
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

This study investigated the Entrepreneurship Education Programme of University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) as perceived by Science Education Students. The study was conducted in UNN situated at Nsukka Local Government Area. Using a descriptive survey design, three research questions were posed. A sample of 174 final year Science Education students was purposively used. Data were collected using a three-clustered structured questionnaire, titled: Questionnaire on Science Education Students' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education Programme (QSESPPEP). The instrument had internal consistency reliability measures of 0.84, 0.82, 0.71 for clusters A, B and C respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 determined using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study showed that Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN is perceived by students to be adequate, some resources are perceived to be adequately available for effective teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme and the available resources are effectively utilized in teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme except that students are not often taken to Entrepreneurship laboratory/workshops for exploration/simulation and some basic materials for practical activities/business simulations are not enough. Recommendations were made among which is that the teaching of entrepreneurship education programme should be practically based to enhance knowledge transfer and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among students irrespective of areas of specialization.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, perception, entrepreneur, science education

Introduction

Nigeria, like many other developing countries, sees education as the best way to start and keep national development going. The national concept of education in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013) calls for broad, practical, and high-quality education that meets the needs of society. Such an education that meets the needs of society will foster education for sustainable development. The education for sustainable development allows human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations [UNESCO], 2014). Entrepreneurship education could be said to be among the education for sustainable development as it aims at poverty reduction. The university system added an entrepreneurship education course to among other things reduce poverty. It was made so that graduates could support themselves on their own, no matter what they did for a living, so that they could contribute as much as possible to the growth of the nation. In other words, education for employment and wealth creation may not be fully achieved without entrepreneurship education programme. Recent trends, however, raise concerns, as youth unemployment has scaled from 18.8% in the third quarter of 2017 to 23.1% in the third quarter of 2018, despite the importance of entrepreneurship education to the national economy and the wellbeing of Nigerian youth (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). Moreover, approximately 47.40 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed (NBS, 2019). According to Omoyele, Oloke, Olabisi, and Aderemi's study in 2022, youth unemployment is on the rise, particularly in Nigeria and other emerging nations. The jobless condition of most Nigerian youths has made some young people resort to banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, and thuggery, among other crimes. This is also an indication that most Nigerian graduates are depending on white-collar employment as their primary source of income. As a result, it could be possible that the goals for which the entrepreneurship education programme was introduced in the higher educational institutions are still unmet. So, it is necessary for

this study to look into how science education students perceive the entrepreneurship education programme.

Entrepreneurship education is a crucial programme that equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary to seize and transform opportunities for self-reliance and national development. It is essential for educating students for the twenty-first century market and is of immense relevance (Okoh, 2015). Participants in the programme are expected to become job creators, fostering the growth of entrepreneurial aptitude (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2000; Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2006; Bischof, Volkmann, & Audretsch, 2018). This programme helps in job development and reduces graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education programmes promote improvement in living standards through innovation, job opportunities, economic growth, and foreign exchange preservation (Eke, Igwesi & Orji, 2011; Nwekeaku, 2013; Anukam, 2013; Teshome, 2014). The National Universities Commission introduced the entrepreneurship education programme (NUC) in Nigeria, and added it to the curricula of Nigeria's higher education institutions which mandates all students to take Entrepreneurship Education (EED) as a required course to graduate successfully from an academic programme (Aliu, 2008). This programme helps students achieve two aspirational objectives of higher education: contributing to the nation's development and developing their physical and mental capacities to become independent and useful members of society (FRN, 2004).

Also, taking entrepreneurial courses encourage students to think creatively and use what they have learned for the advancement of society (NUC, 2007). Since entrepreneurship courses train students for job creation and global competitiveness, they will help to address various socio-psychological issues and delinquencies that students may experience as a result of financial hardship (Ademiluyi, 2007). Thus, Entrepreneurship Education programme is valued and was made compulsory for undergraduate students, including those in the Department of Science Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Science education exposes students to both pedagogy and scientific knowledge, allowing them to expand their skills in the classroom, research, and curriculum development. Perception is a crucial aspect of entrepreneurship education because a positive perception increases the likelihood of starting one's own business. Perception is the process or outcome of becoming aware of things, relationships, and events through the senses, which includes actions like recognizing, observing, and discriminating, (American Psychological Association [APA], 2022; Kendra, 2014). The way students perceive an entrepreneurial programme reflects how they evaluate and interpret the teaching and learning procedures used in entrepreneurship education (Barnes & Lock, 2013). The self-perception theory of Bem (1967) suggests that people learn about their own attitudes, feelings, and internal states in part by inferring them from observations of their own overt behaviour and the context in which that behaviour occurs. The diverse ways students process information may lead to varying opinions on the adequacy of the Entrepreneurship Education Programme among others in UNN. There have been some studies on how students perceive entrepreneurship.

