

ASSESSMENT OF ROLES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY AMONGST UNDERGRADUATES IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

This paper assessed the roles of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of study comprised of all undergraduates in the faculty of education of the three (3) universities in Bayelsa State. A sample of 153 undergraduates purposively selected from the six (6) departments in the Faculty of Education was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and validated by experts. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and a value of 0.80 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Results revealed the available strategies in tertiary institutions that promote the development of entrepreneurial capacity. It was recommended amongst others that University-Private Sector collaboration should be encouraged.

Keywords: Assessments, Tertiary Institutions, Entrepreneurial Capacity

Currently, the concerns for uncertain future due to a long-term economic depression and global economic crisis are spreading throughout our society. Moreover, along with the trend in industrial scale downsizing and profit generation with a small manpower cost, concerns about the increase of youth unemployment due to jobless growth are deepening. Being among the top richest states in terms of crude oil production and large federal allocation in the country, unemployment rate in Bayelsa State is alarming. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as at 2018 pegged the unemployment rate of Bayelsa State at 36.1%. Also, Trading Economics (2019) reported that unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.10% in the 3rd quarter of 2018 from 22.70% in the 2nd quarter of 2018. Chris (2019) in declaring open a two-day workshop on “Breaking the Resilience of High Unemployment Rate” reported that employment rate if not managed will reach 33.5% by 2020. He further noted that this incessant increase validates the new status of Nigeria as the global poverty capital (World Bank, 2018).

Many countries agree that the business start-ups are the solution for youth unemployment so that our government is also expending much effort in developing the policies to stop the increase in youth unemployment rate and create more jobs by instilling youth entrepreneurship and creating a positive atmosphere for business start-ups in this grave period of low economic growth. This method is important and also useful in maintaining steady economic and social growth.

It is a common experience that about 80% of the graduates from Nigerian universities find it very difficult to get employment every year. This is partly due to the curricula of the universities and other tertiary institutions, which lay emphasis on training for white-collar jobs. For example, current national and regional policy thrusts like the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have been sensitizing the youths by emphasizing on poverty eradication, employment generation and wealth-creation as well as public-private partnership. Accordingly, a number of initiatives like the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and the establishment of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) have been introduced (Okojie, 2018). However, the situation remains unchanged. One of the possible causes is that this initiative in Nigeria addresses only the output end of capacity development solving problem. In addressing the input end, therefore, a complementary approach is required.

Besides, even the educational system that addresses the output end either lays more emphasis on content and knowledge acquisition for its sake or just stresses the inquiry-discovery model of teaching and learning. In developed economies or industrializing economies, for example, the education system emphasizes the trail of inquiry-discovery-application in teaching and students to perceive problems (including societal problems) as challenges and opportunities that can be turned into goods and services of commercial value (Giwa, 2019).

One of such approaches for achieving this in Nigeria is teaching and research at entrepreneurship and innovation centres by universities and other tertiary institutions and the promoting of universities-private sector collaboration. This will involve developing the capacity of staff and students in entrepreneurship and innovation, engaging in outreach activities with small and medium enterprises through such interventions as business incubators. Training of entrepreneurs and conducting researches and consultancies by small business development centre's in universities are considered inevitable for patenting entrepreneurial, industrial and economic growth in Nigeria. This is the approach being adopted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) through its directive to all universities in Nigeria to establishment the centres for entrepreneurship and linkage programmes. The concept most widely used to understand the phenomena associated with the establishment of a business is entrepreneurship. Analyzing the definition of entrepreneurship found in

Omeodu (2019), it was possible to find that entrepreneurship has been often emphasized when one plans to establish a company. Omeodu and Charles-Owaba(2020)considered entrepreneurial capacity as the first step in establishing one's business and a positive attitude and experience toward business start-up should be preceded prior to actually making a decision to start his/her business. Cheolwoo (2017) defined entrepreneurial capacity as an individual's effort to start his/her business so that without it, one would not be able to proceed further. Considering that starting a business can be fulfilled through calculate and intentional activities, the first step, entrepreneurial intention, is essential for understanding overall phenomena involved in business start-up, as it is a key element in determining the early characteristics of start-ups. Shapero (2011) claimed that the roles of entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial capacities are important for the nation, region or organization to have their power of recuperation to ride out economic downturns and self-reforming traits. Therefore, it is important for our society to contribute to continuous economic growth by inculcating a positive

perception in the minds of students with entrepreneurial intentions to promote and activate start-ups and let the ones with potentials to challenge and succeed.

The aim of this study is to assess the available strategies in tertiary institutions, the extent to which the strategies promotes entrepreneurial capacities and the challenges associated with promoting entrepreneurial capacities amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa state.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the roles of tertiary institutions in promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study achieved the following;

- i) To identify the available programmes in tertiary institutions that promotes innovations and entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State.
- ii) To determine the extent to which available programmes in tertiary institutions promotes entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State.
- iii) To determine the challenges associated with promoting entrepreneurship capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

- i) What are the available programmes in tertiary institutions that promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?
- ii) To what extent do the available programmes in tertiary institutions promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?
- iii) What are the challenges associated with promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population comprised of all final year students in the faculty of education in the three higher institutions which have education courses in Bayelsa state. A purposive sampling technique was used to select Niger Delta University out of the other two higher institutions, because it is the only institutions that have graduated students in the faculty of education. All the 153 final year students from the 6 departments in the faculty of education formed the sample. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged as "Assessment of Roles of Tertiary Institution in Promoting Entrepreneurial Capacity Questionnaire" (ARTIPECQ) developed by the researchers. The instrument was a structured 26-item questionnaire divided into four (4) sections. Section A solicits the demographic information of the respondents, Section B was on the available strategies, Section C was on the extent to which it promotes entrepreneurial capacity and Section D was on the challenges. The instrument was validated by experts of measurement and evaluation and entrepreneurship education. It was subjected to pilot testing and the outcome was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula (PPMC), which yielded a coefficient value of 0.80. One-on-one mode of questionnaire administration was adopted and 100% return rate was achieved. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the

research questions. Mean values of 2.50 and above were considered accepted, while the values below 2.50 were considered rejected.

