

Imperative of Entrepreneurship Education for University Students: The Case Study of University of Ibadan

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Abstract

The renewed interest in the study and practice of entrepreneurship in the 21st century is due to its potency to create business, boost productivity, and increase wealth, as well as its capacity to effect positive change in market or industry structure in particular and the society in general. Entrepreneurship education became compulsory for all undergraduates of Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria effective from 2007/2008 academic session with a view to re-orientating graduates towards entrepreneurial self-efficacy, value creation and self-employment. This study assesses the beneficial impact of entrepreneurship education on University of Ibadan (UI) students. The research deploys both theoretical and conceptual frameworks of Entrepreneurship, and follows the trends in entrepreneurship value and development. A population of all students who have passed through GES 301, both GES 301 and ETR 301, or are doing M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship was involved. Samples were drawn using the purposive sampling technique via an online survey, created through Google Forms. A sample size of one hundred and two was involved. The research findings justify the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curricula of UI.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, UI, Attitude, and Intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In the face of contemporary economic and social challenges worldwide, entrepreneurship has become the mainstay of economic growth and development as well as the cornerstone of social engineering and social value creation. Indubitably, the term, ‘entrepreneurship’ has no single concise or generally accepted definition. Expert definitions of entrepreneurship are often based on individuals’ perspectives on the subject. It is predictably difficult to find a definition that sufficiently covers all the tenets of entrepreneurship. The nature and characteristics of entrepreneurship make it difficult, if not impossible, to attract a single all-embracing definition.

According to Ahmad and Seymour (2008):

The lack of a single definition of entrepreneurship is partly due to the differentiated traditions within the field of entrepreneurship research, including: anthropology (for examples, de Montoya, 2000, Firth, 1967, Fraser, 1937), social science (for examples Swedberg, 1993; Waldringer, Aldrich, & Ward, 1990; Weber, 1898/1990), economics (including Casson, 2003; Kirzner, 1973; Knight, 1942; Schumpeter, 1934; Shane, 2003; von Hayek, 1948; von Mises, 1949/1996) and management (for examples, Drucker, 1985, 1999; Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1995).

Entrepreneurship is the dynamic pursuit of innovative opportunity with determination to marshal limited resources to create a new venture and nurture the venture into a sustainable, successful enterprise. It is concerned with the process of conceptualizing and developing new ventures and managing the growing ventures, along with attendant risks and rewards. Research has shown that there is a convincing evidence of a link between entrepreneurship development and national development, as concrete experiences in many developed countries in America, Europe and Asia have proved that entrepreneurship contributes substantially to national development. Indeed, entrepreneurship has become the cynosure of the contemporary world and academics are pushing back its frontiers through entrepreneurship education (EE).

According to Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2009: 5, 19 and 21):

Entrepreneurship is an exciting field of study. Entrepreneurship education, throughout the world, is growing. The number of universities and colleges offering at least one course in entrepreneurship increases each year. The number of faculties teaching entrepreneurship as well as the number of endowed chairs increases regularly. The study of entrepreneurship has relevance today, not only because it helps entrepreneurs better fulfil their personal needs but because it acts as a positive force in economic growth by serving as the bridge between innovation and the marketplace.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship Education (EE) became compulsory for all students of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria effective from 2007/2008 academic session, courtesy of a Federal Government (FG) policy, which was aimed at re-orientating graduates towards entrepreneurial self-efficacy, value creation and self-employment. The FG's initiative was geared to producing entrepreneurial graduates for the world of work.

Meanwhile, University of Ibadan had commenced teaching and research in entrepreneurship and innovation in Nigeria at the turn of this century. From 2006 to 2008 spanning three academic sessions, UI developed a strategy on teaching entrepreneurship and innovation to expose all undergraduate students at the 200 level to the concept of entrepreneurship and innovation using a series of annual workshops. Thereafter, the teaching of a 300-level elective course on Entrepreneurship and Innovation commenced with effect from 2009. (Soyibo, 2012; 2013)

Presently, UI offers two courses in entrepreneurship to all students in 300 level, viz. compulsory GES 301: Introduction to Entrepreneurship Skills, and elective ETR 301: Basic Entrepreneurship and Innovation in first and second semesters respectively, as well as two tracks of Master's degree (M.Sc.) programmes in Entrepreneurship, namely Academic M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship Education and Professional M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship Studies. Established in 1948, UI is the first University in Nigeria and until 1962 when it became a full-fledged independent University, it was a College of the University of London in a special relationship scheme.

