. In addition, some do not attach any credit unit to the course hence making students to see entrepreneurship as a mere university requirement for graduation. Teachers in most cases use only lecture method to teach entrepreneurship which is a skill driven course without applying entrepreneurship driven strategies like business plan and industry collaboration.

Consequently, it becomes necessary to find out the strengths of business plan and industry collaboration as strategies for enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions.

Purpose of the study

The major purpose of the work is to determine the strengths of business plan and industrial collaboration as strategies for enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Method

A structured questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data for this study. The questionnaire had 28 items and structured on a five point rating scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

Design of the study

The study was a survey type undertaken to obtain the opinions of respondents on the strengths of business plan and industrial collaboration strategies for enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions.

Population of the study

The population comprised 63 business educators in tertiary institutions that offer business education programmes in Anambra State of Nigeria.

Analysis of data

The data gathered were analyzed using the calculation of mean scores. Any item with a mean rating that is equal to or more than 3.50 was accepted while a mean rating that is less than 3.50 was not accepted as strategies capable of enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship.

For the analysis of data related to the hypotheses, where the calculated t-test values at 0.05 level of significance was less than the table t-value for the given degree of freedom (df), the null hypothesis was accepted, otherwise it was rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses of Business Educators on Strengths of Business Plan as a Strategy for Teaching Entrepreneurship N=53

S/NO	Business Plan Strategy	Mean	SD
1	Provide knowledge on how to obtain grant/fund from an agency	4.19	.59
2	Provides knowledge on how to carefully think through every aspect of business purpose	3.35	.61
3	Provides knowledge on how to prepare workable business plan in order to establish creditability with potential employees, suppliers and customers	4.15	.63
4	Provides knowledge on the construction of cash flow statement	4.08	.58
5	Acts as part of the on-going process of strategic planning	4.08	.55
6	Provides knowledge on how to build into the products, unique selling proposition	4.13	.59
7	Provides knowledge on how to estimate for business demands	4.17	.64
8	Provides knowledge on how to provide a financial history of the business	4.51	.54
9	Provides knowledge on how to be goal oriented	4.19	.92
10	Provides knowledge on how to be imaginative and creative in taking calculated risks	4.38	.69

11	Provides knowledge on how to demonstrate self-confidence	4.36	.71
12	Provides knowledge on how to cope with changing business situations	4.28	.72
13	Provides knowledge on how to manage time to meet job schedule	4.36	.65
14	Provides knowledge on how to make use of appropriate business feedback	4.15	.93
15	Provides knowledge on how to source for capital, loan and use loan wisely	4.23	.72
16	Provides knowledge on how to detect errors on time, block leakages and prevent wastage	4.02	.64
17	Provides knowledge on legal protection of the property of an entrepreneur	3.79	.53
18	Provides knowledge of laws regulating the operation of entrepreneur	3.65	.68
19	Provides knowledge on how to establish relevant financial plan to guide fund allocation	3.98	.66
20	Provides knowledge on how to use appropriate internal control system to reduce enterprise financial indebtedness	3.85	.89

Mean responses of business educators on the strength of business plan as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship to student revealed that all the 20 items on business plan strategy were strongly considered as helpful in teaching entrepreneurship to student. However, the two greatest strengths in the use of business plan as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship to students are providing students the “knowledge on how to provide a financial history of the business” and the “knowledge on how to carefully think through every aspect of business purpose”. These had mean values of 4.51 and 4.45 respectively.

