

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programme: Implications for University System Effectiveness

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Abstract

The paper investigated inclusive entrepreneurship education programme and its implications for university system effectiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Two research questions were formulated to give direction to the study. The population of the study was made up of all final year students that offered entrepreneurship courses in 2018/2019 academic session in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Out of this population, 650 students were randomly selected as sample of the study. An 11-item questionnaire titled "Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programme Questionnaire" (IEPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and Entrepreneurship, from University of Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method. This yielded 0.82 coefficient. The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. It was found that inadequate basic facilities, poor maintenance culture of the facilities, inadequate programme instructors, and provision of basic entrepreneurship education facilities, employment of enough programme instructors were, among others, the challenges of inclusive education and stakeholders' role in promoting inclusive entrepreneurial education respectively. Consequently, it was recommended that educational stakeholders should intensify and sustain their roles in the administration of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme.

Keywords: Inclusive, Entrepreneurship, programme, University, Effectiveness

Introduction

One of the ways through which university education is regarded as being effective is the quality of the university products turn out into the larger society. It is in this regard that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2008) recommends making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities as one of the contributions of the university education to national development. Entrepreneurship education is not

meant for a particular group of students in any educational institution. Paul (2005) as cited in Asuquo (2016) opined that entrepreneurship education is a very important course in higher education programme for every student. Asuquo (2016) stated that “entrepreneurship education is a component of general education which is geared towards stimulating undergraduates' and graduates' interest to be creative, innovative and showcase their enterprising skills, identify business opportunities, mobilize the necessary resources, take the risk of producing quality tangible goods and as well as rewarding quality services to members of the public for the main purpose of maximizing profit”. Inclusive entrepreneurship education programme is to pre-equip all students with basic skills to create jobs instead of searching for job opportunities after graduation. Such skills according to Asuquo (2016) include leadership, communication, management, creativity, innovation, risk-taking, proactive, self confident, social responsibility, marketing, networking, planning, business evaluation, opportunity identification and business proposal development skill.

Isaac (2010) opined that, entrepreneurship programme is to stimulate the business initiative of graduates of tertiary institutions to enable them identify business opportunities and subsequently combine factors of production to create self-employment and wealth. Entrepreneurship education programme promotes innovative creativity, self-reliance and job creation spirit in the graduates of entrepreneurship (Virgy, 2014). Steven (2010) opined that entrepreneurship education programme is to train and produce those who could be creative and innovative with the ability to function well for the good of individual and the society as a whole. Entrepreneurship education programme is geared towards equipping all students irrespective of age, religious affiliation, tribe, socioeconomic background, as well as ensuring that all students who are gifted/talented and those who are handicapped/disabled are empowered through skills acquisition to be self-employed. Accommodation of all categories of learners under one learning environment informs inclusive education.

Inclusive education according to Sambo and Bwoi (2015) involves full integration of learners with and without special needs into the same classroom and schools and thereby exposing them to the same learning opportunities. From the positioning of Okwudire and Okechukwu (2008), inclusive education is the progressive increase in the participation of students, in reduction of their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005) stated that inclusion has to do with:

- a) Recognition of the right to education and its provision in non-discriminatory ways.
- b) A common vision which covers all people.
- c) A belief that schools and other places of learning have a responsibility to educate all children and adults in line with human rights principles.
- d) A continuous process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners regardless of factors such as disability, gender, age, ethnicity, language, HIV status, geographical location and sexuality, recognizing that all people can learn.

From the foregoing, inclusive education is that education that is meant for all learners

without putting into cognizance the strength and weakness of the learners' ability and disability of the learners, socioeconomic and political background of the learner or any other factor whatsoever.

Specifically, inclusive entrepreneurship education programme in the university system is that area of general education that is designed to equip all undergraduates with the prerequisites employability skills and to stimulate their entrepreneurship consciousness in theory and practice. Without exclusion, inclusive entrepreneurship education is designed to develop, enrich and instill entrepreneurial skills and knowledge that enable all beneficiaries (undergraduates) irrespective of their physical, emotional and financial challenges to be wealth creators using global best entrepreneurial practices. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2008) states the contributions of university education to include:

- a) Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation.
- b) Making professional course contents reflex our national requirements.
- c) Making all students part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education to offer general study course such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism.
- d) Making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigerian universities.

