

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMES AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVENESS OF UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between social entrepreneurship and innovative skill University in Rivers State. The result of the study revealed that entrepreneurship education programmes have a significant relationship with career mindset of business education students. The study also revealed that the dimensions of entrepreneurship education programmes of scalable start-up entrepreneurship, innovation entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship significantly correlated with career mindset of business education students. The study further showed that team cooperation significantly moderated the influence of the relationship between entrepreneurship education programmes and career mindset of business education students. The study therefore, concluded that entrepreneurship education programmes enhances career mindset of business education students of universities in Rivers State. It was recommended that universities should initiate entrepreneurship education programmes in order to create and enhance career mindset of business education students and others in universities.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneur, Innovative Skill, Career Mindset

INTRODUCTION

It has become imperative for a serious attention to be given to entrepreneurship education to be in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is so because our educational system has been able to turn out graduates from over 150 Universities, Polytechnics and Monotechnics that have not been trained to be self-reliance, but to depend entirely on white collar jobs for a living. As such there are several graduates from our institutions today who are not fully employed. Apart from the book that they gained, there are no requisite skills to make them self-reliance. Therefore, there is the need to engage the youth who make up the over 60% of the population in meaningful educational programmes to prevent unhealthy alternatives for this group of persons. Again, a close look at the educational sector in our country, Osakwe (2015), reveals that very little or nothing is being done in the area of entrepreneurial, technological and scientific education that could have made the students and other beneficiaries develop skills, abilities and ideas for national growth and development.

The failure to achieve the objectives of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions could be attributed to poor career or entrepreneurial mindset of students as seen in lack of capacity level innovative skills and knowledge building development. Therefore, the problems confronting entrepreneurial or career mindset of students has made it necessary to examine entrepreneurship education programmes as a means of enhancing career mindset of business education students of Universities in Rivers State. Various studies have been conducted by researchers using different settings, industries and institutions, for

examples, Oseni, (2017) on the relevance of entrepreneurship educations to the development of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMES) in Nigeria, Rodriquez and Lieber, (2020) on relationship between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset, and career readiness in secondary school students in United State. Murambiwa, et al (2018) on entrepreneurship education for tertiary institutions in Namibia; Okoye and Okoye (2019) entrepreneurship educations in tertiary institutions: Paradigm for sustainable development. Okey, et al (2012) entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions: a bridge for self-relevance and sustainable development in Nigeria; Ngek (2012), an exploratory study on entrepreneurial mindset in the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector: A south African perspective for fostering small and medium enterprises success; entrepreneurial models in higher education institutions, university of Romania; Wardana et al (2020), the impact of entrepreneurship education and students entrepreneurial mindset the mediating role of attitude and self-efficacy, university of Indonesia; Mukhtar et al (2021), does entrepreneurship education and culture promote students entrepreneurial intention? The mediating role of entrepreneurial mindset, university of Indonesia, Grecu and Denes (2017), benefits of entrepreneurship education and training for engineering students, Romania; Amadi-Eechendu et al (2016), entrepreneurial education in a tertiary context: a perspective of the University of South Africa; Osakwe (2015), entrepreneurship education in Delta state tertiary institutions as a means of achieving national growth and development and Auval-Couetil and Long (2014), career impacts of entrepreneurship education: how and when students intend to utilize entrepreneurship in their professional lives, and Rahman et al (2017), , but to the best of our knowledge, none of these studies examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education programmes with its dimensions such as scalable–startup entrepreneurship, innovation entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship and career mindset with it measures of capacity of students innovative skills and knowledge building development of business education students of Universities in Rivers State. This has created a gap in the existing body of knowledge. To close this gap, the study on the relationship between entrepreneurship education programmes and career mindset of business education students of Universities in Rivers State became necessary.

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a response to social and societal issues (Fridhi, 2021). Social Entrepreneurship is a relatively recent scientific concept that has grown considerably in recent years (Chou, 2018). However, the definition of social entrepreneurship remains polymorphic, as evidenced by the various reviews of the literature that have allowed to approach the contours of this economic and social phenomenon (Dacin, 2010; Saebi et al., 2018). It is arousing growing interest both for researchers, practitioners, and public authorities. In this regard, the European Commission (2003) encourages such initiatives to the point of establishing, in certain countries, a legal framework regulating the sector. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2020) defines SE as "any private activity of general interest, organized on the basis of an entrepreneurial approach and not having as main reason profit maximization but the satisfaction of certain economic and social objectives, as well as the capacity to put in place, in the production of goods and services, innovative solutions to the problems of exclusion and unemployment."