The majority of students for instance are satisfied with the course material of the university's entrepreneurship course, according to a study by Isibor and Adekunle (2019) on students' perceptions of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. However, the students' perceptions of the programme's suitability, the availability of resources, and their use of them for effective entrepreneurship education programme instruction were not taken into account in this study. According to a study by Ugwu (2022) on the availability and suitability of resources for entrepreneurship education in universities in south-east Nigeria, there were insufficient resources to carry out the programme. In addition, they noted that certain colleges lacked appropriate workshops and computers, as well as a dedicated building for entrepreneurship. They did not take into account how students felt about the UNN entrepreneurship education programme's adequacy, resource availability, and usage for effective teaching. Okolocha and Ordu (2018) found that the physical facilities and equipment that were available were insufficient and only moderately used for teaching entrepreneurship in business education in colleges of education (COEs) in South-South Nigeria (SSN). They did not take into account how students perceived the adequacy of the entrepreneurship programme, and their study was conducted in college of education that is not a university such as UNN.

Based on the foregoing, students including those in the Department of Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka have been offering the Entrepreneurship Education programme since its introduction into the curricula of universities by the National Universities Commission. They ought to have firsthand knowledge that will enable them to determine whether the Entrepreneurship Education Programme is really adequate in achieving its goals of introduction into the universities among other

things. This necessitated this study, which examined students' perception of entrepreneurship education programme of the university of Nigeria Nsukka.

The study specifically aimed to:

- determine the perception of Science Education students on the adequacy of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN.
- find out the perception of science education students on the availability of resources for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN.
- ascertain the perception of science education students on the extent to which available resources are utilized for the teaching of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN.

The following research questions guided the research study:

- (a.) What is the mean rating of science education students on the adequacy of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN?
- (b.) What is the mean rating of science education students on the availability of resources for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN?
- (c.) What is the mean rating of science education students on the extent to which available resources are utilized in teaching of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN?

Method

A descriptive research design was used in the study. Descriptive research design aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2015). The design guided this study in collecting data from the sample and analysed the same data in a systematic way concerning students' perceptions of the University of Nigeria Nsukka's entrepreneurship education programme. The study was conducted in the Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria that is located in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Science Education Department has five programme areas/units at the undergraduate level which includes: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Integrated Science Education. The population of the study included all 327 students in the Department of Science Education, UNN, comprising 153 third-year students and 174 final-year students who respectively are presently enrolled in the course, and who have completed the requirements, and are preparing to graduate.

The 174 final-year students from the 2020–2021 academic year made up the sample for this study. The sample was purposively used; comprising 68 Biology, 53 Chemistry, 15 Integrated Science, 13 Mathematics, and 25 Physics students. This sample of students was chosen because they had successfully completed the two entrepreneurship education courses (CEDR 341 and 342) that were requirements for graduation. Students, as a result, have sufficient experiences that will influence how they perceive the UNN's entrepreneurship education programme. Data for the study were gathered using a 4-point Likert scale-structured questionnaire called the Science Education Students' Perception of Entrepreneurship Education Programme (QSEPEEP), which was developed by the researchers. It has twenty-two items arranged in three clusters A through C. Each cluster offers four possible responses. For clusters A and B, the ratings are SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), and SD (strongly disagree); however, in cluster C, the ratings are VHE (very high extent), HE (high extent), LE (low extent), and VLE (very low extent). In scoring the instrument, SA/VHE received a score of 4, A/HE received a score of 3, D/LE received a score of 2, and SD/VLE received a score of 1. As a result, 2.5 is the average acceptance score.

Three specialists from the Biology, and Measurement and Evaluation units of the Department of Science Education, UNN, validated the instrument. Twenty final-year students of the Department of Educational Foundations who were not included in the study's sample but shared characteristics with it, such as having taken CEDR 341 and 342, which were offered at the 300 level, and are now in their final year in the same faculty and university, were given copies of the instruments to test their reliability. Because the items were polychotomous, the instruments were scored and subjected to an internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach's alpha. It produced reliability values of 0.84, 0.82, and 0.71 for clusters A, B, and C, respectively; with an overall reliability value of 0.84 which Nworgu (2015) stated to be quite high.