The last but not the least contributions expected of the university education to national development is what informs entrepreneurship education programme. For the university education or system to be effective, inclusive entrepreneurship education programme must be given due attention. Effectiveness has no specific definition and area of coverage in educational context. Different authors have defined effectiveness to suit their perception based on the context. For instance McKinney (2011), as cited in Asuquo (2019), defined effectiveness as the continuous quality improvement in all aspects associated with fulfilling the institutional mission. In the context of this study, university system effectiveness is the sustained process of ensuring that every student or graduate from the university, acquires the prerequisite skills and competence for job creation through inclusive entrepreneurship education programme. Effectiveness in this study is also an impact of inclusive entrepreneurship programmes in the production of graduates who are able to think outside the box through their creative and innovative competence. It is a measure of the accomplishment of the goals of inclusive entrepreneurship education programmes of making every graduate job creators. University system effectiveness is a reflection of graduates' creative and innovative thinking and action that brings to light job creators as opposed to job seekers in the society.

In spite of the laudable objectives of entrepreneurship education in terms of provision of meaningful education for the youth to have creative thinking, be self reliant, the researchers observed that many graduates of tertiary institutions are still not being gainfully employed. In a bid to reduce graduates' unemployment in Nigeria, the Federal Government introduced empowerment programmes to train graduates on skills acquisition. Such programmes include: National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Graduate Empowerment Scheme (GES), Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SuRE-P), among others. These programmes still appear not to achieve the aims and objectives of establishing them as evidence in the teeming population of unemployed youths roaming the streets. These observations necessitated this study, to investigate inclusive entrepreneurship programme for university system effectiveness.

Statement of the problem

The university system is not living up to the expectation to produce the students who will be able to contribute to national development with their acquired entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurship education, in educational institutions, is meant to instill into undergraduates theories of entrepreneurship and practical skills to enable them acquire various skills that equip them to be job creators at graduation instead of job seekers. As a matter of fact, the number of graduates from universities on yearly basis outnumbers available job vacancies. University graduates are not implementing these said acquired skills such as cloth making, bead making, and baking, rather they are bent on seeking for white collar job opportunities.

The rate of increase in graduates' unemployment in Nigeria over the years has been in a geometrical progression and this has been very worrisome to the government and the public. It appears as if university education in particular does not stimulate entrepreneurship consciousness, develop entrepreneurship skills and knowledge that make graduate to be wealth and job creators. Could this circumstance be due to poor implementation and management of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme? This question prompted the researchers' curiosity to examine inclusive entrepreneurship education programme with implications for university system effectiveness.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine inclusive entrepreneurship education programme for university system effectiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1) Identify challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme.
- 2) Identify the roles of stakeholders (University management, State government) in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme?
- 2) What roles are required of stakeholder in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. Descriptive study is a study that uses a sample of a definite population of an investigation to document, describe and explain what is in existent or the present status of phenomena investigated. The study was carried out in the two public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 6,500 registered students of the entrepreneurship education programme in 2018/2019 academic session cutting across University of Calabar (Unical) and Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH) all in Cross River State, Nigeria. A 10% proportionate sample was used in obtaining 650 registered students. The choice of using 10% proportion sample is based on the position of Roll and Gall (as cited in Uzoagulu, 1998) that when a defined population is greater than 5,000 respondents, 10% or less of the population could be used to draw the sample from the population. An 11-item questionnaire titled “Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programme Questionnaire” (IEPQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was made up of three (3) sections, A, B and C. Section A of the instrument collected data regarding respondents' institution and sex. Section B comprised five (5) items while section C was made up of six (6) items on challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme and the roles of stakeholders in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme respectively. The instrument was face validated by two experts; one from Measurement and Evaluation and another one from Educational Management of the University of Calabar. The instrument had Likert type response scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The scales were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient. The coefficient obtained was 0.82. Out of the 650 copies of questionnaire that were administered on the respondents with the help of trained research assistants, 645 were retrieved and analyzed. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The cut-off point of 2.50 was used for the research questions.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What are the challenges of inclusive entrepreneurial education programme?

The data for answering research question 1 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviation on the challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme

S/N	Challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Inadequate basic facilities	3.42	0.84	Agreed
2	Poor maintenance culture of the facilities	3.11	0.82	Agreed
3	Inadequate programme instructors	2.83	0.68	Agreed
4	Lack of facilities for students with special needs	2.72	0.62	Agreed
5	More of theory than practical	2.94	0.70	Agreed

Key: \bar{x} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

The Table 1 presents the mean rating of the respondents on the challenges of inclusive entrepreneurial education programme. The table shows that all 5 challenges recorded mean rating between 3.41 and 2.62 which were above 2.50 cut-off point on the four point scale. These results imply that inadequate basic facilities, poor maintenance of the facilities, inadequate programme personnel/instructors, lack of facilities for students with special needs and more emphasis on theory than practical, were challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme. Also, the standard deviation ranged between 0.62 and 0.84 which indicated that the respondents were not too far from each other in their responses thereby adding value to the reliability of the mean.

