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CONTENTS

Students' Violence and Teaching – Learning Activities
in Colleges of Education in Southwestern Nigeria
Oluwatoyein Isaiah Awolola & Martins Babatunde Fabunmi .......... 1 - 12

Strategic Plan Implementation and Internal Efficiency in Nigerian Universities
Adedayo Yusuf Abdulkareem & Olaolu Paul Akinnubi ............... 13 - 27

Needed Complementary Skills at Ensuring Pedagogical Excellence
in Instructional Delivery
Ayotunde Adebayo.............................................. 29 - 36

Empirical Validity of Impact of University Model for Empowerment
Peter B. Abu.......................................................... 37 - 52

Improving Teacher Productivity and Performance for Better Learning Outcomes in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools
Benedict O. Emumenu & Eragbai Jerome Isuku ....................... 53 - 71

Higher Education: A Catalyst for Developing Entrepreneurial Skills among Nigerian Students
Oladipo, Simeon A. & Adebakin, Azeez B............................. 73 - 91

Challenges and Prospects of Continuous Assessment Implementation in Rural Schools in Nigeria:
The Teachers' Perspective
Adams O.U. Onuka............................................... 93 - 104

Implementation of ECE Policy in Nigeria: Effect of Pre-School Education on Primary School Pupils Total Development in Public Primary School in Odeda Local Government of Ogun State
Ishola Akindele Salami & Grace Titilayo Peluola ..................... 105 - 122
HIGHER EDUCATION: A CATALYST FOR DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AMONG NIGERIAN STUDENTS

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Abstract
It is highly imperative to emphasize the significance of human resources development in the wealth creation of a developing nation such as Nigeria. This study, thus, highlighted the role of higher education in developing entrepreneurial skills among Nigerian undergraduate students. This was informed from the fact that there is a high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, which has been attributed to some academic programme challenges and policies in the tertiary institutions. The study adopted the descriptive survey design, and the ten Universities in Lagos and Ogun States of Nigeria constituted the population. Out of this, four public and two private universities were randomly selected. 150 undergraduate students were also selected from five faculties using purposive random sampling technique. Both documentary analysis and structured questionnaires were used for data collection. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that most institutions concentrate mainly on acquisition of knowledge which could only sustain the graduates in white collar jobs rather than creating their jobs. The study recommended among other things that quality of instruction in the institutions has to be redirected towards inculcating the values of acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance and poverty reduction.

Introduction and background
The importance of education and human capital has been brought out in many studies of economic growth and development. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) assert that human resources constitute the indispensable factor for economic development. Capital and natural resources are
passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. According to Babalola (2003), the rationality behind investment in human capital is based on three arguments, namely: new generations must be given the appropriate parts of the knowledge which has already been accumulated by previous generations; new generations should be taught how existing knowledge should be used to develop new products, to introduce new processes and production methods and social services; and people must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches.

Based on the above, the contributions of tertiary education to national development have motivated countries, individuals, communities and corporate organizations to invest massively in education. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) highlighted some of the aims of higher education to include the development of intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments and the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community. However, these objectives cannot be said to have been fully met as a result of some constraints impeding the attainment of the policy statement. This problem had become eminent considering the number of graduates in our tertiary institutions seeking placement in the few declared vacancies in the public and private establishments, particularly in Nigeria. In view of this unpalatable situation, higher education is expected to be tailored towards developing graduates from tertiary institutions in order to meet the socio-economic needs of Nigeria. Every educational system is expected to be seen as responsive and capable of incorporating the national realities. Higher education in the Nigerian society must not be seen as a situation described by Ramson (1995) (Fabiyi and Adetoro, 2006) as where:

Schools were prejudiced against the work in the production industry, curricular were not related to the realities of most pupils' work after learning in school and pupils leave school with little or no understanding of the workings or importance of the wealth producing sector of the economy.