Results and Discussion

Results

Research Question 1

What are the available strategies in tertiary institutions that promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Available Strategies that Promote Entrepreneurial Capacity

S/N	Items	Mean	St.d	Remarks
1.	Establishment of entrepreneurship development centre	2.04	0.501	NA
2.	Sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of support for entrepreneurship education	3.50	1.02	A
3.	Promotion of science, technology and innovation by providing incentives for students and lecturers	2.06	0.43	NA
4.	Industrial visits and excursions	3.89	1.19	A
5.	Promotion of links with the private sector through research, consultancy, training as building networks and alliances	2.60	0.79	A
6.	Business incubation	2.19	0.89	NA
7.	Curriculum development	3.45	1.03	A
8.	Marketing	3.09	0.99	A
9.	Policy and strategic planning	2.39	0.66	NA
10.	General administration	2.13	0.73	NA

Source: Fieldwork (2020).

**A=Available, NA=Not Available*

The table above shows the mean response of respondents on the available strategies in tertiary institutions that promote entrepreneurship capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State. Item 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 have mean values of 2.04, 2.06, 2.19, 2.39, and 2.13 respectively which are below the criterion mean value of 2.50. Item 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 have mean values of 3.50, 3.89, 2.60, 3.45, and 3.09 which are above the criterion mean value of 2.50. Hence, items 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 are available, while items 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 are not available in tertiary institutions to promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State.

Research Question 2

To what extent do available strategies in tertiary institutions promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?

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Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Extent to which Programmes Promote Entrepreneurial Capacity

S/N	Items	N	Mean	St.d	Remarks
1.	Establishment of entrepreneurship development centre	153	2.36	0.93	VLE
2.	Sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of support for entrepreneurship education	153	3.73	1.31	VHE
3.	Promotion of science, technology and innovation by providing incentives for students and lecturers	153	2.13	0.78	VLE
4.	Industrial visits and excursions	153	3.93	1.07	VHE
5.	Promotion of links with the private sector through research, consultancy, training as building networks and alliances	153	3.07	0.98	VHE
6.	Business incubation	153	2.16	0.54	VLE
7.	Curriculum development	153	3.50	1.14	VHE
8.	Marketing	153	3.76	0.98	VHE
9.	Policy and strategic planning	153	2.17	0.34	VLE
10.	General administration	153	2.20	0.29	VLE

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

**VLE=Very Low Extent, VHE=Very High Extent*

The result in table 2 above shows that the mean value of items 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 were below the criterion mean of 2.50, while items 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8 have mean values above the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, the extent to which items 1, 3, 6, 9 and 10 promotes entrepreneurial capacity was very low, while the others were very high.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges associated with promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Challenges of Promoting Entrepreneurial Capacity

S/N	Items	N	Mean	St.d	Remarks
1.	Corruption	153	3.62	1.09	Major
2.	Lack of fund to finance the projects	153	2.36	0.77	Minor
3.	Lack of implementation culture	153	3.39	0.99	Major
4.	Undergraduates unwillingness to use available opportunities	153	3.40	1.13	Major
5.	Poor staff morale to motivate and stir-up creativity and innovations in students	153	3.45	1.23	Major
6.	Low patronage to indigenous goods and services	153	2.45	0.67	Minor

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

The result in table 3 above shows that items 1, 3, 4 and 5 had mean values of 3.42, 3.39, 3.40 and 3.45 respectively, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. Items 2 and 6 had mean values of 2.36 and 2.45 respectively, which are below the criterion mean value of 2.50. Hence, items 3, 4 and 5 are major challenges associated with the promoting of entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one revealed that the available strategies in tertiary institutions for promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates are sensitization, advocacy and mobilization of support for entrepreneurship education, provision of incentives for innovation, promotion of links with private sector through research, consultancy, training and building networks and alliance. This finding is consistent with Amuseghan (2009), Anao (2012) who averred that establishment of entrepreneurship development centre, the mobilization of support for entrepreneurship education are available strategies for promoting entrepreneurial competencies amongst youths.

The results in research question two revealed that the extent to which the available strategies in tertiary institutions promote entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates was very low. This is in agreement with the submission of Giwa (2019) and Omeodu (2019).

The result in research question three revealed that the major challenges associated with promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates are competition, lack of implementation culture, undergraduates unwillingness to use available opportunities and lack of motivation from the lecturers. This supports the findings of Amuseghan (2009), Giwa (2019), Omeodu (2019); who reported that corruption and lack of implementation culture are major barriers to promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst youths.

Conclusion

This study has established the strategies available in tertiary institutions for promoting entrepreneurial capacity amongst undergraduates in Bayelsa State. It has also addressed the extent to which the strategies promote entrepreneurial capacity and the challenges associated with it.

Recommendations

1. Coordination of University-Private Sector collaboration.
2. Promote continuous development of innovations and breakthroughs by staff and students.
3. Motivation of students to harness effectively every entrepreneurial opportunities

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