Research question 2: What roles are required of stakeholder in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme?

Table 2: Mean response and standard deviation on the roles of stakeholders in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme

S/N	Stakeholders role in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1	Provision of basic entrepreneurship education facilities	3.11	0.73	Agreed
2	Employment of enough programme instructors	3.01	0.70	Agreed
3	Organization of capacity building/training for instructors	2.62	0.65	Agreed
4	Maintenance of facilities	3.21	0.75	Agreed
5	Replacement of worn out facilities	2.73	0.66	Agreed
6	Provision of facilities for students with special needs	2.83	0.68	Agreed

Key: \bar{x} = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 represents the mean rating of the respondents on the roles of the stakeholders in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme. The table shows that all the 6 roles of the stakeholders had mean rating of between 3.21 and 2.62 which were above the 2.50 cut-off point on the four point scale. The results therefore imply that provision of basic entrepreneurship education facilities, employment of sufficient number of programme instructors, organization of training programme for instructors, maintenance of facilities, replacement of worn out facilities and provision of facilities

for students with special needs, were the roles of stakeholders in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme. The Standard Deviation that ranged from 0.65 to 0.75 indicated that respondents were not too far from each other in their responses.

Discussion of the results

The results of the study revealed that inadequate basic facilities, poor maintenance of the facilities, inadequate programme instructors, lack of facilities for students with special needs and more emphasis on theory than practical are the challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education. These results arising from the responses of the respondents indicate that the challenges identified could not in any way enhance university effectiveness. When facilities for inclusive entrepreneurship education programme are not adequate and available for all categories of students, instructors of the programme are inadequate and theoretical aspect of the programme receiving attention more than the practical, it means the beneficiaries (graduates) of the programme become half-baked. Since inclusive entrepreneurship education is part and parcel of general education, the finding agrees with Dabalen, Oni and Adekola (2000) who reported insufficient learning materials, poorly trained academic staff, unplanned expansion of enrollment, among others, leading to oversupply of half-baked graduates as causes of ineffectiveness and declining quality of university education. The finding is also in line with McKinney (2011) who declared that inadequate financial and infrastructural resources are the major hindrances towards effectiveness of educational institution.

From the second research question, it was also found that provision of basic entrepreneurship education facilities, employment of enough programme instructors, training of entrepreneurship education programme instructors, maintenance of facilities, replacement of worn out facilities, as well as provision of facilities for students with special needs, are the roles of the stakeholders in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education programme in the university system. These roles need to be implemented, sustained and intensified so as to get the attention of the students and arouse their interest to make every student a job creator instead of job seeker. This output in terms of graduates who are job creators is an evidence of university effectiveness. The results of the finding is in line with McKinney (2011), as cited in Asuquo (2019), that effectiveness is the continuous quality improvement in all aspects associated with fulfilling the institutional mission. The identified roles of educational stakeholders are directed towards the achievement of university system effectiveness of producing graduates who can think outside the box by being creative, innovative and proactive in their wealth creation.

Implications for university system effectiveness

In this study, the findings have crucial implications for university system effectiveness. The result of the study has indicated inadequate basic facilities, poor maintenance culture of the facilities, inadequate programme instructors, lack of facilities for students

with special needs and more of theory than practical as challenges of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme. These challenges are deviation from the global best practice. In an attempt to enhance standard in the university system, the state and federal governments as well as institutional managers should take cognizance of and address the challenges so as to enhance university system effectiveness accordingly. In addition, provision of basic entrepreneurship education facilities, employment of sufficient number of programme instructors, organization of capacity building/training for instructors, maintenance of facilities, replacement of worn out facilities and provision of adequate facilities for students with special needs are established as stakeholders' roles in promoting inclusive entrepreneurship education. These should be sustained in an attempt to enhance university system effectiveness.

Conclusion

Inclusive entrepreneurship education which is part and parcel of the general education is a tool that prepares every university graduate to be self-reliant and a sine qua non for national development. National development entails citizens' well-being and the nation's growth in all ramifications. Every graduate who is gainfully employed, contributes his or her quota to national development. For this reason, inclusive entrepreneurship education programme in the university system needs the attention of the educational stakeholders.

Recommendations

- 1) Both the State and Federal universities should ensure that, inclusive entrepreneurship education is implemented for the benefit of all students irrespective of their education needs.
- 2) Education stakeholders should intensify and sustain their roles in the administration of inclusive entrepreneurship education programme.

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