



THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TEACHING AND LEARNING IN NIGERIA POLYTECHNICS

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ABSTRACT: *The need to strengthen entrepreneurship education has now become an increasing metaphor in Nigeria institutions due to recent economic recession. Entrepreneurship education has thus, become a sine qua-non every institution must establish going by recent mandate given to higher institutions of learning by regulatory bodies. Paramount to its success, policies and programmes initiated were to foster entrepreneurship teaching and learning among students in schools. This study aims at investigating the potential of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian polytechnics towards job creation & national development and to encourage greater level of entrepreneurial participation. A total of 240 respondents identified from a Nigerian polytechnic (The federal polytechnic Bida) participated in this survey. The result shows that current approaches in use to facilitate entrepreneurial teaching and learning need to be reviewed to yield the desired goal. While the perception of respondents differ based on cognitive factors, the result applauds the need to resolve several misconceptions stemming from identified factors that foster more entrepreneurship activities to contribute towards the nation's economic growth needs.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Education, Incubation Programme, Innovation, Creativity

INTRODUCTION

Higher technical education is mainly provided in Nigeria by polytechnics and some few technical universities to provide skills and training for the nation middle manpower needs. Technical education is fundamentally an entrepreneurial system that seeks to equip students with requisite functional knowledge, skills, attitudes and related competences that are needed for application in creating value-additions in goods and services to be produced (Kennedy, 2011; Idogho and Augustine, 2011). The creation of polytechnics in Nigeria is backed by a decree and principally established to produce the highest possible levels of technical manpower (Jen, 2002; FGN, 2004). As such, fostering entrepreneurial competences is the requisite foundations to fight corruption, poverty and to induce the desired economic growth and development. This has been seen as part of the policy of the federal government to cultivate entrepreneurship competences onto the existing programme offered in Nigeria's Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

Today, this giant stride taken and acknowledged by government is just seen by many as a stop-gap measure with little effort on the part of the institutions charged with the responsibilities. While, institutions have implemented it, the programme/mandate till date shows that it is poorly implemented across polytechnics in the country preparing students as potentially active entrepreneurs. This has created a vacuum in the kind of student entrepreneurs turned out on yearly basis. As such, the intended outcome of the programme is only generating a critical mass



of entrepreneurs that cannot innovatively drive the economy based on the performance index measure (Jen, 2002; FGN, 2004). In view of this, the study aim to properly articulate and aggregate how entrepreneurship curriculum for and not about entrepreneurship education to develop entrepreneurial pedagogies meet the nation's growth needs. To do this, the study will explore potential for teaching entrepreneurship that exist in a Nigerian polytechnic for the development of the nation's economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Education (Nigerian Polytechnics)

Understanding the strategic importance and need for entrepreneurship education, the Nigerian polytechnics system is fairly equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to acquire competences in order to initiate value-addition for economic ventures that will in turn contribute to the overall drive of the country, fighting poverty and fostering economic growth and development (Bubou and Okrigwe, 2011; Ekpoh and Edet, 2011). This scenario is not a peculiar experience of Nigeria as most developed countries with improved educational systems equip their graduates with the right knowledge and skills (Raybould and Sheedy, 2005). The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) equally took this path in a bid to promote entrepreneurship starting with a policy thrust that introduced entrepreneurship education in secondary and higher institutions of learning to produce critical mass of graduate entrepreneurs in different sectors for economic recovery and development (Nkamnebe, 2008; Mitra, Abubakar and Sagagi, 2011). This was done by introducing entrepreneurship courses as add-ons to schools curricula for various programmes offered in all higher educational institutions (Kabongo and Okpara, 2010).

