



UNIVERSITY LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS AN EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY FOR GRADUATE SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH- SOUTH NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out lecturers' perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment; the types of entrepreneurial skill students should acquire to empower them for job creation and the constraints to effective teaching of entrepreneurial courses in Nigerian universities. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. A survey design was adopted and simple random sampling technique was used to select 480 lecturers from a population of 4,389 academic staff from four universities. The instrument for data collection was a 4-point Likert scale developed by the researchers and titled "Lecturers' perception of Entrepreneurship Education for Graduate Self-employment Questionnaire (LPEEGSQ)". The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.72, using test re-test reliability method. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The result of the study showed that lecturers were positive in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment. Male and female lecturers did not differ significantly in their rating of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment. Lecturers rated information skill as the most important skill students should acquire in their preparation for entrepreneurship, followed by financial management skill and risk taking skill. Large class size, inadequate funding and poor mindset of students towards entrepreneurship education were rated as the major constraints to effective entrepreneurship curriculum content delivery. Premised on these findings, it was recommended that government should provide adequate funds to universities to enable them establish and equip entrepreneurial development centers for practical work and adequate teaching personnel both in quality and quantity should be employed to teach entrepreneurial courses in universities.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, University, Empowerment strategy, Self-employment.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, unemployment of graduates has become a teething problem. The scourge which has often caused problems for government in industrialized nations elsewhere is now assuming gigantic dimension in Nigeria. Graduate unemployment in our country is cumulative. It increases as institutions turn out graduates annually. The rate at which young people are leaving school and seeking employment continuously outpaces the capacity of the economy to provide employment. The value system of the Nigerian society has changed due to the transition from school to work to earn a living. This is because Nigeria that once harbored aliens from west African countries and beyond for employment is currently recording high rate of unemployment (Anyago, 2009). The scourge of graduate unemployment in Nigeria is blamed on the university curriculum which has been geared towards stereotyped goals and jobs without adequate practical work. In other words, graduates from our universities acquire knowledge without entrepreneurial skills which would enable them, on graduation to practice what was learnt in school, create jobs for themselves and others and participate in economic development in Nigeria.

In order to make university education functional, relevant and practical, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Universities Commission (NUC) made entrepreneurship education a compulsory course for all undergraduate students in Nigerian universities. The aim of the policy is to ginger in the students entrepreneurial spirit that will help to curb the increasing rate of graduate unemployment. Tulgan (1999) states that the primary purpose of entrepreneurial education is to develop in the learners entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets. This will help graduates to recognize business opportunities, mobilize resources and exploit the opportunity for self-employment which will be beneficial for community and national development (Uche *et al.*, 2009).

Currently, entrepreneurship education is being offered in all universities and other higher institutions. The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum is an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment, self-reliance and poverty reduction. Where appropriate skills, attitude and knowledge accompanied with appropriate practical work are taught to the students, they would on graduation become self-employed and employers of labor. This will reduce the rate of unemployment if not completely eradicated and move Nigeria from a consumer to producer nation (Okah and Odelola, 2009). It is on this premise that the researchers are motivated to find out teacher's perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment and the skills students should acquire to empower them for job creation on graduation. The word empowerment as used in the context of this study involves equipping the students with the potentials by teaching them relevant skills, knowledge and competencies that will enable them to function adequately as entrepreneurs after graduation. It is the recognition of the

need to empower youths for self-employment that has necessitated the inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the university curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education which has the ability to impact on the growth and development of an enterprise through technical and vocational training (Tamuno and Ogiji, 1999). According to Nwosu and Ohia (2009), entrepreneurship education is that aspect of education which equips an individual and creates in the person the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. This means that entrepreneurship education helps to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurship in variety of settings. Entrepreneurship education creates the willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identifiable opportunities (Fashua, 2006).

