

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This study investigated the innovative and creative techniques employed by the school administrator and lecturers in implementation of entrepreneurship education, challenges encountered and possible solutions to these challenges by considering the views of students, lecturers and administrator. Mario Institute of Hospitality, Management and entrepreneurship Education Uhunowere, Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area, Enugu State was used for the qualitative study. The population of the school is 170 students and 20 lecturers. The purposive sample for this study consisted of the school administrator, 5 lecturers and 15 students. Three different but parallel semi structured interview schedules were used for data collection. Data were analysed through the use of content analysis. The following findings amongst others were made: Teaching techniques employed in the school were: a) Flipped classroom model where the students were encouraged to prepare for the lesson before the class takes off; (b) use of the desired or benefit driven approach and (c) interactive, participatory, and formative methods based on Pestalozzi principle of using the three human faculties (head, heart and hand). The impact of these methods led to change of students mindsets, acquired self confidence, skills and become self reliant. Challenges encountered include; poor orientation/mindsets of some lecturers and students, inadequate finance and insufficient amenities. It was recommended that aggressive enlightenment programmes should be organised on radios, television town hall meetings etc to change people's mindset and sufficient capital should be made available to schools to enable effective implementation of the programme.

Key Words: Innovative and Creative Techniques, Implementation and Entrepreneurship Education

Introduction

The issue of high rate of unemployment and unemployable youths in Nigeria has necessitated the need to make a swift from the old system of education that mainly prepared graduates for white collar jobs to the new system that emphasise skill acquisition that will enable graduates to be independent of the government's white collar jobs, and creators of job opportunities. Hence, Okwori, (2017) suggested that entrepreneurs can be used to meet the need of diverse groups and make

individuals self reliant economically in the society. The report of the European Commission (2013), supporting this view stated that entrepreneurs are key to economic growth and creation of new jobs. The report declared entrepreneurship education to be one of the instruments for the support of the entrepreneurship at all levels of the educational system. The question then is what is entrepreneurship education?

Entrepreneurship education has been defined in various ways by different scholars. Ojeifo (2013) defined entrepreneurship education as a functional educational process that provides the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities in their future chosen careers. Nwosu and Ohia (2009) explained that entrepreneurship education inculcates new ideas to life through investment, creativity and value adding innovations. Onyene (2007) earlier stated that, entrepreneurship education is a type of education that impacts the necessary skills and stimulates the entrepreneurial spirit in the learner of self awareness of possession of the potentials or ability to become a master of his/own, while, Kaitami, Balami & Datong (2017), described entrepreneurship education as a form of education that makes it possible for students to possess marketable skills and translate them to self-employment. This may provide solution to the growing threats of insecurity, manifesting in form of armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking and suicide among others, resulting from inability of young graduates to practicalise what they learnt in school.

Hence, the present researchers describe entrepreneurship education as a conscious effort directed at inculcating transformative skills in learners who become committed to it and who would utilize the knowledge gained to create new powerful survival strategies. It is the kind of education that will not only expose the learners to their original course content but will at the same time train the learner to practically demonstrate what has been learnt. This will link classroom work to the market needs, connect learners to industrialists and at the same time establish synergy between what has been learnt and the practical work experience outside school. In the words of Rev. Father Obe, a school administrator during the interview session, "it is a form of education that teaches a new way of seeing and understanding reality, how to generate ideas and translate the ideas into action". This implies that when a learner becomes conscious of his inner abilities, the entrepreneurial spirit within the learner will naturally flow resulting to three basic things creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Creativity and innovation goes hand in hand. It is said that there is no innovation without creativity, because while creativity is the ability to produce new and unique ideas, innovation is the implementation of those ideas created. Okpara (2007) explained that innovation is the method of carrying the finest thoughts into reality which activates creative initiative and produces a chain of new ideas. As such,

there is only one good method as proposed by Bruheier in the spirit of Pestalozzi (2010: 20), which opined that “the whole range of instruction for young people should be designed more to develop the three human faculties (ie head, heart and hand) than to enrich knowledge”. The head faculty emphasizes the ability to reason, think and be explorative, the heart faculty focuses on love and care for your environment while the hand focuses on practice and use of things available to create new ventures. It is believed that people are born with creative instincts and all learners have creative potential, but what is required is for teachers to use teaching techniques or methods that can arouse those innate creative instincts in the learners and build self confidence in them to actualise their dreams.