The examination of current entrepreneurship efforts and stride in the country reveal that implementation lacks a well-defined strategy for the peculiarities and needs of the country to foster good entrepreneurial spirit among students under the nations formal education system. Disheartening as this were, the focus of almost all the entrepreneurship training and education is on provision of entrepreneurial competences that end up using inappropriate pedagogies of lecturing method (Acs, 2010). The students end-up learning concepts as a pre-requisite to fulfil graduation requirements. A study by (Adejimola and Olufunmilayo, 2009) report that about 70% of most polytechnic graduates find it very difficult to get employed each year. Thus, if entrepreneurship is to produce the desired objectives of creating wealth, economic growth and reducing poverty level, the challenge to government and educationalists is to craft entrepreneurial courses and programmes that will keep a reality-based focus on entrepreneurial climate in a learning experience environment (Block and Stumpf, 1992). In other words, it is imperative for entrepreneurial education to be more focused on the end result. This imperative provides the justification for the need to explore and reconsider entrepreneurship education contents that are offered at Nigerian Polytechnics now, using appropriate pedagogy for teaching, developing strategies for evaluation, and programme citing in relevant unit in the polytechnics for outcome-focused implementation.

Entrepreneurship Education (Teaching and Learning)

All over the globe, creating new ventures has become one of the key enhancer of economic growth. Over the years the role entrepreneurship education plays in both developed and



developing countries to foster entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intentions are strongly supported by different studies (Gibb, 2004; Cone, 2008; Mason, 2011). Literatures have shown that researchers have demonstrated and discussed trends, emerging issues and challenges (Garavan and O’Cinneide, 1994; Al-Laham et al, 2007; Animm, 2012) with much gap still left on how higher institution can embrace it in their teaching and learning process. Several literatures, posit that the objectives of entrepreneurship education should be mainly geared towards improving the understanding of entrepreneurship, stimulating entrepreneurial skills, and to create and nurture vibrant entrepreneurs using appropriate pedagogical approach align with entrepreneurship programmes and activities. Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo, (2011) in a related study identify strategy for sustainable development that emphasized more on entrepreneurship education programmes and developments, use of modern methods to deliver entrepreneurship programmes (multimedia and curriculum review), implementation strategy, and lastly focus on the needs of participants.

Innovation and Creativity

Innovation is an emerging concept in entrepreneurship considering it as an indispensable tool to attain competitive advantage (McAdam and Keogh, 2004; Mol and Birkinshaw 2009). Studies relating to this concept show that its main thrust is to ensure organizations long term success (Amabile and Kramer, 2007; Mumford et al, 2002). Empirical evidences have equally shown or proved why they have become a driving force for advancement and prosperity in an organisation (Schumpeter, 1934; Tushman and Nadler, 1986; Hall, 2009). Teaching and understanding how to be innovative and creative have been repeatedly echoed turning into a central phenomenon among research studies. This trend equally shows how innovative firms have proven their power to increase nations growth, profitability, and a larger prospect for development (Hall, 2009; Czarnitzki and Kraft, 2004). Similarly, any attempt at understanding and using innovations considers creativity as part of it. While, creativity synthesis new ideas and concepts putting them through different means such as radical restructuring and re-associations of new or existing ones (Amabile, 1998). This includes and refers to anything that can lead to idea generation and development for the greater good of the people. Several studies on innovation and creativity shows that they are principally aimed at improving or the development of ideas for new product or services to be managed (Amabile, & Kramer, 2007; Amabile & Mueller, 2008).

Incubation Programme

Naturally, incubations are designed to help facilitate and create new start-up ventures with growth potentials in a conducive business environment. This includes ensuring and providing physical space, office and business support services and access to financial support, the need for continuous coaching and mentoring and reliable network support (McAdam & Marlow, 2010; Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse, & Groen, 2012; Clausen & Korneliussen, 2012). Appreciating incubation concept as a tool to fast tract entrepreneurship development is becoming prominent today in both developed and developing countries. Nigeria has long joined the world to embark on businesses using incubations as a tool towards achieving entrepreneurship participation to grow the nation economically, which higher institutions (such as polytechnics) play a vital role in providing facilities to help reduce the probability of failure among budding and start-up entrepreneurs, unemployment rate and spur more in boosting economic development.



METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of this study, a survey methodology was adopted as the primary method used in exploring the role of entrepreneurship programmes towards growth and development in the federal polytechnic bida, situated in the north-central geo-political zone of Nigeria. The polytechnic is selected because of its strategic location and “earn standard” in first adopting entrepreneurship padagogies as part of her curricullum. It is also the first selected by government to give training on entrepreneurship using cefe methodologies by german technical corporation (GIZ) before the implementation of entrepreneurship as compulsory curricullum in Nigeria Polytechincs. A descriptive survey method was used to explore lecturers’ perception on the study objective as the unit of analysis to participate in the survey. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed to the institution staff involved in impacting entrepreneurial skills and competencies within thirty-one (31) departments existing in the institution. A total of 180 representing 75% response rate of the questionnaires were returned by respondents and duly analysed. The survey questions were adapted from (Jansen et al; 2015) considering local environmental condition similar to the earlier studies. A five-point Likert scale questionnaires were designed to elicit responses from the study on three (3) major categories (entrepreneurship education, innovation & creativity and incubation program).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study shows the majority of the respondents were males with about 74.4 %, and followed by females with 25.6%. For age, 23.9% of the respondents age were below 30yrs, while 44.4% of the respondents were under the age group of 31yrs to 40yrs. 19.4% were between the ages of 41yrs to 50yrs and 12.2% of them were between the ages of 51yrs and above. The study similarly shows that majority of the respondents with 66.7% were lecturers 1 and below while, 33.3% of them are senior lecturers and above. With respect to the respondent’s experience 82% have experience of between 1- 10yrs; 33.3% with experience between 11 - 20yrs while, 21.1% of the remainder are those with 21 yrs and above.

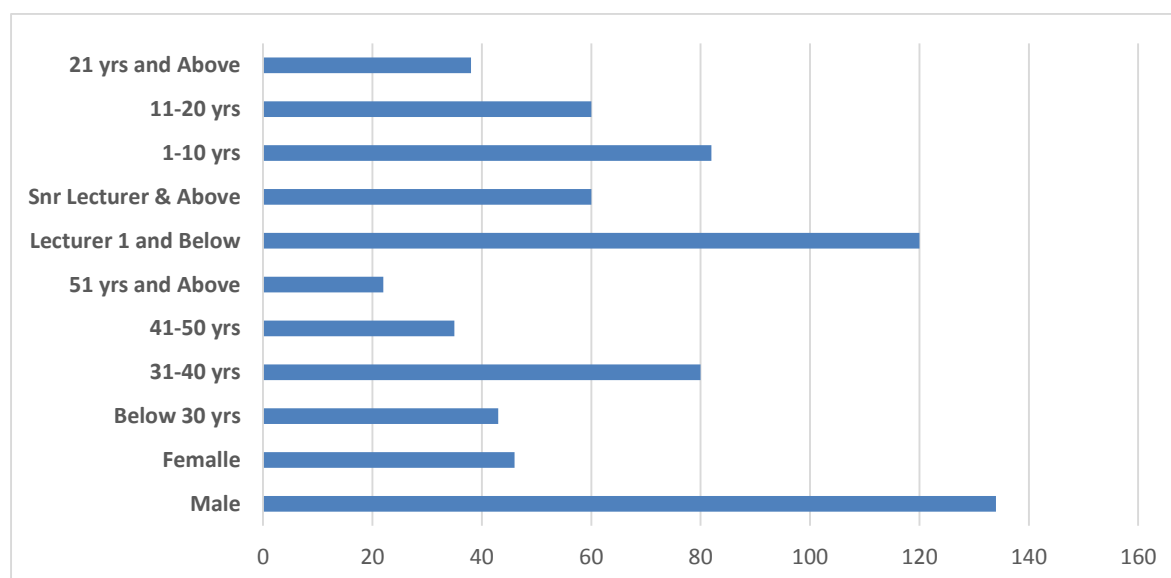


Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Education (Teaching and Learning)