Okiti (2009) describes entrepreneurship education as the gateway to job opportunities and job creation which would constantly enhance self-reliance and self-employment among university graduates. Nwangwu (2007) articulates the objectives of entrepreneurial education at the tertiary level to include:

Offering functional education for youths so as to enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant

Providing graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities

Offering graduates adequate training in the acquisition of skills that will enable them to meet the manpower needs of the society

These objectives buttress the need for youth entrepreneurial empowerment through entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level to harness their potentials and intellectual creativity for job creation. Ijaz *et al.* (2012) in their study pointed out that entrepreneurship education provides various opportunities for students in social interactions with their teachers and peer groups which effects on the entrepreneurial learning process and provides a source for entrepreneurial intention. They recommended that entrepreneurship education should be included at all educational levels which develop entrepreneurship intention and can contribute in social development of entrepreneur as well as the country. In support of this, Postigo and Tamborini (2002) maintain that entrepreneurship education stimulates and develops in the individuals the zeal to be an entrepreneur as well as equipping the person with the tools necessary to set-up of new ventures. This means that entrepreneurship education aims at empowering the youth through the adoption and promotion of problem-solving pedagogical approach, familiarity with information and communication technology, environmental awareness and entrepreneurship skills (Enaohwo, 2009). It is therefore,

a major source of job creation, empowerment and economic dynamism in the globalizing world. In support of this, [Donaldson and Scannell \(2000\)](#) stress the need for the teacher to trigger the desire to learn in the learner by relating the benefits of learning to personal and job needs of the students. In this regard, entrepreneurial education program should be designed to meet the relevant needs of the students for job creation on graduation. [Singh and Sharma \(2011\)](#) describe entrepreneurship as the ability to create and build something from practically nothing and it involves the process of creating value by pulling together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity. According to them, the need of the time is to empower people technically through entrepreneurship training to cope with the changing times and productivity using their entrepreneurial skills for setting and sustaining enterprises.

In a study carried out by [Etor et al. \(2009\)](#), it was found that students were positive in their rating of the relevance of entrepreneurial studies to their learning need for entrepreneurship. It was also found that students agreed that inadequate skilled lecturers, lack of laboratory and conducive classroom for practical work, lack of training materials and textbooks were the operational problems affecting effective teaching of entrepreneurial studies. [Uche et al. \(2009\)](#) in their study discovered that university students lack entrepreneurial skills. Out of 2,500 students that were used for the study, only 3% acquired time management skill, 3.2% acquired sale and marketing skill, 3.6% acquired self-motivation skill, 6% acquired communication skill, 5.6% acquired information skill and 84% said they did not acquire any skill. These findings suggest that our university graduates do not acquire adequate entrepreneurial skills for job creation. This finding is at variance with the idea of [Tulgan \(1999\)](#) that entrepreneurship education at the university level prepares students to acquire a variety of skills that can make the students to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experiences where they can take risk, manage the results and learn from the outcomes. This will help them to be self-sufficient with potentials to create and manage businesses in which they can function as the employer of labor rather than merely being an employee ([Madumere-Obike and Ukala, 2009](#)).

In a related study, [Okiti \(2009\)](#) discovered in her study that a greater percentage of university lecturers agreed that entrepreneurship education would enhance graduate self-employment through job creation and enable graduates to be self-reliant and relevant to the society. The study also revealed that entrepreneurship education would eradicate graduate unemployment since it would create entrepreneurial mindset for undergraduates. Researchers have discovered in their various studies that the fundamental principle of entrepreneurship education is that it deals with the organization of knowledge in a particular subject in such a way that it commands more of the hidden potentials in that subject area for self-employment and job creation with system values that are not ordinarily treated as part of the normal university curriculum ([Ogumu, 1999](#); [Klofsten, 2000](#); [Onwukwe, 2009](#)). Thus, as students are exposed to these principles and values in the course

of teaching and supervision, they would be able to use the knowledge to help in the development of their community (Uche and Adesope, 2009).

In a study conducted by Uche and Adesope (2009), it was discovered that lecturers imparted to the students entrepreneurial skills, including independent minded skill, skill to start a small scale business, communication/proposal presentation skill, time management skill, risk taking skill, business management skill, corporate management skill and attitude to work. They concluded that since all courses have hidden values and skills of entrepreneurship, lecturers should be encouraged to emphasize such values and skills as they teach and supervise students both in formal and informal settings. Dennis (1993) in his study also noted that every student in our university system needs entrepreneurial skills to enable the student to have real choices about his/her future, initiate ideas and manage resources effectively. Oko-Jaja (2009) pointed out that entrepreneurship is all about risk taking, risk taking is about survival and survival is about life. Hence, entrepreneurs are undoubtedly reasonable risk takers. Information skill is needed for successful business. It enables the students to identify business opportunities in the environment. Communication skill equips students with ability to speak the language of business and improve their personal effectiveness. It helps the students to develop proactive attitude, share and sell ideas or products and prepares one for interview (Uche *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, university graduates should be able to write and present business proposal effectively.

