

Comparative Evaluation of Assessment Modes Used in The Implementation of the 21st Century Undergraduate Entrepreneurship-Education-Curriculum in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

Assessment of students' learning is an important component of any educational system. However, effective modes of assessment and evaluation are some of the issues that have yet to be resolved by experts in the field of entrepreneurship education. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the appropriateness of the assessment modes used in implementing entrepreneurship education curricula in private and public universities in North-central Nigeria and determine the adequacy of used modes. The study adopted a descriptive research survey type. All (251,267) undergraduates at the 400 level in the study locale formed the population of the study. 469 and 3825 undergraduates were sampled from private and public universities respectively. This gave 4294 undergraduates sampled through proportional quota and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through a researcher-designed instrument tagged "QCEAMUIUEEC" This instrument was validated and tested for reliability with 0.78 and 0.75 obtained respectively. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the data gathered. The study's findings revealed that continuous assessment and examination using computer-based tests (CBT), group projects, and individual assignments are the assessment modes used most in both institutions. These were adjudged inappropriate as entrepreneurship education requires a more practical-oriented form of assessment. The study therefore recommends that the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the curriculum should put in place the necessary facilities and ensure a paradigm shift in the assessment modes used in the implementation of the curriculum.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Assessment, Assessment modes, implementation, Private and Public universities.

Introduction

Assessment of students' learning is an important component of any educational system. However, effective modes of assessment and evaluation are some of the issues that have yet to be resolved by experts in the field of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education as a field of study lacks agreement on some of the most important concepts. These contentious problems include the definition of the term 'entrepreneurship,' the root word 'enterprise,' who is an entrepreneur, the goals of entrepreneurship education or enterprise education, its content, "teachability" and delivery methods, and how it may be assessed, among others (Pittway & Cope 2007). Based on the submission of scholars as revealed in the literature, entrepreneurship education is not a field of study that can be pinned down with a specific definition. As a result, various experts and scholars who have sought to define it have only articulated the idea based on the entrepreneurial setting of the study.

Strachan (2018), entrepreneurship education is all about training people with skills and competencies including opportunity recognition, business planning and operating, and a sense of initiative, creativity, autonomy, and teamwork. It is also seen as a learning process that imbues in learners' traits and competencies such as team spirit, leadership qualities, problem-solving, negotiation skills, self-direction, and self-management, as opposed to traditional stereotype education, which places less emphasis on skills and practical orientation that may not be needed in today's world of work (Gabedeen & Raimi, 2012). To this end, entrepreneurship education can be viewed as a collection of experiences that provide students with the skills and vision to access and transform a variety of opportunities (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014). As a result, entrepreneurship education trains individuals to be appropriately equipped to acquire marketable skills that may be utilized to start and/or run their own or other people's businesses (Oduwaiye, Abdulkareem & Oyeniran 2011). It may thus be inferred that it focuses on improving an individual's understanding and capacity for pursuing entrepreneurial behaviours, skills, and attitudes in a variety of circumstances.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there is no agreement on the fundamental definitions of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education. However, it appears that there is a shared understanding and agreement about what entrepreneurship education is intended to achieve in general. The goals of entrepreneurial education at the tertiary level, according to Nwangwu (2007), are to provide functional education for youths so that they can be self-employed

and self-reliant; to provide graduates with adequate and appropriate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities, and to provide graduates with adequate training in the acquisition of skills that will enable them to meet the needs of society. Notwithstanding the lack of consensus on the definition of Entrepreneurship education, many scholars and stakeholders in the field of education agreed that exposing all students to entrepreneurship education while in school is a requirement that should be met for them to acquire the necessary skills to become entrepreneurs. This according to them expected of everyone to contribute to the world's economy, especially in the twenty-first century.

However, assessing the learning outcomes of entrepreneurship education is one of the major challenges for educators not only in Nigeria but around the world. According to Moberg, et al (2004), entrepreneurship educators are frequently at a loss when it comes to the evaluation and assessment procedures required to accurately quantify students' learning outcomes in the field of entrepreneurship education. According to the typology of entrepreneurship education, assessment of entrepreneurial outcomes demonstrates not only knowledge, but also an entrepreneurial mindset, attitudes, and perceived skills acquired by students after exposure to field-based teaching and learning processes, as well as the transversal entrepreneurial competencies that operationalize entrepreneurship in the economy (Pittaway & Edwards 2012; Moberg, et al., 2014). Because these notions are difficult to measure or assess directly, they are tough to quantify in the classroom, much like any other academic topic. It is worthy to note at this juncture that the field of entrepreneurship education is characterized by a lack of consensus on some of the basic issues like what the term itself connotes, its objectives, its 'teachability', teaching-learning strategies, and methods of evaluation that is the focus of this study.