The myriad definitions of social entrepreneurship raise specifics relating to the context or the research discipline. The various central articles dealing with previous and future research on social entrepreneurship point out, in this regard, a lack of consensus (Dacin, 2010; Saebi et al., 2018). SE has an important pragmatic character (Mair and Marti, 2006) in the sense that it aims, among other things, local management and service. The advantage of the existence of geographic proximity and support lies in the efficiency of resource and conflict management through permanent adjustments directly linked to the field.

In order to overcome the lack of resources, but also in order to respond more quickly and effectively to social emergencies, companies are often required to collaborate with other organizations. They can be civil society actors, as well as public bodies or even companies in the private sector. In this regard, a collective Social entrepreneurship. The latter consists of deploying resources to multiple actors engaged in different activities and strategies. This makes it possible to integrate sympathizers for the developed social cause and to share different points of view by collaborating and effectively driving lasting social change. In addition, Rahman et al. (2017) emphasize that it depends on the social ties resulting from taking initiative and the effectiveness of the collaboration mechanism created by different actors working for the creation of social value.

The concept of innovation in the field of social entrepreneurship can be analyzed both in terms of the social value created and the organizational form specific to this type of business (Liu et al., 2018). Social enterprises are therefore considered to be hybrid organizations seeking to combine economic performance with a social mission (Chou, 2018). In other words, they constitute a new orientation valuing the creation of shared value in visionary societies (Gramescu, 2015). Mair and Marti (2006) define social entrepreneurship as a process of innovative use and the combination of resources to exploit opportunities that aim to catalyze social change by providing basic human needs in a sustainable manner. In addition, Zahra et al. (2009) consider SE as "activities and processes undertaken to discover, define and exploit opportunities to increase social wealth through the creation of new businesses or the management of existing organizations in innovative ways." Finally, Dees and Anderson (2006) and Dacin (2010) recognize SE itself as a form of SI, notably because of its innovative dimension in the face of social and societal issues. At the individual level, SE highlights a social project initiator and an agent of change (Dees, 1998; Zollo et al., 2018). According to the authors, the latter is presented as an individual offering innovative solutions to the most pressing social problems in society. Social entrepreneurs are ambitious and enduring, and tackle major social problems by proposing *new* ideas for large-scale change. The proximity to the field is a central advantage in the entrepreneurial process. Thus, the social entrepreneur must constantly be on information watch in order to detect investment opportunities (Shane, 2002) but also in order to have a good knowledge of *the* society in which he is inserted. Also, the social entrepreneur is presented as a visionary individual and a leader. He is an innovative actor described in the literature as "a Schumpeterian entrepreneur in the sense that he realizes *new* combinations of production factors whether it is the creation of a new product or service, or else yet another form of organization. This definition highlights an entrepreneur who is distinguished in particular by specific skills. Among other things, the latter is called upon to mobilize a large number of internal stakeholders (volunteers, permanent staff, collaborators, etc.) and external stakeholders (clients, donors, public

actors, local communities, etc.) who will contribute to the success of the social project. Thereafter, the social entrepreneur must be able to manage the relations between the environment and his social enterprise. The role of communication, in this sense, is a major skill. Finally, he very often shows solidarity with his colleagues. Mutual aid and solidarity are a major characteristic of this type of entrepreneurship.

Innovative Skills

Higher Education Institutes are the main catalyst in fostering entrepreneurial spirit by offering major courses on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Teaching and developing 21st century skills tend to be associated as a by-product of innovation and entrepreneurship courses taught at HEIs. The traditional approach of teaching innovation and entrepreneurship is focused on stimulating entrepreneurial intentions leading potential new start-ups. Entrepreneurship education, particularly relevant to innovation & entrepreneurship courses, is not confined to new start-ups, although the emergence of new startups is often used as a print indicator in measuring the level of economic growth particularly with regard to entrepreneurial activities at a national and regional level (Acs & Szerb, 2011). Accelerating entrepreneurial activities has always been the hallmark of achieving socio-economic development and growth goals of a country. Extant literature suggests that traditional pedagogy methods in entrepreneurship education follow the about approach (i.e. to teach what entrepreneurship is about) (Pittway & Edwards, 2012) applied methodological approach (i.e. to engage and expose students to the entrepreneurial process through problem-based learning and design thinking process) (Neck and Greene 2011). The underlying assumption is to revise and reframe a coherent entrepreneurial education system that enables students to learn and reflect the entrepreneurial process. The nature of the entrepreneurial process involves entrepreneurial actions and experiences that represent the degree of creativity, ideation, opportunity analysis, resilience, and dealing with uncertainty as well as institutional structures. The conventional methods primarily grounded in the linear approach of problem-solving lack the suitable toolkits to solidify the students' contextual understanding and learning of the entrepreneurial process (Neck and Greene, 2011).

