

Business Education Curriculum Content and Entrepreneurial Skills Development of Business Education Students in Public Universities in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of Business Education curriculum content and the entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study examined the extent to which Business Education curriculum content has helped to build students entrepreneurial skills. One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design method was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 100 to 400 level Business Education students from two public universities in Lagos State and purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 200 participants from the population. A four rating structured questionnaire titled "Effectiveness of Business Education Curriculum Content and Entrepreneurial Skills Development of Students" (EBECESDS) was employed to gather data for the study. Regression statistics was used to test the hypothesis. Results from the findings revealed that Business Education curriculum content does not equip students with the required entrepreneurial skills needed to be self-reliant. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the curriculum content should be enriched and updated on a regular basis.

Keywords: Business Education, Curriculum content, Employability Skills, Self-reliance

1. Introduction

In order to attain sustainable national development, education is the most important key. It is the veritable tool for sustainable development (Maina, 2013). The positive effect of education on entrepreneurial skill development and growth of entrepreneur cannot be overemphasised (Küttim, Kallaste, Venesaar, & Kiis, 2014). It is a well-known fact that the bedrock of any nation that wants to develop needs educated people through formal education and only quality education can lead to such sustainable growth and development. Education is supposed to equip individual with all needed skills needed to excel after school, however, the high rate of unemployment is alarming and one begin to wonder if graduates are well equipped in order to compete favourably with their counterparts in the labour market. Students need to be well trained and equip with those skills that will make them self-sufficient, self-reliant and stand out from others.

Business Education programme although has been introduced and implemented in the university programmes of study for more than three decades now but the graduates of the programme are still faced with the problem of unemployment in the country despite the promising prospects of the course of study and universities in Nigeria keep producing thousands of theoretical and liberal arts business education graduates with little or no entrepreneurial skills and their potentials for being gainfully employed is uncertain (David and Fabian, 2019). Graduates are produced yearly by universities in different field of study but those that are gainfully employed do not commensurate with those that are unemployed due to inadequate entrepreneurship skills that will be make them entrepreneurs and self-sufficient. These skills will make them more innovative and creative if the rate of unemployment in the country is to be reduced.

The problems of sustainable economic development and unemployment are constantly on the high side in the nation; economy has continued to be fluctuating without any positive strategies to revitalize it. Business activities are

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folding- up as a result of the economic situation of the country and most graduates lack the necessary skills to become successful entrepreneurs. Most universities graduates roam about the streets without any job skill that will make them marketable and these set of people are assumed to have acquired skills and knowledge needed for gainful employment (Okeke, 2016). According to Alharbi, Almahdi, and Mosbahet (2018) the possibility to teach or impact entrepreneurial skills on any student irrespective of the choice of course is very high. This is because students can learn the act of being entrepreneurial. Abioye (2020) stated that for an environment to be ideal, it must create a link between the tertiary institutions and the workforce institutions thereby enabling Business and Entrepreneurial graduates thrive. The major aim of including entrepreneurship as a course in university programme was to educate students in tertiary institutions on the importance of entrepreneurship, thereby developing intention and impacting skills, attitudes, and competencies for the purpose of ensuring graduates are effective in workplace (Olorundare and Kayode, 2014). In the view of Barakabo, (2017), entrepreneurship skills include: possession of the ability to see and assess business opportunities, to mobilisation of resources to exploit these opportunities and put in place necessary action-oriented, highly motivated individuals who bear risk to achieve desired goals. Therefore, entrepreneurial skills in Business Education are: problem solving, risk taking, innovation and critical thinking. Inculcation of entrepreneurial skills urge students to put theory into practice rather than focusing on book knowledge of what entrepreneurship is about (Sherine, Sameh, Reem, Allam and Abdalmuttaleb, 2018).