Sherman, Sebor, and Digman (2008), Pittaway, Rodriguez-Falcon, and Aiyegbayo 2016; have expressed major reservations about using traditional assessment methodologies such as written tests and examinations to assess entrepreneurial abilities and mindsets. These regularly utilized strategies cannot bring forth or expose the intended learning outcomes from learners. Despite the issues, it should be emphasized that existing entrepreneurship education assessment techniques in European Union (EU) countries are rather traditional (Moberg et al 2014). In certain African and Asian countries, the pattern is similar (Ukoha, 2017).

Teachers in Technical Training Institutes in Kenya, according to Mkala and Wanjau (2013), typically use the traditional methods of written continuous assessment. Course tests, class

participation assessments, drafting of business plans, students' oral presentations, and essays are the most often utilized evaluation techniques in Tanzanian business schools for assessing entrepreneurship education, in order of preference (Olomi & Sabokiwgina, 2010). Similarly, Nian, Baker, and Aminu-Islam (2014) discovered that in the assessment of students' achievement in entrepreneurship education, teachers at a university in Malaysia's Perlis typically employ written tests and paper-pencil examinations.

Only an objective assessment and or evaluation of the curriculum can indicate whether or not entrepreneurship education is effective. Classroom evaluation was once considered a capstone event in any educational setting, and it was utilized to determine where and how students ended up at the end of a program. Assessment and evaluation are now considered to be integral aspects of the teaching and learning process. It is an essential component of curriculum practice since it is defined as the process of gathering information in curriculum operations to make judgments about students' learning, curriculum and programs, and educational policy issues. As a result, most educators believe that assessment should be incorporated into the continuous cycle of curriculum planning, operation, implementation, and evaluation (Mikre, 2010).

When defining assessment, Ismail, Akabar, and Widodo (2018) defined it as the process of determining the value of an object or item based on certain references to designate a certain goal. The goal of evaluation efforts, particularly in the education sector, is to determine value, which includes information useful for determining whether or not an educational program exists, techniques used in its implementation, and the program's outcome. The data gathered is utilized to narrow down potential strategy options that appear to be more likely to help achieve the defined objectives.

There are as many evaluation models as there are curriculum evaluators, however, the various models have been classified into three categories. These are the achievement of desired outcomes; the merit of an entity; and the decision-oriented approach. Examples of these models include Tyler's Goals-Oriented Model; The ATO (Antecedents, Transactions, Outcomes) developed by Stake; the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) developed by Stufflebeam; Formative and Summative Evaluation Model proposed by Scriven and many others. The ATO model was chosen for this study because of the chief advantage of its sensitivity to learners and tutors who are the major stakeholders in the implementation of the curriculum and for the fact that it orients more directly to the programme's activities rather than the programme's intents.

Research Questions

- 1 What are the assessment modes used in the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in private and public universities in Nigeria?
- 2 How adequate are the assessment modes used in the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in private and public universities in Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research survey type. The population of the study consists of all (251,267) undergraduates already exposed to the implementation of entrepreneurship education in public and private universities in North-Central Nigeria. The target population was all (37,711) 400-level undergraduates in the study area, Three of the eight public universities in the locale were sampled using proportional and random sampling techniques. Four of the fifteen private universities that satisfied all of the study's criteria were also sampled using the same methods. The proportional quota and random sampling techniques were used to sample (4294) undergraduates in the 400 level as respondents. This was accomplished by choosing an equal percentage from each university based on the total number of undergraduates enrolled in the 400 Level. The data for this study was collected using a researcher-designed instrument tagged “Questionnaire on Evaluation of Assessment Modes used in the Implementation of Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum” (QCEAMUIUEEC). This instrument was validated and tested for reliability with 0.78 and 0.75 obtained respectively. This data gathered was analyzed with the use of mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: *What are the assessment modes used in the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in private and public universities in Nigeria?*

Undergraduates' responses on the assessment modes used by their lecturers in the course of teaching-learning of entrepreneurship education were subjected to percentage analysis. Given that the instrument on the assessment modes used in the implementation of entrepreneurship education contained 10 items structured in a three-response-type, participants with the score 3, 2 and 1 signified that the strategies were ‘Always’ ‘Occasionally’, ‘Never’ used respectively. The summary statistics are presented in Table one

Table 1: Assessment modes used in entrepreneurship education curriculum implementation

SN	Assessment Modes	Private		Public		Grand	Rank	Remark
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
1	Paper-Pencil Assessment (C.A)	1.30	0.59	1.29	0.57	1.30	10 th	Never
2	Paper-pencil Examination	2.34	0.57	2.36	0.63	2.35	6 th	Occasionally
3	Continuous Assessment C. A (CBT)	2.68	0.47	2.71	0.45	2.70	4 th	Always
4	Examination (CBT)	2.83	0.67	2.75	0.80	2.79	2 nd	Always
5	Oral Presentation	1.75	0.67	1.75	0.68	1.75	9 th	Occasionally
6	Individual project	2.31	0.67	2.26	0.69	2.29	7 th	Occasionally
7	Group Project	2.73	0.68	2.85	0.68	2.79	2 nd	Always
8	Writing of Business plan	1.82	0.75	1.82	0.76	1.82	8 th	Occasionally
9	Individual Assignment	2.49	0.67	2.48	0.68	2.49	5 th	Occasionally
10	Group Assignment	2.89	0.62	2.71	0.65	2.80	1 st	Always

As revealed in Table 1 from all the 10 assessment modes listed on the table, the undergraduates who responded to the items on this question (from private and public) attested that four out of the ten listed modes were always used by lecturers in the implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum. These were Continuous Assessment and Examination (CBT), group project and individual assignment. Other modes listed on the table were occasionally used except paper-pencil continuous assessment that the respondents noted that was never used.