Using creative and innovative techniques usually encourage students to experiment with new ideas and pursue enquiring approach in learning. It demands that teachers stimulate learning and encourage students to rediscover themselves in terms of their abilities, knowledge and attitude. Thus, the features identified by this method include that student learn from one another, are practical conscious, debate and exchange ideas, are guided to make self discovery, exposed to informal and flexible learning atmosphere, learn from their mistakes and by solving problems. Mwasalwiba (2010), however noted that these methods are costly and may not be in conformity with the university curricular. Examples of innovative techniques or methods are: computer simulation of business games, role play, business plan development, personal and group projects. Others are visitation to entrepreneurs, new business creation, workshops, group discussions and case study. In furtherance of the above views, Jones and Iredale (2010) supported that entrepreneurship education require experiential learning styles, creative problem solving and learning by doing to arouse the interest of the students.

Thus, innovative method is learner centered, interactive and promotes the use of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. It encourages students to see mistakes as part of innovation, become resourceful and flexible. Responding to the need to produce workers with the necessary entrepreneurial skills and experiences, Okojie (2009) noted that the Federal Government of Nigeria directed all higher education institutions in the country to run entrepreneurship studies programmes as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their disciplines with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. Otunla and Sanausi (2016) also pointed out that the Federal Government recently introduced 34 trade and entrepreneurial subjects in its secondary school curriculum in 2007 to match ideas and challenges of the changing economic structure of the modern society.

However, despite these efforts, Nigeria is still one of the countries with the highest number of unemployed graduates in the world as indicated by Udo (2016). Explaining the possible cause of this problem, Kailani, Balami and Dantong (2017), pointed out that entrepreneurship programme has not been adequately implemented. This, by implication suggests that the technique or method employed

in implementing entrepreneurship education may have influence on the impact created by entrepreneurship on the learners. Based on the above background, there is the need to determine the creative and innovative techniques employed by lecturers in implementation of entrepreneur education in schools and the impact of such methods on students.

Statement of the Problem

The present staggering number of unemployed and unemployable youths in the country is worrisome as this situation pose serious and growing threats of insecurity, manifesting in form of armed robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking and suicide among others. Despite the fact that many researchers have been carried out on the benefits of entrepreneurship education and the extent of involvement of secondary schools and universities in teaching entrepreneurship education, the desired practical impacts on the school graduates are yet very minimal. The poor implementation of such brilliant initiative may have led to the high rate of unemployment being experienced among thousands of graduate youths produced annually.

The teaching of entrepreneurship education may require introduction of creative and innovative techniques to help facilitate improvement in acquisition of practical skills and value reorientation required to produce self reliant, creative, confident and employable youths in the country. However, to the best knowledge of the present researchers, there are no previous studies done on the benefits of employing innovative and creative techniques in implementation of entrepreneurship education as perceived by school administrators, teachers and students and the challenges encountered. This omission creates a gap to be filled by this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to reveal innovative and creative techniques that the school administrators and lecturers employ in implementing entrepreneurship education and the challenges encountered and possible solutions to these challenges by considering the views of students, lecturers and school administrators.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the meaning of Entrepreneurship Education?
2. What are innovative and creative techniques employed by the lecturers and school administrator in implementing entrepreneurship education in your school?
3. What are the outstanding impact/benefits experienced by students undertaking entrepreneurship education?

4. What are the challenges faced by the lecturers, students and the administrator in using innovative and creative technique?
5. What are the possible solutions as perceived by students, lecturers and the administrator?

Methodology

An interpretive qualitative design was used for the study. The approach enabled the researchers to deeply explore the potential effect of current teaching and learning techniques employed in implementing entrepreneurship education in schools as opined by Patton (2015) and Stewart Schamdasani (2015). To save time and other resources, the researchers scheduled one focus group interview for students and two separate interview schedules for the administrator and lecturers, respectively.

Mario institute of hospitality, management and entrepreneurship education comprising the administrator, 170 students and 20 lecturers constituted the population of the study while a purposeful sample of 15 students, 5 lecturers and one administrator were actually used for the study. This is backed up by Boddy and Boddy (2016:430) which opined that the concern of qualitative research is more about gathering in-depth information rather than quasi measurement and so smaller sample sizes are intuitively more appealing.