Nwosu and Ohia (2009) identified in their study curriculum content which is not practical-oriented, inadequate finance, poor entrepreneurial mindset, inconsistent government policy and poor infrastructure such as lack of stable electricity and water supply as challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. Anyaogu (2009) in a study pointed out that the content and method of university curriculum are inadequate for the purpose of managing entrepreneurship education geared toward solving graduate unemployment biting the nation. The study further identified infrastructural system which has decayed overtime, frequent power interruption and inadequate funding and poor budgetary allocations to the education sector as major constraints to effective teaching of entrepreneurship education in the universities. Akpomi (2009) faulted the present method of teaching entrepreneurship education and supported the de-emphasizing of classroom rhetoric. She maintained that the current classroom delivery method is too mechanistic, using the lecture method which does not promote or encourage entrepreneurial behavior. Similarly, Nwangwu (2007) observed that the nation's institutions are experiencing high dearth of experts in entrepreneurship education and contended that the task of producing entrepreneurial graduates requires specialists in the field, teachers who have practical orientation in entrepreneurship. This position is in consonance with the findings by Etor *et al.* (2009) in their study that it is imperative that the teaching of entrepreneurial studies should be handled with high sense of professionalism by specialists in the relevant areas of the program. In this way, the teaching of entrepreneurship

education in our universities would develop in the graduates knowledge and skills that would enable them to be job creators and employers of labor.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. How do lecturers perceive the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment?
2. How do male and female lecturers perceive the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment?
3. What are the entrepreneurial skills students should acquire to empower them for job creation on graduation?
4. What are the constraints to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum contents delivery in Nigerian universities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design adopted for this study was a survey design because the study utilized a representative sample from a population and the drawing of inferences from the results of analysis of available data.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 4,784 academic staff from four Nigerian universities, namely, university of Port Harcourt, River State University of science and Technology, university of Calabar and university of Uyo. A breakdown of the population showed that there were 1075 lecturers in University of Port Harcourt, 1,495 lecturers in Rivers State University of science and Technology, 1,284 academic staff in University of Calabar and 930 lecturers in university of Uyo. Altogether, there were 1,444 female and 3,340 male lecturers.

Sampling Technique and the Sample

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size from the captive population. Lists of academic staff were obtained from the establishment units of the four universities identified for the study. Then simple random sampling technique was used to select 120 academic staff from university of Port Harcourt, 180 lecturers from Rivers State University of Science and Technology, 80 lecturers from university of Calabar and 100 academic staff from University of s Uyo. This gave a sample size of 480 lecturers made up of 280 males and 200 females. The simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every member of the population has equal and independent chance of being selected.

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled "Perception of Entrepreneurship Education for Graduate Self-employment Questionnaire (PEEGSQ)" for lecturers. The instrument was face-validated by an expert in educational research. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.72, using test re-test method. It consisted of four sections. Section A sought personal data of the respondents such as gender, age, educational qualification and rank. Section B was a 4-point Likert type scale consisting of 10 items. Each item had four response options ranging from strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), to Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were required to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each item by ticking an option against each item. This section contained items which measured the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy to graduate self-employment.

Section C was a 5-point Likert type scale consisting of 10 items. Each item had 5 response options ranging from 1-5, where 1 was the least score and 5 the highest score. The respondents were required to tick one of the 5 response options against an item to indicate the type of entrepreneurial skills undergraduate students should acquire to prepare them for job creation on graduation.

Section D of the instrument consisted of 8 items and each item had four response options ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree to Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The respondents were to tick one response option against each item to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the item. This section had items that measured the constraints to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum content delivery.