In Nigeria, higher education comprises the universities, polytechnics, colleges of technology, colleges of education and other professional institutions. In recent years, there have been steady and significant changes aimed at sustainable development of higher education. Before 1979, only the Federal Government controlled university education in Nigeria. The placement of higher education under the concurrent list of the 1979 Nigerian constitution was a breakthrough for the state governments to establish their own universities. The promulgation of Degree 9 of 1993 also allowed private sector participation in university education which led to the establishment of private universities in the country. Nigeria is a nation of about 150 million people and there is explosion in students’ population in tertiary institutions. For instance, there were 53 Universities, 54 Colleges of Education and 55 Polytechnics in 2003, but as at 2007, the numbers increased to 93 Universities, 56 Colleges of Education and 58 Polytechnics (International Labour Organization Report on Nigerian Education, 2009). Sequel to the proliferation of tertiary institutions and the population growth in Nigeria, the total student enrolment increased in an unprecedented rate. Total university student enrolment increased from 606,104 in 2002/2003 academic year to 724,856 in the 2004/2005 academic year. Total student enrolment in the Colleges of Education increased from 197,041 in the 2002/2003 academic year to 351,519 in the 2004/2005 academic year. The total student enrolment in the Polytechnics also escalated from 159,476 in the 2002/2003 academic year to 272,036 in the 2004/2005 academic year. In the same vein, total graduate turnover of these institutions correspondingly grew from 514,214 in the year 2003 to 619,097 in the year 2005 (ILO report on Nigerian education, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite this upsurge number of tertiary institutions, enrolment rate, and increased graduate turnover, the issue of graduate unemployment has increased from 32.3% to 40.3% between 2005 and 2009 respectively, with their attendant consequences (such as increased crime rate, unfulfilled dreams, suicide, impaired financial position, etc.) posing great challenges to the development of the nation. In Nigeria, national unemployment rate escalated from 11.9 per cent in the year 2005 to 14.9 per cent in 2008. As of 2009, the rate had increased to 19.7 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This situation is seen as a generalized waste of human resources. Consequently, entrepreneurial skills needed for sustainable development of these graduates need to be adequately developed while still in school. Hence, this study reiterates the need to gear higher education in Nigeria towards the development of entrepreneurial skills among youths.

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It is also defined as the ability to set up, organize and control a business (Aderogba, 2010). The term, according to Sadiq (2008) in Aderogba (2010), revolved around activities including identification of enterprises, combination and allocation of resources, planning and controlling business management, mobilization and utilization of local materials, risks bearing, marketing, innovation and the creation of employment opportunities. In the same vein, an entrepreneur is an individual who has the capacity to identify business opportunities and to establish and run a business venture successfully. An entrepreneur is therefore considered unique in that he creates some sort of innovative economic activity that never existed elsewhere; he monitors the changing business environment constantly and quickly takes advantage of new technology introduced to enable him improve on how he can serve the market better than his competitors; he becomes self-reliant and is able to do things in his own way (Sadiq, 2008).

Entrepreneurial skills offer students the tools to think creatively and be an effective problem solver. Education for entrepreneurship can be particularly effective in the higher institutions of learning, as students are close to entering working life and self-employment may be a valuable option for them. Graduates are entering an environment that is changing and unstable because technology and contingent factors are daily changing the world of opportunity. Students today increasingly recognize that in the current economic climate most jobs are rarely "for life". The world of employment is changing, hence, Fallows and Steven (2000) state that "permanence and longevity is no longer a significant feature of career paths; traditional paths have disappeared".

This widely held view has led to the speculation that there will be continuing growth in self-employment as a career option for individuals at different stages in their lives. There is now a widespread recognition that entrepreneurship is the engine that drives the economy of most nations. In Nigeria, the need for entrepreneurial development seems to be occasioned by the high level of unemployment. Nafukho (1998) therefore regards education as a vital measure to ignite entrepreneurial mindset among young people and asserts that promoting entrepreneurial skills and attitudes provides benefits to society through creation of new jobs that may spring up from entrepreneurial small firms.

Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2007 introduced a compulsory course known as "Entrepreneurship and Corporate Governance" in all tertiary institutions with the sole aim of enhancing the entrepreneurship skills among students as well as fresh graduates in the country. This is done in order to reduce the level of unemployment, encourage creativity and promote self-reliance. Furthermore, Davies (2001) in his annual Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports that there is an overall lack of entrepreneurship elements in the education system in Africa. Some of the factors adduced include the following among others: inadequate business role models; negative mindsets towards confidence, lack of initiative and creativity; and negative perception towards entrepreneurship as a career choice.

The economic structure in Africa is well served by higher institutions, in that they provide a resource pool for big businesses. In the process, however, a student's mindset has been entrenched to employment in the big businesses. In the last few years, small and medium businesses in the country are accounting for an increasingly greater proportion of economic activity. As such, higher institutions in Nigeria need to redefine their role in the economy and in the society. Policies around entrepreneurship should focus on identifying and improving individual entrepreneurial capabilities/potentials at all levels.
through education, and relevant training should be provided in all Nigerian universities.

Entrepreneurship and Higher Education Curriculum in Nigeria
Undoubtedly, many reforms are ongoing in the Nigerian education sector with a view to meeting the demands of the society. Among these reforms are the introduction of free and compulsory basic education for all Nigerian school-age children and the licensing of private universities. With the injection of these noble innovations into the education sector by way of reforms, there is increasing demand for education and the government cannot but look for means to cater for the school products. With the proliferation of schools, colleges and universities, Nigeria has produced an army of unemployable and unemployed youths. Hence, higher education requires effective practice and improvement in a global context that guarantees entrepreneurship and employment. In consonance with this, Iliya (2007) said the agitation for entrepreneurship education is one of the ways to solving youth unemployment. Akinkugbe (2004), in describing the need for entrepreneurship education for the Nigerian students, said this form of education exposes students to the skills they require to develop an entrepreneurial orientation and mindset as a necessary preparation for the business, vocational and professional lives after their formal university education. By complementing their academic education with entrepreneurship and financial education, they are leveraged with the qualities and skills they need to become more relevant in today’s global market places.

This has consequently received positive response from the National Universities Commission (NUC) through the introduction of entrepreneurship education to the Nigerian University curriculum. In this regard, many higher institutions of learning have yielded to the calls through their academic planning units by developing entrepreneurship programmes in their General Studies curriculum in the new “Benchmarks and Minimum Academic Standards” (BMAS) for higher education. This laudable idea is directed towards enhancing the career potentials of the Nigerian youths but is yet to take off fully in most tertiary institutions in the country.

Ochiagha (1995) in Iliya (2007) sees all forms of education (University or Polytechnic) as geared towards preparing individuals (directly or indirectly) for productive work, but Vocational Education prepares individuals for a specified work and not for world of work. Therefore, Vocational Education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) is to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled persons who will be enterprising and self-reliant. Entrepreneurship education therefore entails training of all students irrespective of their area of specialization in the art of identifying business opportunities for the purpose of self-reliance. Through this training, Nigerian graduates are expected to possess entrepreneurial skills that would enable them to be self-employed and job creators rather than job seekers.

According to Ojo (1999), “to be successful in the business world, students are required to receive proper training and continuous re-training on the job because of the dynamic nature of business in Nigeria today.” In the same vein, Yusuf (1989) states that entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs-to-be must therefore be encouraged to acquire enough of technical skills. They will also require to be trained in how to: calculate profit and loss and to estimate risks; undertake market research; put these ideas together into a business plans and make it happen. Therefore, acquisition of entrepreneurship skills will encourage Nigerian students to engage in one economic activity such as buying and selling, printing, tailoring, farming, Computer/GSM repairs, catering services, cabinet making, technology, automobile mechanics, leather works, painting, textile design, barbing, etc. which would in turn boost and bring about vibrant economic competition among students.