Three different, but parallel, semi-structure interview schedules, for the administrator, lecturers and students were developed for the study based on the information obtained from interviews with two senior lecturers in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Before the commencement of the interview and group discussion the administrator of the school, the lecturers and the students were duly informed of the rationale for the study, the potential benefits of the research to the academic community and that their participation in the study was voluntary. They were also advised of their unconditional right to withdraw from the study if they wished. Likewise notification of the right not to respond to questions considered sensitive was given. Lastly, participants were given a guarantee of the confidentiality of their contributions and that these were to be used only for the purpose of the study.

Interviews were conducted by the three authors: Amoke, J. N., Nwafor, B. N. and Diara, C. F. The first author asked questions, the secondary author tape recorded the answers while the third author did manual recording of notes on paper. The school administrator/head and teachers were interviewed individually, while the students were interviewed in a group (i.e focus group discussion). The interviews were conducted in English. In all, 7 semi-structured interviews were conducted with an average length of 45 minutes each. Coding and analysis were carried out in parallel with the data collection.

In the interviews, the students, teachers and the administrator were asked; their concept of entrepreneurship education, what they considered to be the techniques employed in teaching entrepreneurship education, how that learners benefited from these methods of implementing entrepreneurship education, what they experienced as challenges and the way forward to overcome such challenges. The interviewer used propping and follow up questions (e.g. how come? What do you mean? Any other information?) and took a non-judgmental approach. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative data analysis process was organised in five steps which were parallel to the method proposed by Erdogan and Ok (2007). These steps were: (a) transcription (b) reliability analysis (c) coding (d) establishing themes and categories and (e) writing up and interpreting the results. Collected data were first translated into written format and then subjected to content analysis for examining the common codes and thus categories. After that, the researchers identified some clusters of codes which then transformed into themes. Patterns relations and trends that emerged from the data were then noted in the themes. The researchers enumerated the frequency with which certain observations occurred as a way of identifying prominent themes. Only those themes that fitted the research objectives were considered for future analysis.

Results

The results of the study were presented according to the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question One: What do you understand by the term entrepreneurship education?

Entrepreneurship education was perceived as the development of behaviour, attitudes, capacities, skills and mindsets for the purpose of generating creative ideas, innovation, business start up and self-confidence in the learner.

Research Question Two: What are innovative and creative techniques employed by the lecturers and school administrator in implementing entrepreneurship education in your school? The participants in the study indicated that the innovative and creative techniques employed in teaching entrepreneurship education in the school were: a) Flipped classroom model where the students were encouraged to prepare for the lesson before the class takes off; (b) use of the desired or benefit driven approach and (c) interactive, participatory, and formative methods based on Pestalozzi principle of using the three human faculties (head, heart and hand).

Research Question Three: What are the outstanding impact/benefits experienced by students undertaking entrepreneurship education?

The result of the study showed that the technique employed in teaching entrepreneurship in the school equipped the learners with creative skills, changed mind sets, self confidence, and ability to combine properly the use of the head, heart and hand in helping themselves and the country to develop.

Research Question Four: What are the challenges faced by the lecturers, students and the administrator in using innovative and creative technique?

The view of the respondents with regards to the challenges encountered in employing innovative techniques in teaching entrepreneurship education were as follows- insufficient fund to conduct practical by the lecturers and for students to practice what they have been taught in the class, insufficient basic amenities and infrastructure like hostel accommodation, poor electricity supply, lab equipment, and lack of tarred roads. Other challenges encountered by lecturers and the administrator were changing the students' poor orientation or negative mindset to believe in themselves that they can do it and lack of time to cover the curriculum that seems to be versatile.

Research Question Five: What are the possible solutions as perceived by students, lecturers and the administrator?

Respondents suggested that aggressive enlightenment programmes should be organised on radios, televisions, town hall meetings among others to change people's mindset and sufficient capital should be made available to schools to enable effective implementation of the programme.