The instrument was administered to the respondents in their various institutions by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. Copies of the instrument were filled and returned on the spot. All the 480 copies of the questionnaire administered were correctly filled and returned. This gave a return rate of 100 per cent. All the positively worded items in the 4-point Likert scale was scored. 4 points for strongly Agree (A), 3 points for Agree, 2 points for Disagree (D), and 1 point for strongly Disagree (SD). The scoring technique was revised for negatively worded items.

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used for data analysis. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to facilitate data analysis. For items with 4 response options, a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as significant, while a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as not significant. Similarity for items with a 5-point response option, a mean rating of 3.0 and above was accepted as significant, while a mean rating below 3.0 was regarded as not significant.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

How do lecturers perceive the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment?

The result of data analysis for this research question is presented on Table 1.

Table-1. Lecturers' Rating of the Relevance of Entrepreneurship education to Graduate Self-employment (n=480).

Items	X	SD	Decision
Entrepreneurship education will			
1. Empower students to face the challenges of unemployment after graduation.	2.53	0.44	Accepted
2. Empower university graduates to be Employers of labour	3.82	1.06	Accepted
3. Help graduates to contribute meaningfully to economic development of the country	3.04	1.15	Accepted
4. Help to reduce poverty among university graduates.	2.58	0.50	Accepted
5. Expose students to the business world	3.14	0.82	Accepted
6. Help to reduce the impact of globalization on university graduates	2.80	0.82	Accepted
7. Enable university graduates to be self-reliant	2.86	0.67	Accepted
8. Help to develop in the students creativity and innovativeness	2.62	0.36	Accepted
9. Expose students to knowledge and Skills for job creation after graduation	2.82	0.45	Accepted
10. Expose students to areas of risk in business ventures	2.75	0.38	Accepted
Grand mean score	2.90	0.66	

Decision range: Mean score of 2.50 and above is significant or accepted, while mean score below 2.50 is not significant or not accepted.

The data on table 1 shows that the grand mean of 2.90 is greater than the accepted mean score of 2.50 indicating that the items have been accepted by the respondents as being positive contributions

of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment. Item-by-item analysis reveals that each of the 10 items has a mean score greater than the accepted mean score of 2.50. This depicts that the respondents (lecturers) were positive in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment.

Research Question 2

How do male and female lecturers perceive the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment?

The result of data analysis for this research question is presented on Table 2

Table-2. Male and female lecturers' rating of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment (n=480)

Items	Male (n=280)			Female (n=200)		
	\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
Entrepreneurship education will						
1. Empower students to face the challenges of unemployment after graduation.	2.54	0.43	Accepted	2.52	0.45	Accepted
2. Empower university graduates to be employers of labour	3.68	1.09	Accepted	3.96	1.05	Accepted
3. Help graduates to contribute meaningfully to economic development of the country	3.45	1.05	Accepted	2.63	1.25	Accepted
4. Help to reduce poverty among university graduates.	2.59	0.47	Accepted	2.57	0.53	Accepted
5. Expose students to the business world	3.08	0.92	Accepted	3.20	0.72	Accepted
6. Help to reduce the impact of globalization on university graduates	2.90	0.66	Accepted	2.70	0.68	Accepted
7. Enable university graduates to be self-reliant	2.88	0.74	Accepted	2.84	0.80	Accepted
8. Help to develop in the Students creativity and innovativeness	2.54	0.42	Accepted	2.70	0.30	Accepted
9. Expose students to knowledge and Skills for job creation after graduation	2.74	0.52	Accepted	2.90	0.38	Accepted
10. Expose students to areas of	2.85	0.36	Accepted	2.65	0.40	Accepted

risk in business ventures

Grand mean	2.93	0.68	2.87	0.64
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Decision range: Mean score of 2.50 and above is regarded as being significant while mean score below 2.50 is not significant.

Table 2 shows that the grand mean scores of 2.93 for male lecturers and 2.87 for female lecturers are greater than the accepted mean score of 2.50, indicating that male and female lecturers do not differ significantly in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment.

Research Question 3

What are the entrepreneurial skills students should acquire to empower them for job creation on graduation?

The answers to this question are presented on table 3.

