

INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM ON THE OUTPUT OF POLYTECHNIC GRADUATES IN KWARA STATE

Israel Segun OGUNDELE PhD.

Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Faculty of Education,
Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria
israel.ogundele@kwasu.edu.ng

&

Sikiru Issa Nuhu

Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Faculty of Education,
Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria
sikiru.issa@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examined the influence of entrepreneurship program integration on the output of Polytechnic graduates in Kwara State. Specifically, the study examined the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship programs on polytechnic graduates' business innovation and creativity, among others. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of all 116 HND II students of Kwara State Polytechnic, and this number formed the participants of the study. The instrument used for data collection was the "Influence of Entrepreneurship Program on Polytechnic Graduates Output Questionnaire" (IEPGOQ). The reliability of the instrument was carried out and a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.86 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The study found that entrepreneurship integration positively influenced polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity. Furthermore, it was revealed that the entrepreneurship program contributes to business development among Polytechnic graduates in Kwara State. The study concluded that integrating entrepreneurship programs into Kwara State polytechnics significantly enhance graduates' innovation, creativity, and business development. The study recommended, among others, that students should be mandated to develop a viable business plans before graduation, as this would bring out their creative abilities in creating jobs for themselves in particular and the nation at large.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Integration, Polytechnic graduates, innovation, creativity.

Introduction

The current state of affairs in developed countries around the world has led to a surge in interest in learning the professional competencies and techniques of entrepreneurship education. According to Okwuanasor and Nwazor (2008), business education is a type of education that helps students learn facts, develop skills, solve problems, and develop business-like attitudes that are necessary for success in business circumstances. Nwachukwu (2012) saw business education as encompassing all educational processes involving the study of techniques, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, and knowledge relating to occupation in vocational sectors.

Simon (2005) asserts that entrepreneurship education teaches young people more than just how to launch a business. Entrepreneurship is the ability to envision and map out new business ventures, by integrating information from the functional disciplines and the outside world, especially in the context of the exceptional uncertainty and ambiguity that a new company/business encounters. Jonathan (2005) states that there are two categories of entrepreneurial education: education "for" entrepreneurship and education "about" entrepreneurship. While the second focuses on the learning process and the development of competencies, skills, aptitudes, and values, the first is concerned with the creation and dissemination of field knowledge.

In Nigeria, several educational institutions from post-primary to post-secondary, including polytechnics, offer entrepreneurship programs. This is explained in the 2013 National Policy on Education. According to Section 1; 7(d) of the policy, the national educational goals include, among other things, the development of mental, physical, and social skills and abilities as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills as tools for people to live in and contribute to the advancement of society. Additionally, Section 8(f) promote the acquisition of self-sufficiency-related skills.

In the light of this, 9(d) declared that educational activities should focus on the learners in order to maximise their self-development and self-fulfilment. Additionally, 9(j) added that, at any point after junior secondary education, an individual should have the option of continuing full-time studies, combining work and study, or beginning full-time employment, without ruling out the possibility of returning to school later. Beyond only teaching on how to run a firm, entrepreneurship education aims to foster creative thinking as well as a strong sense of accountability and self-work. Awodun (2013) supported this assertion by saying that the goal of an entrepreneurship program is to provide students the motivation and abilities they need to find employment, become self-sufficient, and successfully launch and run a firm.

To guarantee that the advantages of the Nigerian entrepreneurship program are realised, the government decided to implement entrepreneurship education at all educational levels. There is an ongoing debate regarding the sufficiency of Nigerian university and polytechnic graduates. Firms in need of their services and recent graduates looking for work, are particularly concerned about innovation and creativity. Andrew, Bankole, and Olatunde (2009) report indicated that the employment prospects of recent graduates had decreased, suggesting that there appears to be a significant mismatch between university output and labour market demand. The main causes of this are their improper preparations and the low skill level needed for the majority of professions, if any, for which they are even available. In a study conducted by Ugochukwu (2015) on the contributions of entrepreneurship programs in the Nigerian Polytechnics towards reducing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria, it was found that entrepreneurship education is a means of combating unemployment. The difficulties of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria are examined in Akanni's (2014) study and based on the study, entrepreneurship was noted to have significant impact on a country's economic growth by creating jobs, using local resources.