Findings

This section presents in detail the findings of the study. After reading and discussing the interview protocols, they were found to converge on five general themes that described (1) the concept of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (2) techniques used in implementing entrepreneurship education (3) the benefits of using such techniques on the learners (4) challenges experienced and (5) suggestions on how to overcome such challenges for better implementation of entrepreneurship education. The perception of the administrator, lecturers and students with respect to the five themes were summarised as follows:

Theme I: Concept of Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship Education

The first theme to emerge from the responses was the students', lecturers' and administrator's views on who an entrepreneur is and what they understood to be entrepreneurship education. The general perception of an entrepreneur implied an individual that uses the privilege of turbulence, unsatisfactory situation, lack and need to create new items, businesses, or service to improve the environment or society, while entrepreneurship education was perceived as the development of behaviour,

attitudes, capacities, skills and mindsets for the purpose of generating creative ideas, innovation, business start up and self-confidence. The following quotes demonstrate these opinions: “Entrepreneurship is a way of life, a new way of seeing realities. It is taking advantage of a failed system, generating ideal which can help or provide solution to the peoples’ problem”. (admin). “An entrepreneur is a social reformer” (lecturer). To her “entrepreneurship education is a type of education that train learners to be creative, self reliant and confident” (student). “It is a type of education that makes people to see opportunity in every disadvantaged situation, and create ability to improvise”. (student). “Entrepreneurship is all about being self employed and economically self reliant”. (lecturer)

Theme two: Innovative and creative techniques employed in implementing entrepreneurship education in the school

The participants in the study indicated that the innovative and creative techniques employed in teaching entrepreneurship education in the school were: a) Flipped classroom model where the students were encouraged to prepare for the lesson before the class takes off; (b) use of the desired or benefit driven approach and (c) interactive, participatory, and formative methods based on Pestalozzi principle of using the three human faculties (head, heart and hand). The administrator commented that the “head, heart and hand should be considered in assessing a child in other to produce a total person”. The belief is that learners are adult and full of potentials, hence, making it learner centered made the students to put into practice what they are taught and become self reliant. As stated by a participant lecturer, ‘we allot 70% to practicals and 30% to theory to encourage students to participate and use their brain to create ideas on their own’.

One of the students made this comment “the administrator has ways of ensuring that students speak out, move out to the public, and find problems to solve”. This is in line with the flipped classroom technique. Students were taught to use their head to think, heart to show love and care and hand to create and handle equipment”. Another student gave example that the administrator took final year students to the village to practice home keeping. Students were assigned to spend eight weeks in a particular family to practice how to maintain homes-cooking, compound cleaning, decoration among others. Lecturers emphasised that students were trained to build desire to learn through showing the benefits involved in learning a particular thing, such as being punctual to school, class, meetings, church, respecting their seniors, and showing care and love to everybody and learning special skills like weaving, basket making, sewing cloth, cooking, producing soap, detergents, perfume, tissue papers among others.

Theme three: The benefits of using innovative and creative techniques in implementing entrepreneurship education.

The majority of the participants in the study felt that the technique employed in teaching entrepreneurship in their school equips the learners with creative skills, changed mind sets, self confidence, and ability to combine properly the use of the head, heart and hand to help themselves and the country to develop. In the word of the administrator "my graduate students don't look for job rather companies and other employers of labour look for them. According to him, six months before graduation, the school receive a lot of application from various employers of labour to recruit the graduate students as soon as they complete their examination, "where others see forest, Mario students see agriculture and where others see darkness, they see light" as commented by one of the students "I don't need to be employed by anybody because I can be on my own. We are taught to be jack of all trade and master of all. I can boast of having acquired at least seven skills". Another student made this statement "the school made me to believe in myself, be able to manage a home and acquire leadership spirit". A teacher/lecturer participant stated thus; our teaching technique makes the learners to be bold, believe in themselves, be self reliant and ready to create job opportunities at any time". Job look for students and our students do not look for job". "Our slogan is start small and start now".

Theme Four: challenges experienced in implementing entrepreneurship programmes:

When asked if there were any challenges encountered in implementing entrepreneurship education, the general views of the participants were as follows- insufficient fund to conduct practical by the lecturers and for students to practice what they have been taught in the class. There is also insufficient basic amenities and infrastructure like hostel accommodation, poor electricity supply, lab equipment, no good roads, etc. Other challenges encountered by lecturers and the administrator were changing the students, poor orientation or negative mindset to believe in themselves that they can do it and lack of time to cover the curriculum that seems to be versatile. Some comments made by the participants pointed to the challenges as evidenced in the following quotes: "We are given assignment/project after each course and all of them are practical that required a lot of money and time". Another student recounted "administrator's slogan is that you must deliver and there is no time. The programme is jam-packed and no reason for failure is acceptable by the administrator". A lecturer complained thus, "there is no good road leading to the school and no hostel or staff residential accommodation. We are suffering too much".