Table-3. Lecturers’ rating of the entrepreneurial skills students should acquire to empower them for job creation.

Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Rank order
1. Information skill	3.32	0.82	1 st
2. Financial management skill	3.28	0.83	2 nd
3. Risk taking skill	3.25	0.74	3 rd
4. Communication skill	3.20	0.90	4 th
5. Motivational skill	3.18	0.89	5 th
6. Marketing skill	3.16	0.75	6 th
7. Time management skill	3.09	0.87	7 th
8. Problem-solving skill	3.04	0.86	8 th
9. Creativity and innovation skill	3.03	0.85	9 th
10. Human relations skill	3.01	0.88	10 th
Grand mean	3.16	0.84	

Decision range: Mean score of 3.00 and above is significant, while mean score below 3.00 is not significant.

The result of data analysis presented on table 3 shows that the grand mean score of 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.84 is greater than the accepted mean score of 3.00. The result shows that lecturers have accepted the items as the necessary entrepreneurial skills students should acquire to prepare them for job creation and self-employment after graduation. Table 3 further shows that

information skill is ranked 1st position followed by financial management skill and risk taking skill ranked 2nd and 3rd positions respectively as three outstanding skills students should acquire.

Research Question 4

What are the constraints to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum content delivery in Nigerian universities?

The answer to this question is presented in table 4.

Table-4. Lecturers rating of the constraints to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum content delivery (n=480).

Constraints	\bar{X}	SD	Rank order
1. Large class size	3.86	1.50	1 st
2. Inadequate funding	3.36	1.84	2 nd
3. Poor mindset of students toward entrepreneurship	3.30	1.83	3 rd
4. Lack of well-equipped Entrepreneurial development centers	3.25	1.64	4 th
5. Lack of training/instructional materials	3.13	1.88	5 th
6. Epileptic power supply	2.96	1.78	6 th
7. Inadequate qualified manpower	2.84	1.75	7 th
8. Inadequate provision for Practical work	2.64	1.70	8 th
Grand mean	3.17	1.74	

Decision range: Mean score of 2.50 and above is significant, while mean score below 2.50 is not accepted or not significant.

The data on table 4 reveal that lecturers rate large class size with a mean score of 3.86 as a major constraint to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum delivery. This is ranked 1st position and followed by inadequate funding with a mean score of 3.36 and ranked 2nd position. Poor mindset of students toward entrepreneurship is ranked 3rd position with a mean score of 3.30. The ranking followed in that order to the last which is inadequate provision for practical work with a mean score of 2.84 and ranked 8th position. Since the grand mean of 3.17 is greater than the accepted mean of 2.50, it is clear that lecturers generally agreed that the items stated on table 4 constitute constraints to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum content delivery.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the findings of this study reveals that university lecturers are positive in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment. This means that lecturers view entrepreneurship education as a program that will empower graduates through acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to be self-employed, job creators, employer of labour as well as empower them to face the challenges of globalization, unemployment and poverty. This finding is in consonance with the work of [Okiti \(2009\)](#) who viewed entrepreneurship education as the gateway to job opportunities and job creation which will enhance self-reliance and self-employment among university graduates. The finding is also in agreement with the research finding of [Etor et al. \(2009\)](#) who found that students were positive in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurial studies to their learning needs for entrepreneurship. The finding of this study also shows that male and female lecturers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment. This means that gender is not a major factor in determining lecturers' sense of judgment. Male and female lecturers are alike in many respects and if both of them learn the same thing or teach the same thing, they are likely to perceive learnt habits the same way. Another finding of this study is that lecturers rate information skill as the most outstanding entrepreneurial skill students should acquire followed by financial management skill and risk taking skill. Information skill is very important for entrepreneurship because it is the key to successful business. It enables entrepreneurs to identify investment opportunities in the society. This finding is supported by the work of [Dennis \(1993\)](#) who reported that every university student needs information skill and other entrepreneurial skills to enable the student identify business opportunities, have real choices about the future, initiate ideas and manage resources effectively. Financial management skill is equally important because students need this skill to be able to source for funds, utilize and manage them effectively. Every business venture, small or large requires money, therefore, financial management skill enables the entrepreneur to plan for financial resources, prepare the business budget and keep financial records. Risk taking skill will help the graduates to manage uncertainties associated with business ventures. The entrepreneur is a risk taker who braves uncertainties and strives to create a business and industrial activity where none existed before. In the same vein [Onyene et al. \(2008\)](#) submitted that entrepreneurship is all about risk taking, risk taking is about survival and survival is about life. Therefore, entrepreneurs are undoubtedly risk takers. Other entrepreneurial skills accepted by lecturers that students should acquire in preparation for self-employment and job creation as revealed in this study include communication, motivational, marketing, time management, problem solving, creativity/innovation and human relations skills. These findings are in consonance with the work of [Tulgan \(1999\)](#) who earlier reported that entrepreneurship education at the university level prepares students to acquire a variety of skills that can make them to be responsible, enterprising individuals by engaging themselves in real life learning experiences where they can take risk, manage the results and learn from the outcomes. However, in the research finding by