Students are the main recipients of the entrepreneurship education system and developing human capital stemming from 21st century skills. According this has become paramount for nations' socio-economic growth and development and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage at the global level. Recently, the countries government has launched a university entrepreneurship program as a part of transforming into university free zones to provide students and in particular, to undergraduates, with the key support from academia as well as industry to facilitate the transformation of their ideas into well-established businesses (Neck and Greene, 2011). Within this, the role of HEIs and industry partners is to work collaborative partnerships that allow the students to experience important phases of the entrepreneurial process which include 'ideation', 'incubation' and 'acceleration'. To achieve successful outcomes in terms of viable business ideas, it is equally important that students learn and develop key 21st century skills to reap the maximum benefits of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour: This theory was proposed by Ajzen (1991). The theory explains that attitude influences intention. Entrepreneurial attitude according to this

theory is conceptualized as an antecedent of the intention to undertake entrepreneurial activities. The theory further stated that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by personality traits, attitudinal and behavioural factors, experiences, demographic profiles and entrepreneurial education (Koe et al 2012; Hnery et al, 2005; Tam, 2009). The theory explains that entrepreneurship is a planned behaviour nursed over a longer period of time. The theory explains that entrepreneurship intentions are created once the mindset is developed. The theory also explains two critical components of entrepreneurial mindset which is opportunity recognition, which is the capability to enhance innovativeness, proactiveness and calculated risks, and the individual entrepreneurial orientation conceptualized as student's perceptions of their attitude with regard to risk, willingness, innovativeness, and proactiveness that might be built into their future entrepreneurial behaviour. This theory was adopted in this study because it is related with the independent variable (Entrepreneurship education programmes). The theory predicts that entrepreneurial learning enhances student's entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and competencies related to their predisposition to become future entrepreneurs.

Fixed and Growth Mindset Theory: This theory was proposed by Dweck in 2006. The theory stated that an individual could either hold a fixed mindset or growth mindset and not both of them combined. According to this theory, a fixed mindset that makes an individual believes in his qualities that are considered to be carved in stone and also unlikely to change. The theory also stipulates that growth mindset deals with the belief that an individual may adopt a mindset which can grant changes and growth through his effort. The growth mindset as predicted by Dweck (2006) implies the personal endeavor that everyone may have for achieving change and growth.

Fixed and growth mindset theory further explain that individual response to the surrounding world is guided by the influence those mindsets, have on him. Thus, the influence describes whether an individual respond to challenges, effort, obstacles and the success of others in a consciously and unconsciously manner. The fixed and growth mindset predicts according to Johnson (2009) that a person with low confidence and fixed mindset believes that he will come out with low-performance goals as results. Hence, the person will face challenges in a helpless characteristics manner pattern of typical behaviours, feelings, and thoughts. Also, a person with growth mindset believes that he can succeed and face challenges through the adoption of learning goals. This theory suited this study in that it is related to then variables of the study. This theory implies that if the career mindset of students is motivated through entrepreneurship education programmes, the intention to become better entrepreneurs will be there.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and the discussion of findings, the study concluded that social entrepreneurship education programmes enhance career mindset of business education students. The dimensions for entrepreneurship education programmes such as scalable start-up entrepreneurship, innovation entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship influence measures of career mindset of business education students such as capacity of students, innovative skills and knowledge building development. Also, team cooperation moderated the relationship between entrepreneurship education programmes and career mindset of business education students. Universities whose students are not exposed to entrepreneurship education programmes tend to exhibit low career mindset in the field of

entrepreneurship. Therefore, entrepreneurship education programmes enhance, capacity of students, innovative skills and knowledge building development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities should initiate entrepreneurship education programmes in order to create career mindset in business education students and other students in their universities.
2. All stakeholders in the field of education should team up to design policies and effective curriculum in entrepreneurial studies that enhance the study effective entrepreneurship.
3. Scalable start-up entrepreneurship, innovation entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship should be adopted by universities for enhancement of career mindset of students.

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