Business Education refers to as a broad and comprehensive field of study whose instructional programme is endowed with the capacity of providing required vocation skills, aptitude and knowledge to effectively and efficiently manage personal businesses and function in the economic system as a whole. A remarkable attribute of Business Education programme is that its graduates can perform and function independently as employers of labour and as entrepreneurs (Okoro, 2013). Therefore, there are lots of job prospects for Business Education graduates even from the junior secondary level to the graduate level and these career prospects are: vocational practices, teaching careers, and office environment (Aquah in Ore, 2022). According to Ugwunwoti and Okorojiofor (2017) Business Education is a programme of study offered in Nigerian tertiary institutions that basically trains students to acquire business related skills for paid or self-employment. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) defined Business Education to be part of Vocational and Technical Education offered in tertiary institutions in Nigeria with the sole aim of imparting necessary skills to individuals to become self-reliant economically. Okoli, (2010) opined that Business Education is concerned with teaching of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes necessary for successful business career and sustainable economy growth and development.

Business Education is an instructional content that involves school-work integration by teaching students the fundamental theories and processes of business. However, the content of the programme curricula does not totally match with the purpose of the programme as the content of the curriculum is more theoretical than practical thereby leaving students with little or no entrepreneurial skills to become self-reliant and job creators. The main goals of Business Education are to prepare students for specific career in office occupations, requisite skills acquisition for job creation and entrepreneurship, and exposure of students with knowledge about business, including digital skills, which incorporates information and communication technology (Edokpolor and Egbri in Ore, Hassan and Ogungbo, 2022). Dike (2009) viewed Business Education curriculum as an educational process of action that focuses on educating students in business related areas and educational related discipline.

The philosophy of the Business Education curriculums as stated in Aquah (2014) includes:-

- a) To equip the student with necessary saleable skills that will make them acquire, sustain and grow on their jobs and be self-employed thereby creating jobs for others
- b) To prepare Business Education students for aadvanced training in Business Education
- c) To prepare students for higher studies in Business Education
- d) To gain the basic knowledge and skills of Business Education
- e) To possess the basic skills require in office occupation
- f) To relate skills and knowledge acquired during programme to national development
- g) To provide students with the needed pedagogical skills for teaching business subjects.
- h) To provide students with basic skill and orientation in preparation for the world of work for those who may not further their educational training.

However, according to National Universities Commission (FRN, 2017) the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for under-graduates programmes in Nigeria stated the objectives for Business Education:

- a) to produce an efficient and committed well trained business education teachers for the secondary education level in Nigerian
- b) It is aimed at producing well trained manpower that is endowed with critical and analytical knowledge of contemporary business world for the purpose of influencing the development of a sustainable economy.
- c) It is to provide a course of instruction and all necessary facilities and exposure for the pursuit and acquisition of learning and knowledge for services to humanity.
- d) It is also to provide adequate educational foundation for interested graduates that have the intention of furthering their education in business education or any other relevant areas in education.

These objectives are too ambiguous and are not tailored developing and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. Aja, Onoh and Igwe (2018) opined that the curriculum contents of tertiary institutions are pertinent for sustainable development in Nigeria but does not totally equip students with adequate relevant knowledge, skills and resources to be self-employed.

The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria is becoming worrisome and most of the unemployed graduates do not have adequate entrepreneurial skills that can make them self-sufficient and become job creators rather than job seekers. Business Education graduates are not left out as the curriculum contents of the programme do not give adequate room to student to be creative and innovative. The contents of the curriculum is more of theory than practical thereby leaving students to reading of textbooks and lecture notes for the sole aim of performing better in all subjects rather than practicalising what they have learnt.

Although, government has put in place measure to reduce the unemployment rate by creating more avenues for graduates to be employers of labours but the problem of unemployment still persist. Okoye and Nkanu (2020) stated that the Federal Government of Nigeria has embarked on a quest to reform the educational system so that the system could be more functional and relevant to both the citizens and society at large by reducing the rate of unemployment through reform strategy and the introduction of some programmes such as: National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) (2001), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2004) and the Bank of Industries (BOI) (2015) to train and provide short and medium term loans for graduates entrepreneurs to enable them become employers of labour. However, most graduates still continue to be unemployed after graduation, whereas it is expected of them to have acquired indispensable entrepreneurship skills for work effectiveness in the work place or set up an enterprise of theirs.