Also, it will provide the student with theoretical background necessary for meaningful economic engagement. Such skills will not only enable them to make informed choices in terms of decisions on what, how and when to do any economic activity but also stimulate the human tendency for freedom by encouraging students to strive to be self-reliant after graduation, enable the students to be acquainted with the business atmosphere before graduation, position the students to appreciate wealth creation rather than searching for non-existing white collar jobs. Consequently, acquisition of basic entrepreneurial skills will accelerate the nation’s economic growth, owing to the fact that youths are known to be full of innovative ideas if given the opportunity.

Developing nations like Nigeria have to re-channel the boisterous energies of youths to more productive business adventures rather than crimes and cultism as presently witnessed on campuses.
Impediments to Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities

Various tertiary institutions in Nigeria are gradually incorporating entrepreneurship education into their curriculum but most institutions are faced with some challenges. Inegbenebor (2005) highlighted the challenges which need to be addressed if entrepreneurship education is to attain the desired goals.

• Orientation of student: It is important to note that entrepreneurship is not yet a popular vocational choice among young people in Nigeria. The dominant culture at the moment is a wage-earner culture. In many ways, the socio-cultural environment does not favour entrepreneurship given the collectivist values of the society. There is a need therefore for entrepreneurship education to have a significant promotional content to stimulate and sustain the interest of students in the programme.

• Orientation of university administration: Many university administrators are largely ignorant of the value and potential of entrepreneurship education in national competitiveness and development. Entrepreneurship education in such institutions may not have the level of support that it needs to gain acceptance among students and staff. It is imperative that university administration seeks to educate themselves on the importance of entrepreneurship education. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should go beyond prescribing the minimum academic standards with respect to entrepreneurship education to organizing seminars and workshops with the aim of enhancing the knowledge of university administrators in this area.

• What to teach and to whom: This points to the need for students to study the entrepreneurship education. There is need to understand that there is a difference between entrepreneurship and small business management. It is suggested that NUC provides a forum for entrepreneurship teachers and educators to brainstorm for the purpose of generating ideas for use by universities. This is not to suggest that a standard programme should be forced on universities. The question of who is to be target entrepreneurship is important. While everybody can

class size for teaching effectiveness make it imperative for this question to be addressed. Should entrepreneurship be an elective or a compulsory course? Should students be allowed to self-select themselves for entrepreneurship education? Whatever the answer to these questions, it is important that entrepreneurship is promoted heavily among young people.

• Who is to teach entrepreneurship: At the moment, teaching entrepreneurship is an all-comers game. As the programme becomes more popular, many more academicians who do not have the required preparation are bound to jump into the train. Yet teaching entrepreneurship requires special training and experience. Once again, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and each university, polytechnic and college of Education need to build capacity in this area to have meaningful results. One technique that can be useful in improving teachers' entrepreneurship knowledge is to encourage institutions involved in sharing resources, knowledge and experience in this area through seminars, conferences and workshops.

• Lack of teaching materials: There is a dearth of teaching materials especially case materials that are suitable for teaching entrepreneurship in Nigerian universities. It is suggested that entrepreneurship teachers in the various institutions should embark on producing real cases, projects of entrepreneurs, and exercises that are suitable for experiential learning among students.

• Uncoordinated and weak institutional support: Government and its agencies responsible for entrepreneurship development have not started to address the problem of entrepreneurship education at all levels of educational system. It has been stated earlier that stimulation and sustenance of entrepreneurship education and small business management training can be carefully traced to articulated government policy and funding. Agencies such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA) needs to address this issue with the aim of providing funds to the universities and other institutions for entrepreneurship education.
Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurship Education

To achieve quality entrepreneurship education and enhance youth self-reliance in Nigeria, the following strategies according to Ayodele (2006) will help to alleviate the problem:

- There should be some form of genuine school work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experience.
- Pooling local public and private funds to create a small venture capital fund.
- School-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business using the school as mini-incubators.
- Providing small business schools where interested students and community members can participate.
- Developing entrepreneur internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
- Establishing an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skill sets required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill acquisition centers for the youths.
- Creating an economic friendly political environment.
- Improving on the government taxation on small scale businesses.