Business diversification is aided by the promotion of technology and capital formation, but the results show that Nigerian entrepreneurs faces several obstacles, including issues with protecting ideas, network issues, political unpredictability, unethical business practices, and power supply issues. The study focuses on how Kwara State Polytechnic graduates' production is affected by the inclusion of an entrepreneurship curriculum. This study only consider Kwara State Polytechnic. Additionally, only HND II students majoring in Office Technology and Management were included in the study. The specific purposes of the study

are to examine the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship programs on polytechnic graduates' business innovation and creativity and to examine the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship programs on polytechnic graduates' business development in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity in Kwara State?
2. What is the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' business development in Kwara State?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 116 HND II students of Kwara State Polytechnic. There was no sample as the total population of the study was used because the researchers felt the population was manageable and sizeable to cover. A structured questionnaire designed by the researchers, tagged 'Influence of Entrepreneurship Program on Polytechnic Graduates Output Questionnaire' (IEPGOQ). A four-point rating scale was used in the questionnaire, which shows the extent of agreement and disagreement of respondents to the items provided. The ratings were weighted as: Strongly Agreed (SA – 4 points), Agreed (A – 3 points), Disagreed (D – 2 points), and Strongly Disagreed (SD – 1 point). The instrument has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.86. The researchers administered 116 copies of the questionnaire, and all the copies were retrieved, making a 100% return rate, which was used for the analysis. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity in Kwara State?

Table 1

Mean and standard deviation of responses on the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	The entrepreneurship program has given me creative business ideas	3.49	0.58	Agreed
2.	The entrepreneurship program has made me to be innovative in business ideas	2.63	0.75	Agreed
3.	With entrepreneurship education, I can come up with a good business plan	3.48	0.64	Agreed
4.	The entrepreneurship program has enabled me to identify business strengths and weaknesses	2.90	0.75	Agreed
5.	The entrepreneurship program prepared me to envision and chart a course for a new business venture	3.52	0.55	Agreed
6.	Entrepreneurship education encouraged me to be future-oriented	2.72	0.96	Agreed
7.	The entrepreneurship program enabled me to have a preference for moderate risk	3.28	0.86	Agreed
8.	The entrepreneurship program prepared me to tackle and	3.32	0.90	Agreed

	solve problems easily			
9.	Entrepreneurship education enabled me to turn problems into new opportunities	3.45	0.63	Agreed
10.	The entrepreneurship program imbued me with the essence of creativity as a necessary condition for innovation	3.39	0.62	Agreed
Weighted average		3.22		Agreed

According to the data in table 1, the respondents believed that the entrepreneurship program helped them come up with innovative ideas (mean = 3.49) and that it helped them envisage and plan the course for a new business venture (mean = 3.52). Furthermore, the respondents concurred that entrepreneurship education helped them create a strong business plan (mean = 3.48) and turn obstacles into opportunities (mean = 3.45). According to the respondents, the entrepreneurship program helped them understand the importance of creativity as a prerequisite for innovations (mean = 3.39), equipped them to handle and resolve difficulties with ease (mean = 3.32), and gave them the ability to prefer moderate risk (mean = 3.28). Additionally, respondents concurred that the entrepreneurship program had helped them recognise the strengths and shortcomings of their businesses (mean = 2.90) and had inspired them to focus on the future (mean = 2.72). The respondents (mean = 2.63) were equally in agreement that the entrepreneurship program had helped them become more creative in their business concepts. The standard deviations for each of the ten items range from 0.55 to 0.96. This means that the responses of the respondents were not widespread as they are close to their respective mean scores. Overall, the respondents agreed to all the item constructs in Table 1, which implied that entrepreneurship integration influenced polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity in Kwara State. This was supported with a mean score of 3.22.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of the integration of entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' business development in Kwara State?