Table 2: Mean responses on strengths of Industrial Collaboration as a strategy for enhancing the Teaching of Entrepreneurship N=53

S/NO	Business Plan Strategy	Mean	SD
21	Helps students to appreciate what is learned in the classroom	4.57	.54
22	Exposes students to practical laboratory practices	4.47	.50
23	Exposes students to real business life experiences	4.25	.68
24	Exposes students to real business environment adaptation	3.85	.69
25	Improves students' ability to work as a team	4.21	.57
26	Impacts in students the ability to relate to competitors	4.00	.59
27	Improves students' application of practical abilities and performance	4.30	.54
28	Improves students' public relations skills	4.25	.55

Table 2 displays mean responses of business educators on strengths of industrial collaboration as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship to students. Mean values of all the items ranged from 3.8 to 4.57. These mean values show that business educators strongly perceived industrial collaboration in teaching entrepreneurship to students as useful. Specifically, the greatest strengths of using industrial collaboration as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship lies in helping students to appreciate what is learned in the classroom (4.57)

Hypothesis I

Table 3: T-test comparison on the Strengths of Business Plan as Strategy for Teaching Entrepreneurship

s/no	Business plan Strategy	University = 15		College of Education = 38		df	t	p
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1.	Provides knowledge on how to obtain grant/funding from an agency	4.40	.63	4.11	.56	51	1.665	102
2	Provides knowledge on how to carefully think through every aspect of business plan	4.60	.63	4.39	.59	51	1.112	.271

3	Provides knowledge on how to prepare workable business plan in order to establish creditability with potential employees, suppliers and customers	4.13	.64	4.16	.64	51	.126	.900
4	Provides knowledge on the construction of cash flow statement	4.33	.623	.97	.54	512	.086	.042*
5	Acts as part of the ongoing process of strategic planning	4.27	.594	.00	.52	511	.616	.112
6	Provides knowledge on how to build into the products, unique selling proposition	4.20	.684	.11	.56	51	.523	.603
7	Provides knowledge on how to estimate for business demands	4.47	.644	.05	.61	512	.189	.033*
8	Provides knowledge on how to provide a financial history of the business	4.47	.64	4.53	.51	51	.358	.722
9	Provides knowledge on how to be goal oriented	4.13	.92	4.21	.93	51	.272	.786
10	Provides knowledge on how to be imaginative and creative in taking calculated risks	4.40	.74	4.24	.28	51	.772	.443
11	Provides knowledge on how to demonstrate self-confidence	4.27	.70	4.26	.72	51	.016	.987
12	Provides knowledge on how to cope with changing business situations	4.00	.76	4.39	.68	51	1.846	.071

13	Provides knowledge on how to manage time to meet hob schedule	4.13	.61	4.45	.65	51	1.600	.116
14	Provides knowledge on how to make use of appropriate business feedback	4.00	1.00	4.21	.91	51	.741	.462
15	Provides knowledge on how to source for capital loan and use loan wisely	4.53	.64	4.11	.73	51	1.993	.050*
16	Provides knowledge on how to detect errors on time, block leakages and prevent wastage	4.27	.70	3.92	.59	51	1.824	.074
17	Provides knowledge on legal protection of the property of an entrepreneur	3.73	.46	3.82	.56	51	.506	.616
18	Provides knowledge of laws regulating the operation of entrepreneurs	3.67	.82	3.65	.63	51	.085	.932
19	Provides knowledge on how to establish relevant financial plans to guide fund allocation	4.20	.68	3.89	.65	51	1.525	.133
20	Provides knowledge on how to use appropriate internal control system to reduce enterprise financial indebtedness	3.47	1.19	4.00	.70	51	2.033	.047*

To test for difference in perception between business educators in the universities and colleges of education, t-test was used. Table 3 shows that the perception of the two differed significantly in 3 of the 20 items 4, 15 and 20 with t-values (51) = 2.086, 1.993 and =-2.033 and p-values, .041, .050 and .047; but do not differ significantly in 17 aspects of the strengths of business plan as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship. It was, therefore, concluded that business educators teaching in the universities and colleges of education do not differ significantly in their perception of the strengths of business plan as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship education.