Theme five: Suggested solutions to the challenges or way forward: the last sub theme that emerged from the responses is related to the solutions to the challenges.

Participants suggested how those challenges they experienced could be reduced or eliminated in order to ensure more effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education as follows: government can intervene by building

students hostel/teachers residential grantees, provision of stable electricity supply, good roads and other necessary equipment. Giving loan or grants to young entrepreneurs to establish their own business, enlightenment programme through radio, television, town hall meetings, social media to help change peoples' negative mind set. To buttress this point the administrator made this comment, "mistake or failure is necessary for growth in entrepreneurship" change of mindset concerning failure in business or any venture is necessary. Another teacher made this quote "funding entrepreneurship school and young entrepreneurs will be one of the greatest contributions of the government towards eliminating poverty in the country".

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the concept of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship education. The finding of the study revealed that participants perceive entrepreneurs to be social reformers who thrive in hopeless situations and always create new ideas or business to improve the environment. This is in line with Oviawe (2010) on the conception of the innovative and creative techniques theme, the respondents' revealed unique and uncommon student centered participatory and formative methods of teaching grounded in Pestalozzi educational principle. This may account for the rapid and transparent impact of the entrepreneurship education on students in Mario institute. This method of teaching was supported by Jones and Iradele (2010) which suggested that entrepreneurship education demands experiential learning styles, creative problem solving and learning by doing to arouse the interest of the students. This finding however, deviated from the result of the research conducted by Takawira & Ndofire (2018) which stated that participants lamented how their entrepreneurship learning was confined to the lecture room and textbook content with teacher centred approach to learning.

Nevertheless, Ojastu, Chiu and Olsen (2011) noted that despite the lack of consensus on the strengths and drawbacks of various teaching methods in entrepreneurship education, there is convergence of opinion on the view that the best way to learn entrepreneurship is to "live it".

It also emerged from the study that students' exposure to entrepreneurship education through creative and innovative techniques resulted in change of mind set, development of creative spirit, self confidence, self reliant and ability to adapt to any situation. This finding corroborated with the view of Nwosu and Ohia (2009) and Ojeifo (2013) which claimed that entrepreneurship education provides youths with adequate training that enable them to be creative, innovative and broad minded in adapting to the environment.

However, close analysis of the study revealed that the participants encountered some challenges in using those techniques such as lack of fund, time, insufficient equipments, changing negative mindset or orientation of the people

among others. These were mainly as a result of the practical nature of the method adopted which consumes a lot of money and time.

Mwasalwiba (2010) equally asserted that innovative methods are costly and may not be in conformity with the university curricula. The current study therefore suggested how those challenges would be reduced or surmounted through re-orientation of the people in order to change their negative mindset, government becoming committed financially in empowering schools and individual youths involved in entrepreneurship to become stable and balanced in undertaking creative and innovative ventures.

Limitations and Implications

One major limitation observed was that the qualitative research design used for the study did not permit use of large sample size. Nonetheless, we suggest that the findings have implication for school administrators, lecturers and teachers by presenting a systematic conceptualization of innovative and creative techniques that can be used in teaching entrepreneurship education to yield greater positive impact on learners. The study equally contributes to existing literature on techniques of teaching entrepreneurship education and the challenges involved.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the innovative and creative techniques employed by lecturers in teaching entrepreneurship education has major influence on the learners which in turn influences the employability of youths and the labour market. It therefore provides avenue for addressing the problem of unemployment and unemployable state among young school graduates in the country. It points out among others that the technique employed in teaching entrepreneurship education should be point of focus when looking at solution for improving creative skills, self confidence, self reliance and job creation abilities of graduate youths in Nigeria. The finding is therefore important to school administrators, lecturers and teachers and other stake holders in the country and researchers interested in investigating factors for improving entrepreneurial and creative skills of young school graduates.

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