Research Question 2: How appropriate are the *assessment modes used in the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in private and public universities in Nigeria?*

Given that students may not have any idea on how appropriate they are supposed to be assessed in entrepreneurship education curriculum to be in a position to determine whether the strategies used by the lecturers were appropriate or not, the researcher (being a specialist in the field of curriculum and conversant with the assessment modes that are more appropriate as in literature, therefore, used the responses provided by participants in Table one is used by the researcher to give value judgement on the appropriateness of the assessment modes used in the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in private and public universities in Nigeria.

Value Judgment: The assessment modes used in the implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum in private and public universities in North-central Nigeria is comparatively

inappropriate. This was because the assessment modes used are the ones that placed more emphasis on evaluation of cognitive domain at the expense of affective and psychomotor domains which are supposed to be given more emphasis with the nature of entrepreneurship education.

Discussion of the Findings

The study found that the assessment modes used in assessing students' achievement in the entrepreneurship education curriculum in the private and public universities in North-Central universities were inappropriate. This is judged to be inappropriate because both private and public universities used mainly paper-pencil and CBT (examination) in assessing the students as against oral examination or field experience assessment that is even suggested in the BMAS. Also, it is judged to be inappropriate for the fact that entrepreneurship education is more practical than a theory that may be assessed with the CBT that is mostly used by the sampled universities. This finding is in agreement with the findings of many earlier researchers like Moberg et al (2014) who noted that assessment practices in entrepreneurship education remain fairly traditional in European Union countries.

In the same vein, Ukoha, (2017) also noted that the trends of assessing entrepreneurship education are the same in some African and Asian countries with what is observed in Europe. Mkala et al (2013) also found the same in Kenya, while Nian, Baker, and Islam discovered that teachers at universities in Malaysia Perlis frequently use written tests and examinations in entrepreneurship education assessment. Contrarily, this finding disagrees with that of Simon (2016) who noted that the assessment tools used in entrepreneurship education in some Nigerian Higher institutions are appropriate. The disagreement in the findings might be a result of the fact that Simon used the lecturers to assess the appropriateness of the tools themselves.

In both Mkala et al. (2013) and Ukoha (2017), respondents placed written tests and examinations as the first and second assessment modes employed by their lecturers in the implementation of entrepreneurship education, respectively. The consistency in the findings of the studies could be because they both used a descriptive survey study approach. In addition, it was the students who provided information concerning the evaluation modes employed by their lecturers during the curriculum implementation. Apart from that, these two previous researches, as well as the current one, used descriptive statistics to analyze data on this topic. All of these factors contribute to the research findings agreeing. More crucially, if the respondents in one of the experiments had not been students, the results might not have been consistent.

The discrepancy between this study's findings and that of Simon (2016) on the appropriateness of the evaluation modalities employed in curriculum implementation could be due to variances in the respondents and source of the judgment. The appropriateness of the assessment modes in this study was determined by the fact that the respondents evaluated written examination as the most common evaluation style employed by instructors in universities, which was found to be inappropriate as many scholars indicated in the literature. This is because, as an immersive course targeted at developing and altering students' mindsets, attitudes, and entrepreneurial competencies, entrepreneurship education cannot be adequately assessed via a written exam or a computer-based test. Other experiential techniques, such as oral examination, on-site or field inspection, and others, should be used instead.

Simon (2016), on the other hand, employed the lecturers in charge of the course to examine the suitability of the assessment techniques they were utilizing. The disparity in the outcomes of the two studies could be due to differences in the respondents employed in this study and the source of the judgment. Simon (2016) conducted a self-evaluation that lacked both internal and external validity in the majority of cases.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that the assessment modes used in the implementation of entrepreneurship education curricula in private and public universities located in North-central Nigeria were inappropriate. The modes were inappropriate for the fact that entrepreneurship education is a course that is aimed at providing learners with skills capable of making them job creators upon graduation. Determining these skills requires assessment modes capable of assessing those skills in practical terms.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, therefore it is recommended that the relevant stakeholders saddled with the responsibilities of implementing entrepreneurship education in universities should be encouraged to ensure a paradigm shift in the assessment modes used in the implementation of entrepreneurship education curricula. Assessment Modes capable of assessing the psychomotor and affective domain of students' learning should be used instead.

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