After receiving approval from the Head of Department, the researchers delivered copies of the validated questionnaires to the respondents via the class representatives of each programme area. The researchers later collected them from the class representatives of the units, who recorded a 100% return of the questionnaires. The research questions were answered using the mean and standard deviation. The acceptance mean is 2.50. However, mean values between 1.00 and 1.49 are of very low

extent, 1.50 and 2.49 are of low extent, 2.50 and 3.49 are of high extent, and 3.50 and 4.00 are of very high extent in the decision-making of cluster C.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Students on their Perception of the Adequacy of Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
	Entrepreneurship Education programme is adequate in:								
1.	giving students requisite entrepreneurship knowledge	155	17	2	-	174	3.88	0.36	Accepted
2.	enabling students acquire basic entrepreneurial skills	145	24	4	1	174	3.79	0.49	Accepted
3.	enabling students become self-reliant	150	20	3	1	174	3.83	0.46	Accepted
4.	enabling students become self-employed after graduation	72	91	8	3	174	3.33	0.65	Accepted
5.	reducing level of unemployment in the society	64	99	5	6	174	3.27	0.68	Accepted
6.	helping students to have source of income before graduation	62	94	10	8	174	3.21	0.75	Accepted
7.	ensuring poverty alleviation among the students	57	87	21	9	174	3.10	0.81	Accepted
8.	reduction of economic crisis in Nigeria	53	85	18	18	174	2.99	0.91	Accepted
9.	preparing students to identify business opportunity	140	24	5	5	174	3.72	0.66	Accepted
10.	preparing students to use business opportunity	134	31	5	4	174	3.69	0.64	Accepted
Grand						174	3.48	0.43	Accepted

Table 1 reveals that the mean ratings of Science Education students on all the items as regards to their perception of the adequacy of Entrepreneurship Education programme in UNN range from 2.99 to 3.36 and the standard deviation scores range of 0.36 to 0.49. Each of the mean scores shown above was above the acceptable mean of 2.50. Also, their corresponding standard deviation scores were small. The grand mean was 3.48 and its grand standard deviation score was 0.43. This therefore implies that Science Education students generally had positive perception of the adequacy of Entrepreneurship Education programme in UNN.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Science Education Students' Perception of the Availability of Resources for Effective Teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
	There are adequate:								
1.	standard textbooks for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education programme	131	27	13	3	174	3.64	0.69	Accepted
2.	workbooks for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education programme	128	35	10	1	174	3.67	0.61	Accepted
3.	entrepreneurship laboratory/workshops for exploration/simulation depending on students' areas of specialization	6	73	72	23	174	2.36	0.75	Rejected
4.	trained personnel to guide the students in entrepreneurship practical activities	98	61	11	4	174	3.45	0.72	Accepted
5.	basic materials for practice	19	78	58	19	174	2.56	0.83	Accepted
6.	machines and other necessary facilities for practical activities/business simulations	16	88	45	25	174	2.55	0.85	Accepted
Grand						174	3.04	0.40	Accepted

Table 2 discloses that items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 had mean scores of 3.64, 3.67, 3.45, 2.56 and 2.55 respectively and corresponding standard deviation values of 0.69, 0.61, 0.72, 0.83 and 0.85 respectively. The stated mean scores are above the cut-off mean of 2.50. However, item 3 has a mean score of 2.36 and a standard deviation value of 0.75. The stated mean value of item 3 is below the cut-off mean of 2.50. The grand mean was 3.04 and the corresponding small grand standard deviation value was 0.40. It therefore implies that Science Education students have positive perception of the availability of resources for effective teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN except in item 3 where there was a decline in the mean rating that entrepreneurship laboratory/workshops are available for students' exploration depending on their areas of specialization.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of Science Education Students on the Extent to which Available Resources is Utilized in Teaching Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN

S/N	Item Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	students use the available standard textbooks for studying of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN	128	36	7	3	174	3.66	0.64	Very High Extent
2.	students are meant to solve applied questions in the entrepreneurship workbooks	127	31	13	3	174	3.62	0.70	Very High Extent
3.	students are often taken to entrepreneurship laboratory/workshops for exploration/simulation	14	47	91	22	174	2.30	0.79	Low Extent
4.	students are being guided effectively by trained personnel in entrepreneurship practical activities	114	28	17	15	174	3.39	0.98	High Extent
5.	students have enough basic materials which they use in practical activities/business simulations	8	22	93	51	174	1.93	0.78	Low Extent
6.	students practice effectively with machines and other necessary facilities	11	9	29	125	174	1.46	0.86	Very Low Extent
Grand						174	2.73	0.44	Accepted

Table 3 reveals that items 1, 2 and 4 have mean scores of 3.66, 3.62 and 3.39 respectively and with corresponding standard deviation values of 0.64, 0.70 and 0.98 respectively. The stated mean values are above the cut-off mean of 2.50 and are on a very high extent except item 4 that is on a high extent. However, items 3, 5 and 6 have mean values of 2.30, 1.93 and 1.46 respectively and the corresponding standard deviation scores of 0.79, 0.78 and 0.86. respectively. The stated mean scores are below the cut-off mean of 2.50 and are within the ranges of low and very low extent. The grand mean and the grand standard deviation values were 2.73 and 0.44 respectively. From the grand mean score therefore, Science Education students have positive perception on the extent to which available resources are utilized in teaching of entrepreneurship education programme in UNN except in items 3, 5 and 6.