Henderson (1995) in Ineghenebor (2005) identified the winning strategies of successful entrepreneurs which potential entrepreneurs can use to create a moneymaking business that include; conceptualising a product or service to meet a defined need; evaluating the potential of the business idea by analysing the trends in the economy which may influence the fortunes of the business; developing a credible business plan; assembling the needed resources to implement the plan; launching the business; expanding the business; developing capacity to manage atrocity and crises when they occur and managing the successful venture.

Statement of Problem

It has been a common practice in Nigeria that employees spend their active life in the same company, more often than not, in a State company. This has made self-employment and entrepreneurial activities remain underdeveloped for a long time. This has also contributed in no small measures to the ever increasing unemployment rate in Nigeria. Thus, if there is one problem giving an average Nigerian sleeplessness night, it is the issue of unemployment and youth restiveness (Elebeke, 2011). More worrisome to everyone, especially parents, is that most graduates today end up as long time applicants, not because there are no jobs to absorb them but because they are either unemployable or too many for the limited vacancies declared.

Obviously, a number of deficiencies have been identified in the Nigerian higher education as the causes, some of these are: deficiency in communication skills; deficiency in technical skills; lack of conceptual analytical skills; and lack of management skill. These deficiencies are attributable to inadequate funding, decaying infrastructural facilities, poor staff condition of service leading to brain drain, low quality of intake of students from secondary schools which have been neglected over the years. Resultant effect of which is a remarkable decline in the quality of output and consequently high rate of unemployment. This background, therefore, informed this study.

Be that as it may, it is widely believed that higher education provides adequate training and aids production of qualified personnel who are capable of working independently, effectively and efficiently. It is also believed that this form of education enhances the development of entrepreneurship skills (such as technical, imaginative, analytical and creativity) among students in the tertiary institutions. The questions arising from the background which this study sought to answer therefore include the following:

1) Why are majority of Nigerian graduates jobless?

2) Do Nigerian graduates receive sufficient skills to make them self-reliant?

3) How far has the Nigerian higher education curriculum been able to adequately prepare students for the world of work?
Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between higher education curriculum and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Students from the public and private universities in Lagos and Ogun States of Nigeria constituted the population of the study. Out of this, four public and two private universities were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Five final year undergraduate students from the Faculties of Administration, Education, Arts/Social Sciences, Science/Engineering and Medicine were randomly selected given a sub-total of 25 participants from the Faculties and a total of 150 subjects for the study. Documentary analysis and a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Higher Education Curriculum and Acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills Questionnaire (HECAES-Q)" were used to elicit information for the study. Using the test-retest method of reliability, a reliability index of 0.72 was obtained. Data obtained was also analyzed using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool (at 5% probability level of significance) as well as the descriptive statistics.

Results

Research Question 1: Why are majority of Nigerian graduates jobless?

Table 1: Annual Graduate Turn-Out of Bachelor’s Degree by Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>4,727</td>
<td>3,413</td>
<td>6,380</td>
<td>5,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2,938</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>3,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>3,211</td>
<td>3,248</td>
<td>3,250</td>
<td>3,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>5,425</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1,079</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>2,112</td>
<td>1,781</td>
<td>2,846</td>
<td>2,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>1,489</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>4,461</td>
<td>2,840</td>
<td>5,839</td>
<td>4,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>8,459</td>
<td>4,996</td>
<td>8,187</td>
<td>5,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above revealed that a good number of Nigerian graduates do not read courses that are naturally entrepreneurial. Majority prefer courses (such as Business Administration, Law, Engineering and Medicine) that could fetch them white collar jobs. This indicates and explains the rationale for the high rate of unemployment in the society.

Research Question 2: Do Nigerian graduates have access to entrepreneurial activities that could make them self-reliant?