An evaluation of the impact of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial mind-set requires an examination of their attitudes towards entrepreneurship and their intentions of becoming either job creators or job takers on graduation. Entrepreneurship research indicates that attitudes and intentions are two constructs that have become a common yardstick in assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education on university students (Vestergaard, Moberg, and Jørgensen, 2012:19). An attitude is a tendency to act or react in certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Hence, attitude can either be positive or negative (Banu, 1984 as cited in Pulka, Rikwentishe & Ibrahim, 2014).

The immediate antecedent of behaviour is the intention to perform the given behaviour. Intentions capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour. They are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform a behaviour. The stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely should be its performance. Attitude as a predictor of intention is a reflection of the individual's appraisal of a behaviour. The more favourable the appraisal, the greater the intention (Ajzen, 1991). Entrepreneurship is behaviour. (Drucker, 1985:26). Learnedly put, entrepreneurship is a behavioural phenomenon. (Roberts, Stevenson, Sahlman, Marshall & Hamermesh, 2007: 5-15). Attitudes can be developed and influenced by EE. (Nacuta, 2014: 18).

1.3 Research Objective and Scope

The objective of this research is to evaluate the degree of actual impact of the two undergraduate courses and the two Master's degree programmes in entrepreneurship on the attitudes and intentions of UI students towards entrepreneurship practice. Scope of the study encompasses undergraduate students who have passed through GES 301 and ETR 301, and postgraduate students who are currently in their last (third) semester studying for either academic or professional Master's degree in Entrepreneurship.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

1.4.1 Research Questions

- i. What are the attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship?
- ii. To what degree are students intending to become entrepreneurs?

1.4.2 Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATE).
- ii. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention (EI).

2.0 Literature, Materials and Methods

2.1 Literature Review

As evident in literature, very recent empirical research around the world shows that University-level entrepreneurship education is of critical importance in fostering entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Suffice to say that research indicates that individuals who study entrepreneurship are three to four times more likely to start their own

business and that entrepreneurship education throughout the world has never been so important in terms of courses and academic research (Hisrich et al., 2009: 5, 19). A study on university students in South-West Nigeria indicated that entrepreneurship education provokes students' intention of becoming entrepreneurs (Izedonmi and Okafor, 2010). Entrepreneurship education has significant positive and beneficial impact on self-employment and career intention of Nigerian undergraduate students and on their attitude towards entrepreneurship (Egunsola, Dazala & Daniel, 2012).

In the Netherlands, entrepreneurship education exerts a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurship intentions of higher education students through higher attitude towards entrepreneurship (Karali, 2013). Undergraduates with strong positive attitude tend to interpret that going into entrepreneurial activities is feasible and hence desirable (Pulka et al., 2014). There is a strong relationship between the exposure of students of Landmark University, Omu-Aran to entrepreneurship education and their intentions of becoming self-employed (Babatunde & Durowaiye, 2014). Entrepreneurship education has positive impact on entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurial profile of Master's degree students at Tunisian University (Nasr & Boujelbene, 2014).

2.2 Materials and Methods

A population of all students who have passed through GES 301, both GES 301 and ETR 301, or who are doing M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship was used. Samples were drawn using the purposive sampling technique. An online survey, created through Google Forms was used and respondents were invited through email, SMS and WhatsApp. All data was collected in a Google spreadsheet and SPSS was used for statistical analysis. Consequent on the nature of online surveys, the sample was limited to the number of available responses. Hence, a sample size of one hundred and two was used.

3 Results

Table 3.1 Distribution of respondents' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	57	55.88
Female	45	44.12
Total	102	100

Research Question 1: What is the attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship?

Table 3.2 Descriptive analysis of attitudes towards entrepreneurship

S/N	Items	N	F %							X̄	SD
			SD	D	FD	N	FA	A	SA		
1.	Starting my own business sounds attractive to me	102	7 6.9	- -	- -	7 6.9	4 3.9	29 28.4	55 53.9	6.02	1.610
2.	To start my own company would probably be the best way for me to take advantage of my education	102	1 1	2 2.0	2 2.0	18 17.6	14 13.7	36 35.3	29 28.4	5.61	1.314
3.	I am confident that I would succeed if I start my own business	102	1 1.0	1 1.0	- -	2 2.0	13 12.7	28 27.5	57 55.9	6.30	1.042
4.	I personally consider entrepreneurship to be a highly desirable career alternative for people with my education	102	- -	3 2.9	2 2.0	10 9.8	9 8.8	36 35.3	42 41.2	5.95	1.246
5.	Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality	102	- -	- -	- -	1 1.0	- -	33 32.4	68 66.7	6.65	.539
6.	I would rather prefer a new company to being the manager of an existing one	102	1 1.0	6 5.9	3 2.9	23 22.5	18 17.6	28 27.5	23 22.5	5.23	1.475
Total									35.76		

The weighted mean is 4.0. Grand mean is 5.96. Table 3.2 above shows that all items have means greater than the weighted mean. And also, the grand mean of all the items is greater than the weighted mean, implying that respondents have a positive ATE.