Discussion

The results showed that science education students believe that entrepreneurship education programmes are sufficient in providing students with the necessary entrepreneurship knowledge, assisting them in acquiring fundamental entrepreneurial skills, helping them become independent and self-employed after graduation, lowering the level of unemployment in the community, assisting students in having a source of income prior to graduation, ensuring the alleviation of poverty among the students, and lowering the economic crisis in Nigeria. These findings support the finding by Isibor and Adekunle (2019), that the majority of students are satisfied with the course contents (curriculum) of the university's entrepreneurship course. This explains the course's suitability and the scope's comprehensiveness in preparing students for independence as well as for the nation's economic development and expansion.

In addition, Science Education students disagreed that there were enough entrepreneurship labs and workshops available for students to explore or simulate, depending on their areas of specialty, for the successful teaching of the Entrepreneurship Education Programme. This corroborates the

findings of the study by Okolocha and Ordu (2018) that inadequate physical facilities and equipment are present for the instruction of entrepreneurship programmes. Also, the results are consistent with the research done by Ugwu (2022), which found that insufficient funds were available to buy and maintain facilities, guarantee a consistent supply of power, as well as to oversee employees for entrepreneurship instruction. Although there is a building (the entrepreneurship block) that houses a workshop, lecture hall, and lecturers' offices, more entrepreneurship laboratories and workshops should be made available to students in order to encourage exploration and simulation in accordance with students' areas of specialization, boost their interest, and enable them to have enough hands-on experience to improve their efficiency in the programme.

Finally, science education students have positive perceptions of the extent to which some available resources are utilized in the teaching of the entrepreneurship education programme at UNN, but rated on a low and/or very low degree, that students are taken to entrepreneurship laboratories and workshops for exploration and simulation, have enough basic materials that they use in practical activities, and practice effectively with machines and other necessary facilities. This result is consistent with Okolocha and Ordu's (2018) study that the use of equipment and physical facilities for entrepreneurship instruction is only moderate. This may be due to the fact that the mandatory nature of the entrepreneurship education programme attracts a large number of students, which has a detrimental impact on how effectively particular resources are used to teach the course. It is crucial that students receive enough exposure to the tools available for entrepreneurship education. With the exposure, students gain hands-on experience that improves learning transfer and is geared toward sustaining self-reliance, lowering unemployment, raising per capita income, and increasing the nation's gross domestic product.

The exposure also ensures that entrepreneurship is taught practically in terms of developing workable business concepts, identifying market gaps and possible clients for business ideas, participating in business startups throughout the programme, and participating in product developments. In essence, this type of instruction emphasizes practical skills and knowledge that students may use to successfully launch and manage their own businesses irrespective of their disciplines.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Entrepreneurship Education Programme in UNN is perceived by students as being adequate, some resources are perceived to be adequately available for effective teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme and the available resources are effectively utilized in teaching of Entrepreneurship Education Programme except that students are not often taken to Entrepreneurship laboratory/workshops for exploration/simulation and some basic materials, machines or facilities for practical activities/business simulations are not enough perhaps, because of high students' enrolment in the course as a compulsory/major course.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- Lecturers should ensure that entrepreneurship education programme is taught in such a manner that it practically equips students irrespective of areas of specialization on how to set up and run their own businesses effectively thereby reducing unemployment and poverty.
- In courses such as Biology Special Methods, lecturers should expose and guide student-teachers towards developing entrepreneurial skills needed in local instructional materials production, herbarium technique, establishment of mini-Biology laboratory, and establishment of small-scale animal farms such as poultry farm among others.
- Government should supply universities with adequate facilities for effective teaching of entrepreneurship education programme.
- The teaching of entrepreneurship education programme at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka should be practically based to enhance knowledge transfer and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among students irrespective of areas of specialization.
- The lecturers/facilitators who are the implementers of the entrepreneurship education curriculum should be well trained and professionally equipped to impart the students successfully.

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