Table 2: Entrepreneurship Development Program/Activities in Nigerian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) beneficiaries</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26,042</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2,091</td>
<td>10,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational skill development of National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) participants</td>
<td>38,259</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>11,624</td>
<td>15,354</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed youths trained under NOAS</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>1,480</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained youths provided with tools to establish own Business</td>
<td>37000</td>
<td>37000</td>
<td>37000</td>
<td>37000</td>
<td>36105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National open Apprenticeship scheme NOAS(s) Registered</td>
<td>11100</td>
<td>11100</td>
<td>1110005050</td>
<td>5105</td>
<td>10615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A cursory look at Table 2 above shows that various entrepreneurial programmes are supported by the government. The number of participants registered over the period of analysis is constant while the number of beneficiaries out of the total number of graduates of the programme (a) Registered (b) Beneficiary

Start your own Business
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

Women co-operatives
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

Rural agric dev and training scheme:
- (a) Registered
- (b) Beneficiary

Rural handicraft scheme
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

Environmental Beautification scheme
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

Graduate attachment programme
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

Community dev. Scheme
- (a) Register
- (b) Beneficiary

This indicates that not many people gained access to these programmes in the recent past.

Research Question 3: How far has the Nigerian higher education curriculum been able to adequately prepare students for the world of work?

Table 3: Responses to Relevance of the Nigerian Higher Education Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Mean Score (X)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was taught the rudiments of Business Plan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was exposed to the Sources of Capital while in school</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the concept of Financial Plan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can recognize and create business opportunities</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the basic knowledge of Feasibility Analysis</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand business ethics and social responsibility</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can adequately run a Marketing Plan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the nature and importance of entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial Process</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above indicates that an average Nigerian university course concentrates more on the core content and not entrepreneurial element of such course. All the reactions in the table shows that students are not often exposed to the rudiments of entrepreneurship education. It also reveals that their content areas do not, in most cases, expose students to creating business opportunities but rather to acquisition of knowledge and skills that can sustain them in white collar jobs.
Analysis

Ho: There is no significant correlation between higher education curriculum and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria.

Table 5: Summary of Correlation Analysis of Higher Education curriculum and acquisition of Entrepreneurial Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N=150</th>
<th>Mean (X)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Curriculum</td>
<td>45.61</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Skills</td>
<td>41.03</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant; P = .05; df = 148; critical r = .17

Table 5 shows that there is a significant correlation between higher education curriculum and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills (r-Cal .68 > r-critical .17). This implies that curriculum content of higher education has a great implication on teaching entrepreneurship education in the universities.

Discussion

The study revealed a significant correlation between higher education curriculum and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. The curriculum of a university is the totality of the experiences that are offered to the students by the institution in the pursuance of its teaching and learning philosophy, goals and objectives. NUC (1999) emphasized that the curriculum of any programme is aimed at equipping students with knowledge and professional skill. The National Policy on Education (2004) emphasized the contribution of university education to national development through intensifying and diversifying its programme for the development of high level manpower. Given the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the development of entrepreneurship skills and inclusion in the university curricula should be of paramount importance to the government. Okebukola (2001) opined that in redesigning university curricula, emphasis should be placed on facilitating the acquisition of skills, competencies and abilities which are required by employers of labour.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is undisputedly recognized as the bedrock of any meaningful development. The National Policy on Education (2004) states the need for functional education to be relevant, practical and acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. This means that the quality of instruction at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) has to be oriented towards inculcating the values of acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance and reducing poverty. In the opinion of this study, it is recommended therefore that entrepreneurship education should be encouraged in all higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Possibly, experienced workforce from industries should be co-opted to teach the course. A functional approach to the design of the entrepreneurship education for Nigerian students should be adopted. Such a programme should be practical-oriented through Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIIWES) with support from all sectors (public and private) of the nation. Governments (Federal, State and Local) in partnership with NGOs and well meaning citizens should provide graduates'/Students' loans and grants and be disbursed appropriately. Therefore, with collective responsibility of the governments and the Nigerian populace, these goals of developing entrepreneurship could be achieved in the shortest possible time.

References