Research Question 2: To what degree are students intending to become entrepreneurs?

Table 3.3: Have you seriously considered becoming an entrepreneur?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	93.14
No	7	6.86
Total	102	100

Table 3.3 above describes the EIs of respondents. 93.14% of respondents have the intentions of becoming an entrepreneur as compared to only 6.86% who do not have such intention. Succinctly, of the total number of 102 respondents, 95 have seriously considered becoming entrepreneurs. This shows a high entrepreneurship intention among the respondents.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and students' ATE

Table 3.4: Testing hypothesis 1

		If yes, please specify the course	Student attitude
If yes, please specify the course	Pearson Correlation	1	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.512
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	6.520	12.275
	Covariance	.065	.122
	N	102	102
Student attitude	Pearson Correlation	.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.512	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	12.275	5353.843
	Covariance	.122	53.008
	N	102	102

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The above table on correlation analysis of students’ attitude gives a correlation value (r) of 0.066 at 0.512 level of significance. The hypothesis is upheld since the result shows an insignificant relationship between entrepreneurship education and attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention.

Table 3.5: Testing Hypothesis 2

		If yes, please specify the course	Have you ever seriously considered becoming an entrepreneur
If yes, please specify the course	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 - 102	-.074 .462 102
Have you ever seriously considered becoming an entrepreneur?	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	-.074 .462 102	1 - 102

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Pearson Correlation of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention item reveals a negative relationship (−0.074) between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention at 0.462 level of significance. Hypothesis 2 is hereby upheld.

4. Discussion

On the basis of the findings presented in the previous section, it was found that, on the whole, students’ appraisal of entrepreneurship is positive. In effect, this study has proven that entrepreneurship education is a potent instrument to positively influence students’ entrepreneurship attitude. Many studies have supported the positive effect of entrepreneurship education on the development of entrepreneurship attitude of students. Peterman and Kennedy (2003) in their study found out that offering entrepreneurship education course to students helps them to develop favourable entrepreneurship attitude. Pullka et al (2014) in their study indicated that students hold strong positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and hence towards entrepreneurship. Also, an exploratory study conducted by Adnan et al (2015) in Saudi Private University supports that students have a positive personal attitude towards entrepreneurship resulting from entrepreneurship education. Correlation analysis of hypothesis 1 shows that although a positive relationship exists between entrepreneurship education and

students' attitude towards entrepreneurship, the result shows that the relationship is insignificant, thereby upholding the hypothesis.

The analysis of empirical studies carried out brings out some interesting aspects about the entrepreneurship intention of students. It was found out that although majority of the students (93.14%) are interested in pursuing entrepreneurship, this intention could not be directly linked to the entrepreneurship education offered to them. This is because correlation analysis of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship intention on hypothesis 2 depicts that a negative ($r = -0.074$) and insignificant relationship (0.462) exists between entrepreneurship courses and students' entrepreneurship intention. However, the high entrepreneurship intentions could be indirectly traced to students' positive entrepreneurship attitudes, which they derived from the entrepreneurship courses they took. This could be explained using Ajzen theory of planned behaviour. According to this theory, entrepreneurial behaviour is a function of entrepreneurial intentions (Izedonmi & Okafor, 2010). This theory according to Thandi and Sharma (2003) as cited in Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) suggests that a person's attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur, subjective norms (perception of others), and behavioural control are antecedents of intention. Thus, the more favourable the attitudes and subjective norms is and the greater the perceived behavioural control is, the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour. Furthermore, Carlson, (1985) opines that attitude can offer a prediction about a person's future actions. Khuang and An (2016) further buttress this opinion through their finding, which says that attitude toward entrepreneurship prove to have significant impact on entrepreneurship intention which is the tendency to start a new business venture. Therefore, entrepreneurship attitude can influence the intention of students to become entrepreneurs.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study shows that entrepreneurship education has positive impact on UI students' entrepreneurial attitude. This positive impact validates the compulsory inclusion of entrepreneurship into UI undergraduate curricula and justifies the introduction of postgraduate programmes in entrepreneurship. However, the university can further enhance her entrepreneurship courses and programmes by introducing entrepreneurship education support systems such as entrepreneurship counselling and students' entrepreneurship networking. Specific study should be carried out on what value entrepreneurship education support systems will add to the students.

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