Hypothesis 2

Table 4: t-test comparison on the strengths of industrial collaboration as strategy for teaching entrepreneurship

s/n	Industrial Collaboration Strategy	Upto 5 years =19		Above 5 years =34		df	T	p-values
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
21	Helps students to appreciate what is learned in the classroom	4.58	.61	4.56	.50	51	.129	.897
22	Exposes students to practical laboratory practices	4.53	.51	4.44	.50	51	.586	.560
23	Exposes students to real business life experiences	4.05	.91	4.35	.49	51	.151	.122
24	Exposes students to real business environment adaptation	3.389	.66	3.82	.72	51	.357	.723
25	Improves students' ability to work as a team	4.00	.67	3.32	.47	51	.2053	.045*
26	Impacts in students the ability to relate to competitors	4.11	.66	3.94	.55	51	.973	.335
27	Improves students' application of practical abilities and performance	4.16	.50	4.38	.55	51	1.467	.149
28	Improves students' public relations skills	4.16	.69	4.29	.46	51	.860	.394

Significant, P-0.05

Table 4 shows that t-values for 7 of the 8 items were .129, .586, -1.571, .357, .973, -1.467, and 860 with corresponding P-values .05. It was therefore concluded that there was no significant difference in the opinions of experienced and inexperienced business educators on the strengths of Industrial collaboration as a strategy for teaching entrepreneurship.

Discussion

Various governments in Nigeria have fought the monster-unemployment by devising all kinds of education reform initiatives. The recent initiative is entrepreneurship education aimed at empowering the youths/graduates with entrepreneurial skills to enable them be self-reliant and self employed and contribute their quota to economic development of our country. This study makes an attempt to ascertain the strengths of business plan and industrial collaboration as strategies for enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions. The results showed that all the 28 item statements on business plan and industrial collaboration were considered helpful in teaching entrepreneurship to the students. This implies that for business educators to inculcate effective entrepreneurial skills in the students, they should use more of practice driven instructional strategies. When they apply well developed business plan in their teaching, supplemented with appropriate school-industry linkage, the students will grasp the overall picture of the What? Why? How? Where? and When? associated with entrepreneurship ventures.

Since entrepreneurship is the key to the successful launch of any business and basic key to the graduates unemployment problem, it then implies that when students learn how to prepare business plans, gain mastery of the content with the teacher acting as a facilitator and the students putting into practice what they learnt in the classroom in a real business environment through industry collaboration, then the students will improve on their entrepreneurial traits such as being confident in themselves, creative, original, business driven, consumer oriented, technically oriented, flexible and competent.

Buttressing the need for entrepreneurial driven strategy, Akpomi (2009) stated that education today is too mechanistic and frowned at a situation where wrong pedagogy was used in teaching entrepreneurship designed to inculcate in students skills that will make them self-employed. Okoye, (2007) stressed that entrepreneurship can fail among graduates if the educational system fails to turn out graduates that are trained on the basis of the prevailing business circumstances in the environment. Odu (2010) emphasized that a good school-industry link will lead to effective entrepreneurship.

Olufokunbi, (1995) regretted that very few entrepreneurs have been stimulated to have meaningful interaction with the universities and polytechnics. According to him, a lot could be learnt from the experiences

of the entrepreneurs who have toiled, failed and succeeded. From all indication, it appears that the teaching of entrepreneurship education with business plan and industrial collaboration strategies will help students to exhibit creativity, imbibe business ethics, attitude, behaviour and other entrepreneurial skills needed for self-reliance and self-employment.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the use of business plans and industrial collaboration as strategies in teaching entrepreneurship will help students to develop entrepreneurial capabilities needed to be self-reliant and self-employed. When the existing gaps in skill acquisition are closed through the application of entrepreneurship driven instructional strategy, the students can set up businesses of their choice, remain in businesses after graduation and contribute their quota to the economic development of the country. This will help to minimize unemployment and crime rate in our country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers (Business educators) should use appropriate entrepreneurship driven instructional strategies capable of enhancing the teaching of entrepreneurship. The strategies should include business plans and industry collaboration.
2. There should be a closer cooperation and collaboration between education and the private enterprise in order to help students acquire necessary entrepreneurship skills from the onset of their enrolment in school.
3. Entrepreneurship network and resource centres should be established in schools by the government.
4. Business education departments should establish business centres where students should be shared in groups to take charge of the business on daily basis. The essence is to enable them imbibe practical entrepreneurial culture while in school as part of the learning process.
5. School management/administrators should establish linkages with industries.