Entrepreneurship education in the polytechnic comprises of two components (teaching and learning). The respondents moderately agreed that polytechnics are able to offer knowledgeable and experienced academicians couple with good infrastructure to produce marketable graduates to become entrepreneurs. 55.6% of respondents agreed of their involvement and compatibility to support entrepreneurship education in the polytechnic while, 6.7% of them strongly disagreed. 30% of the respondents' responses shows that they were unclear about their role and 9.2% expressed lack of confidence with the strategy and plan of teaching and learning entrepreneurship education programmes in the polytechnic.

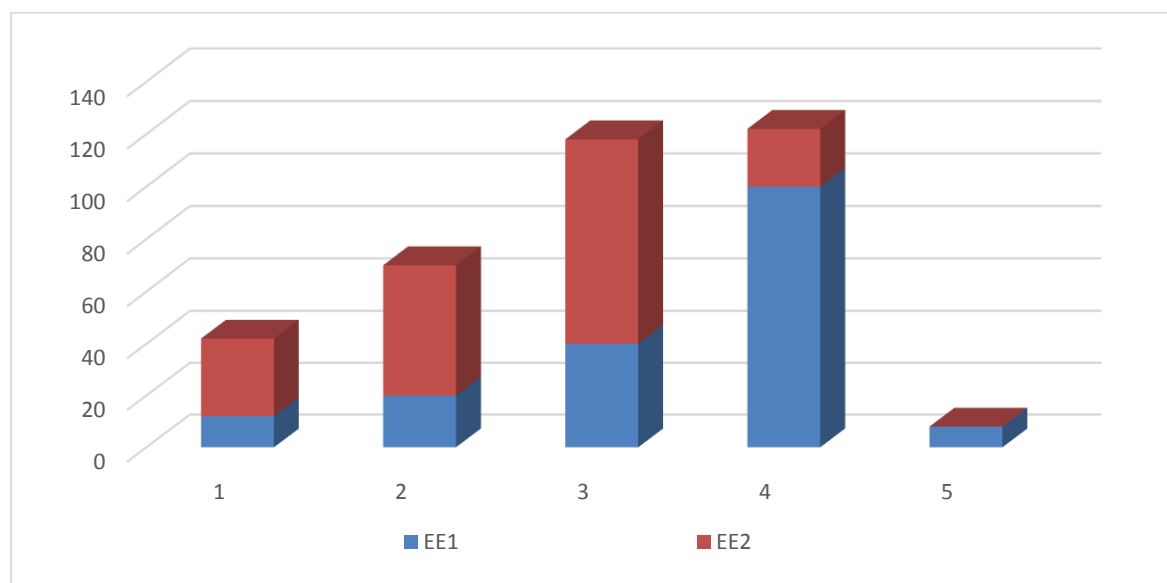


Figure 2: Perception on Entrepreneurship Education

The Syllabus for teaching is one of the most important elements in entrepreneurship education. As presented in the Figure 2, it is clear that majority of lecturers, which constitute 48.3% of the population believe that the polytechnic has a comprehensive syllabus to support entrepreneurship programmes, indicating that the syllabus plays a significant role in fostering the entrepreneurial intention among students. But the second highest were 44.2% lecturers who were unclear with the content in the syllabus, whereas 32 % of some were the lecturers who were not involved in the entrepreneurship programme. Only 7.5% of staff disagreed that the syllabus in helps developing entrepreneurship programme.

Innovation and Creativity

On innovation and creativity activities, the majority of the study respondents agreed on the role it plays, but disagreed as to whether the top management of the polytechnic providing sufficient encouragement to the institution entrepreneurship development. The findings show that 64.2% of respondents surveyed believe the top management was fully supportive towards entrepreneurship programs. 35.8% of them reveal more activities will be needed to re-



organized entrepreneurship activities in the polytechnic. The results further indicate a stronger need for simulation of entrepreneurship activities to support students' business ideas generated during the course of the programme. The outcome on this shows that 56.7% of the respondents support the need for this while, 43.3% of the respondents lend their support to improving their pitching activities to support business ideas, plans/models.