One of the so many causes of graduate unemployment is the inadequacy in Business Education curricula as it does not effectively develop skills that will make graduates job creators. Ibikunle, Orefuwa and Mafo (2019), are of the opinion that the high rate of unemployment biting the country is caused by so many problem of which lack or inadequate employability and entrepreneurship skills due to inappropriate school curricula is one of such problems. Business Education curricula lacks proper integration of practical with theory, irregular curricula review and poorly structured curriculum contents and these have affected the development of entrepreneurial skills among graduates of the programme.

This study examined the effectiveness of Business Education curriculum contents and entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students' in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objective of the study is to:

- a) examine the effect of Business Education curriculum contents and students' entrepreneurship skills development in Lagos State public universities;

A null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant

H₀₁: Business Education curriculum content does not have significant effect on entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students in public universities in Lagos State.

2. Literature Review

This study is connected to the theory of planned behaviour propounded by Ajzen in 1985; it is focused on how intentions are transformed into actions. This theory is used to explain the importance of entrepreneurship education in

the creation and development of students' entrepreneurship skills which is the key to any decision to be an entrepreneur. According to Ajzen (1991), this theory helps to explain the important effect and efficacy of entrepreneurship education. The theory explains individual's behaviours in three ways that will affect entrepreneurial skills and these are: social norms, personal attitudes and perceived behavioural control. Social norms are perceived social expectations from the people and environment to carry out that behaviour. Personal attitudes focus on the specific positive or negative behaviour of an individual towards entrepreneurship. Perceived behavioural control explains an individual's personal assessment of control over the performance of the behaviour (Fretschner, 2014) These factors affect a person's ability to control their behaviour such as becoming an entrepreneur and setting-up a business (Iglesias-Sánchez, Jambrino-Maldonado, Velasco, and Kokash, 2016).

This theory is important as it assist to predict cognitive decision-making and human behaviour which places emphasise on behaviours with respect to starting a business. This theory is relevant to this work because it explains the significance of the development students' entrepreneurial skills and the behavioural mind-set of an entrepreneur.

3. Research Methods

Descriptive research design of the survey was adopted for this study. The rationale behind this choice was that it explains how the curriculum content affects the development of entrepreneurial skills of Business Education students. The population for the study comprised of 100 to 400 levels Business Education students from Lagos State University, Ojo and University of Lagos, Akoka. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample size of 25 participants across the four levels from both universities making a total of 200 participants.

The study employed an online four- point Likert rating scale structured questionnaire as the research instrument titled "Effectiveness of Business Education Curriculum Content and Entrepreneurial Skills Development" (EBECESD). The questionnaire was divided into four sessions containing 15 items relating to the objectives of the study. The responses were scored Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1. The reliability of the instrument was tested using test-retest method and the result was analysed using Pearson Product Moments Correlation Coefficient with a reliability coefficient of 0.75 and the instrument was validated through face and content validity by an expert in the field of Business Education and after which the questionnaire was sent online via the WhatsApp group of the study population with 100% response. Least Square regression was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Product and Service Solution version 20.

4. Results and Discussion

H₀₁: Business Education curriculum content does not have significant effect on entrepreneurial skills development of business education students in public universities in Lagos State.