6. Business education departments should organize seminars and workshop for students where successful entrepreneurs would be invited as resource persons to share their experiences with students and staff.
7. Teachers (business educators) should be sponsored by school managements to attend seminars, workshops and conferences to enable them acquire knowledge, skills and competencies in teaching entrepreneurship education using appropriate entrepreneurial driven strategies.
8. Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Nigerian should be given a substantial credit unit at least four (4) credit units, to afford teachers and students enough time for demonstration and practice.
9. Entrepreneurship education across all levels of education should be made a policy issue and core course irrespective of the students area of specialization. The essence is to ensure that each student can open a business when white collar job is not available.
10. Government should fund entrepreneurship education to enable teachers and students meet up with the demands of the course.

References

- Akpomi, M.E. Achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigeria higher institutions. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 8 (1).
- European Commission Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General (2008). *Entrepreneurship: A Panacea to industrial and technological development*. *Delta Business Education Journal*, 1 (3), 112-114.
- Ikeme, A. (2007). Nigeria: Entrepreneurship Repositioning youth for tomorrow in Nigeria. Retrieved November 2009. From <http://www.ali africa.com>.
- Ile, C. M. & Umezurike, A. N. (2007). Poverty reduction through business education. Evidence from medium scale enterprises in Anambra State. *Business Education Journal*, 5 (1), 97-105.
- Krueger, N. F. & Brazeal, D.V. (2007). Methodologies and approaches by teaching entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship teaching strategies*. Preparation and execution www.exed.hbs.edu/programms/eecpc/curriculum.html.

- Mebane, J. O. (2006). Business education and entrepreneurship development and growth. *Association of Business educators of Nigeria (ABEN)*. Book of Readings, 1 (6), 43-52.
- Nelson, R. E. & Johnson, S.D. (2008). Teaching of Entrepreneurship development education: A strategic approach to economic growth in Kenya. *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education*, 35, (1) 7-21.
- Nicholas, F.S. (2000). Strategy, definitions and meaning. Retrieval on 18th September, 2008. From, internet www.leanactivity.com.
- Odu, K.O. (2010). School-industry link with entrepreneurship in vocational technical education in the face of global economic crises in Nigeria. *Unizik Orient Journal of Education*.
- Ojukwu, K. (2008). An overview of the education sector reform in Nigeria: Fundamental reforms in lecturer competence assessment. *Business education Journal*, 6 (2), 1-10.
- Okoye, K.R.E. (2007). Need for entrepreneurship curricular in technical and vocational education programmes. *Journal of Education Research and Policies 2* (2), 46-49.
- Olufokunbi, B. (1995). Entrepreneurship within the Nigerian economy today. Paper presented at the conference on entrepreneurship within the Nigeria economy organized by CIRD Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife 11th October, 1995.
- Osamwonyi, I. O. (2009). The Nigerian Economy: Edo State Unemployment and the role of entrepreneurship. Graduate Entrepreneurship Scheme, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Training Manual for Participants, 1-10.
- SMEDAN (2004). *Strategies for successful employment trader*, 5(1), 17-21.
- Udegboka, K. (2009). Development objectives and skills in the teaching of social studies in Rivers State College of Education, Portha-court. *Journal of Social Studies Teachers Association of Nigeria*, 3 (5), 30-34.
- Yabana, A. (2003). Technical and vocational education: A functional approach to employment generation. A lead paper presented at the national conference on technical and vocational education, organized by Federal Polytechnic, Damaturu, Yobe State.