Uche *et al.* (2009) university students were found to lack entrepreneurial skills. This could be attributed to the fact that students were taught theoretical knowledge without entrepreneurial skills.

The study shows that the respondents rate large class size generally as the major constraint to effective entrepreneurship education curriculum content delivery. This finding is attributable to population explosion due to increased students' enrolment in universities. This makes it difficult for lecturers to teach entrepreneurial courses effectively and supervise students' work individually. It also affects the method of teaching entrepreneurship education. Akpomi (2009) states that the current classroom delivery method using the lecture method is too mechanistic and does not promote or encourage entrepreneurship behavior. The respondents also rate inadequate funding as a constraint. This is a serious problem because if adequate fund is not provided, entrepreneurial development centers will not be well equipped for practical work and the provision of training and instructional materials will not be feasible. This finding is supported by the work of Anyaogu (2009) who reported that poor infrastructure, inadequate funding and poor budgetary allocations to the education sector are major challenges to effective teaching of entrepreneurial courses in the universities. This finding is also in agreement with the work of Nwosu and Ohia (2009) who identified in their study curriculum content which is not practical-oriented and insufficient finance as challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

CONCLUSION

Premised on the findings of this study, it is evident that lecturers are positive in their assessment of the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy to graduate self-employment. They perceive entrepreneurship studies as a means of empowering Nigerian graduates through acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurial skills to be job creators, employers of labor and to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the nation. Male and female lecturers do not differ significantly in their perception of the relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment. University lecturers identify information, financial management skill and risk taking skills as major entrepreneurial skills that students should acquire. Majority of lecturers rate large class size, inadequate funding and poor mindset of students towards entrepreneurship education as major constraints to effective teaching of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore, recommended that:

Adequate and experienced quality manpower (teachers) with entrepreneurial skills should be recruited to teach entrepreneurial courses in the universities. The teaching of entrepreneurship education needs to be handled with high sense of professionalism by specialists in the relevant

areas of the program. With sufficient quality teaching staff, the problem of large class size will be greatly reduced as each staff will be assigned a manageable class size for effective teaching and supervision.

Entrepreneurship education in the universities should be adequately funded. This can be achieved through increased budgetary allocation to the universities by the government. With adequate funding, universities will be able to establish and adequately equip entrepreneurial development centers for practical work and provide adequate training/instructional materials for the programs. There is need for the university management to create the necessary awareness concerning entrepreneurship education among the students, emphasizing the relevance of the program to graduate self-employment in this era of rising graduate unemployment. Students should be made to understand that entrepreneurship education is not just one of those university theoretical courses they study and write examination to have grades without having in mind to practice what is taught. Making the program practical- orientated will fascinate and sustain the interest of students. The traditional lecture method that characterizes teaching in the universities should be curtailed in entrepreneurship education classes. The method of teaching should be experiential and self-discovery.

A directorate or committee for entrepreneurship education should be established in each university to ensure consistent and effective monitoring and supervision of the program. This will ensure good management and check mismanagement of fund and facilities meant for the program. There should be provision of periodic retraining of the teachers to update their knowledge in the various areas of entrepreneurship and in the use of information and communication technology. This will expose them to modern trends in entrepreneurship across the globe and enhance effective teaching and learning in the program.

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