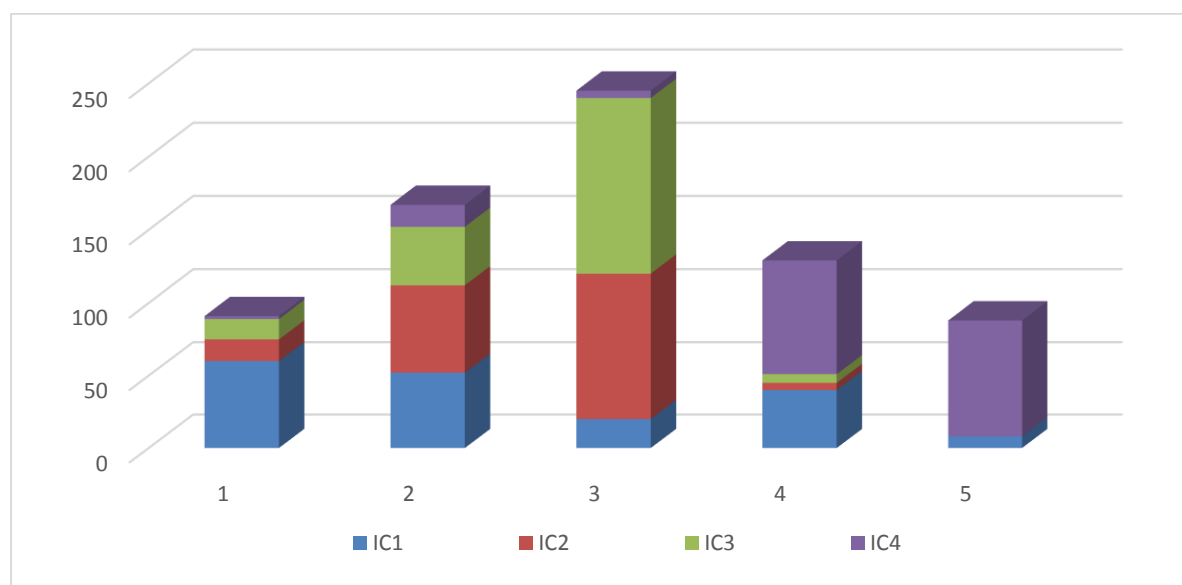


Figure 3: Perception on Innovation and Creativity

Furthermore, the study also examined prototype development of entrepreneurship businesses identified, where 42.5% of respondents indicate an uncertainty on the effort of polytechnic to support students for this stage. Other respondents with 14.2% and 13.3% respectively does not agree the polytechnic have resources or ability to focus on the development of viable entrepreneurial business plan and the realization of a prototype for ideas generated. This indicates the absence of stimulation activities on entrepreneurship programmes of the polytechnic.

Incubation Programme

Incubation programmes are largely presumed to focus on providing a range of physical facilities support, resources and services needed during the early stage of development of entrepreneurship business ideas. The majority of the respondents surveyed did not agree there exist entrepreneurship incubation programmes in the polytechnics. 30% of the respondents indicate they were uncertain if the polytechnic has business incubator programmes to support entrepreneurship programmes, 46.7% similarly affirm same to mentoring to start-up firms, 34.2% on funding, 44.2% also regarding business plan development and competition and 42.5% also attesting for networking opportunities. This reflects a worrisome situation on polytechnic entrepreneurship programmes (teaching and learning). Hence, the need for top management of the institution to focus on these challenges to turnaround their entrepreneurship development programme.