Table 1. Effect of Curriculum content on development of students entrepreneurship skills

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.021	0.552		9.102	.000
	Curriculum Contents	2.402	0.157	0.747	15.342	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Development of Students Entrepreneurship Skills

Table 1 shows the result of regression analysis of the effect of curriculum content and entrepreneurial skills development of students in public universities in Lagos State. The coefficient of curriculum content is 2.402 while the standard error is .157 Meanwhile the t value is 15.342. It is also observed from the table that curriculum content can significantly ($t = 15.342, p = 0.000$) predict changes in the development of students' entrepreneurship skills. Since the significant value ($p = .000$) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses was rejected and the researcher concludes that business education curriculum content does not have significant effect on entrepreneurship skills development of students studying business education in public universities in Lagos State.

Entrepreneurship education is not a mechanical process rather it is considered to be a creative process. That is, Entrepreneurship Education is an innovative and creative process aimed at developing students' entrepreneurial mind-set. From the data analysed in the study hypothesis which sought to know if Business Education curriculum content has significant effect on entrepreneurial skills development of business education students in public universities in Lagos State was rejected because the P value of Pearson coefficient was less than the benchmark of 0.05. The study concluded that Business Education curriculum content has significant effect on entrepreneurial skills development of Business Education students in public universities in Lagos State. This thus implies that, in as much as there is constant improvement in the curriculum contents of business education, there is a high tendency that this will in-turn influence the development of entrepreneurial skills of students offering the course in public universities in Lagos State. This also means that business education curriculum content can significant predict the development of entrepreneurial skills of business education students in public universities in Lagos State.

This finding is consistent with Abioye (2020) who conducted a study on the impact of entrepreneurship education programme on current graduate entrepreneurs. Key findings of the study provided evidence to support the notion that entrepreneurship education which is a part of Business Education impacted students' knowledge on entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, Nigeria produces up to 500,000 graduates from multiple disciplines every year from its educational institutions however, most of these graduates fail to possess the 21st Century skills and competencies that are required to be effective in the workforce and are therefore considered unemployable or self-reliant.

Aja, Onoh and Igwe (2018) findings also corroborate the position of the current study. These researchers studied "entrepreneurship education programme in Nigerian Universities as a means for guaranteeing sustainable development in Nigeria". The study revealed that Business Education curricular contents are relevant for sustainable development in Nigeria but does not fully equip students with adequate knowledge, resources and skills to establish on their own or to make them entrepreneurial.

Also, David and Fabian (2019) carried out a study which examined Business Education programmes curriculum contents and employability skills acquisition among universities graduates in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study population was 987 Business Education graduates in eight academic sessions between 2007/2008 and 2014/2015 from Cross River University of Technology and the University of Calabar. The sample size was 200 Business Education graduates using accidental, snowball and purposive sampling techniques. It was revealed from the study findings that the level of employability skills acquisition among business education graduates in universities is significantly low. The study thus recommended that National Universities Commission (NUC) should urgently embark on an inclusive curriculum reform that incorporate business education students, business educators, curriculum planners and developers and industry experts into the curriculum planning, design, development and implementation phases.

5. Conclusion

Generally, the curriculum contents currently available for Business Education programme in public universities in Nigeria have negative effect on the development of students' entrepreneurship skills after graduation; therefore, making them dependent on the society for survival. The curriculum content did not enhance students' entrepreneurship skills development. This shows that the curriculum of business education seems out-dated, not well enriched and unable to reflect the required entrepreneurship skills needed by students to be self-employed or self-reliant during and after graduating from the university.

Based on the findings from the study carried out, the following are hereby recommended:

- a) There should be a review of the curriculum contents of Business Education in higher institutions to incorporate new ideas that can enhance the development of students' entrepreneurship skills.
- b) Business education curriculum should be well-structured in such a way that it will integrate both practical and theory so that it will blend theory and practice thereby producing entrepreneurs rather than job seekers.
- c) The curriculum content should be rich in creativity and innovation engender entrepreneurship skill development of students
- d) There should be regular improvement in the curriculum contents as the needs arise as this will create in students the ability to add value to any organization they may find themselves after school.

All stakeholders should be involved in the curriculum planning, design, development and implementation phase for better outcomes.

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