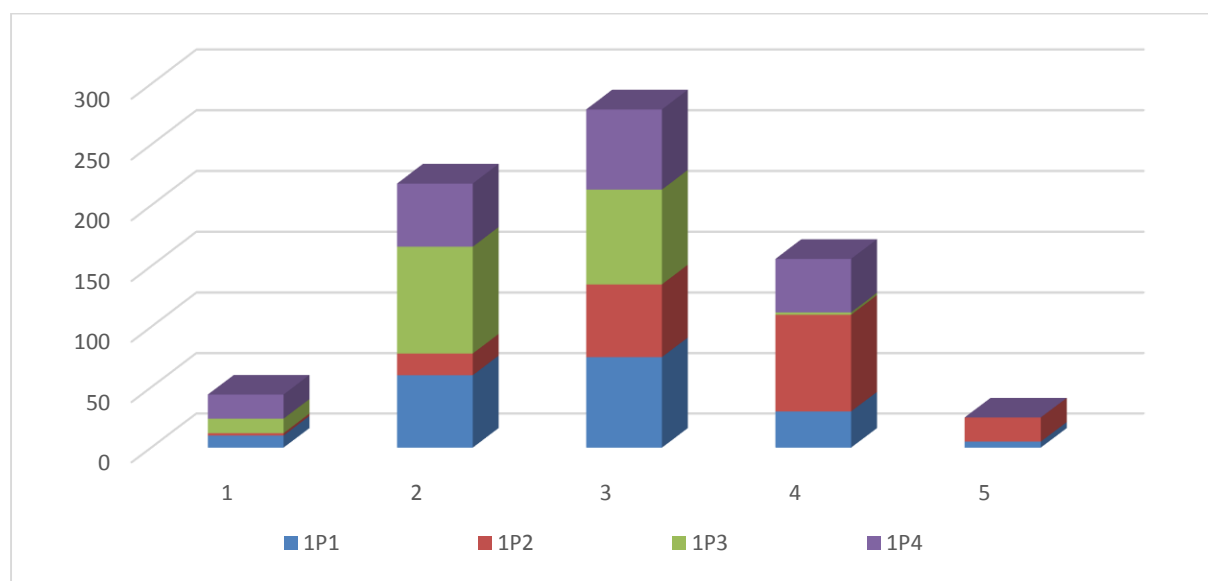


Figure 4: Perception on Innovation Programme Activities

Furthermore, 23% of did not agree the polytechnic has a good physical infrastructure, 17% of the responded in favor of mentorship for start-up firms while, 29% were on funding, 14% on business plan competition and 14% on networking opportunities. This finding have proved that the respondents who are directly involved in entrepreneurship programmes of the polytechnic are not satisfied with neither the concept nor its implementation in the polytechnic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigates lecturers' viewpoints of polytechnics role on entrepreneurship towards teaching and learning to results into national growth and development based on entrepreneurship education currently thought, innovation and creativity activities, and incubation programme available to spur developmental activities. The result shows that more efforts are needed and necessary to get to the desired outcome of using entrepreneurship as a gateway to promote national growth in the country. The study critically shows that Nigerian Polytechnics needs to go back to the drawing board to re-examine the intent and objectives for establishing entrepreneurship centers to provide the bridge needed by students to turn their ideas into products and services. Thus, the top management in polytechnics needs to play a vital role in this areas to devise a workable plan, policies and process necessary to foster the development of entrepreneurship in yielding desired outcome for the nation's polytechnics to provide higher technical knowledge and manpower for the growth of the nation. The followings are some of the recommendation drawn from the study.

1. The constant need for creating platform through workshops and seminar on entrepreneurship teaching and learning to lecturers to foster positive intention and to accelerate the growth of start-up firms from the institutions.
2. While the establishment or creation of business incubation centers at all polytechnic to



provides services to students and staffs products and services are desirable, there is need for more education on this to be able to tap on the full benefits of the business incubation as a tool to support businesses developed.

3. Making effort to initiate collaborations and networking with industries, research institution based on triple helix model to create the synergy needed and financial support to students in the business incubator programmes. This is very important because funding is needed to enable the entrepreneurs market their products and services.

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