Table 2

Mean and standard deviation of responses on the influence of the integration of the entrepreneurship program on polytechnic graduates' business development

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	The entrepreneurship program has given me the drive to continue in business	3.40	0.49	Agreed
2.	The entrepreneurship program has helped me identify weaknesses that will affect the frontier of my business	3.39	0.51	Agreed
3.	Entrepreneurship education has helped me to discover opportunities for business growth	3.27	0.54	Agreed
4.	The entrepreneurship program enabled me to identify the process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours	3.44	0.77	Agreed
5.	Entrepreneurship education gave me the ability to set up a business enterprise, as different to being employed	3.41	0.61	Agreed
6.	Entrepreneurship training enabled me to have confidence in personal success	3.35	0.53	Agreed
7.	Entrepreneurship education encouraged me to believe in business success and achievement	3.22	0.57	Agreed
8.	Entrepreneurship education served my establishment as	3.27	0.47	Agreed

	a catalyst for economic growth and development.			
9	Entrepreneurship education has given me the ability to recognize and evaluate business opportunities	3.62	0.51	Agreed
10	Entrepreneurship education has enabled me to create a smooth transition from traditional to a modern style of business.	3.06	0.94	Agreed
Weighted average		3.34		Agreed

The respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education has given them the drive to continue in business (mean = 3.62), and they agreed that entrepreneurship programs have helped them understand how to use available capital in any form for business endeavours (mean = 3.44), according to data in Table 2. The respondents also concurred that entrepreneurship education provided them with the motivation to stay in business (mean = 3.40) and the ability to launch a business as opposed to being employed (mean = 3.41).

The respondents agreed that entrepreneurship training has given them confidence in their achievement (mean = 3.35) and that the program has assisted them in identifying shortcomings that may impact the future of their business (mean = 3.39). In the same way that they felt that entrepreneurship education acted as a catalyst for economic growth and development, the respondents also agreed that it had assisted them in identifying business growth prospects (mean = 3.27). Respondents also concurred that entrepreneurship education helped them to smoothly shift from a traditional to a modern business model and inspired them to believe in business success and achievement (mean = 3.22). (average = 3.06). All 10 items in table 2 had standard deviation ranging from 0.49 to 0.94. This means that the responses of the respondents were not widespread as they are close to their respective mean scores.

Overall, the respondents agreed to all the item constructs in Table 2, which implied that entrepreneurship integration influenced polytechnic graduates' business development in Kwara State. This was supported with a mean score of 3.34.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that entrepreneurship integration positively influenced polytechnic graduates' innovation and creativity in Kwara State. This aligns with existing literature, which emphasize that structured entrepreneurship education fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and opportunity recognition, which are key drivers of business innovation (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). A similar study by Oosterbeek et al. (2010) found that entrepreneurship training enhances students' ability to generate novel business ideas, supporting the finding of the study that entrepreneurship education stimulates graduates' creativity in Kwara State. Additionally, the study established that entrepreneurship education contributes to business development among graduates. This is consistent with Nabi et al. (2017), who argued that exposure to entrepreneurial training increases graduates' confidence in launching and managing enterprises. In Kwara State, where unemployment remains a challenge, equipping polytechnic graduates with business skills improves their self-employment prospects and economic participation. This finding also resonates with Fayolle & Gailly (2015), who highlighted that entrepreneurship programs enhance practical business competencies, such as financial management and market analysis, which are crucial for business sustainability.

Conclusion

This study established that integrating entrepreneurship programs into Kwara State polytechnic training, significantly enhances graduates' innovation, creativity, and business development. The findings align with global evidence that structured entrepreneurial education cultivates problem-solving skills, fosters adaptability, and equips graduates with practical competencies for business success. By bridging the gap between academia and real-world enterprise, these programs empower polytechnic graduates to contribute meaningfully to Kwara State's economic growth and reduce unemployment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students should be mandated to develop a viable business plan before graduation, as this would bring out their creative abilities in creating jobs for themselves in particular and the nation at large.
2. Collaboration with local businesses and industry experts can offer real-world insights, networking opportunities, and post-graduation support for the graduates.

References

- Andrew, D., Bankole, O., & Olatunde, A. (2009). Labor market prospects of a university graduates in Nigeria. *Nigeria University System Innovation Project. November 2000.*
- Akanni, L. F. (2014). Entrepreneurship and Its Challenges in Nigeria's Turbulent Environment. *Journal of Business Education* 2(1), 47-55.
- Awodun, M. (2013). *Entrepreneurship for Senior Secondary*. KWASU Entrepreneurship Series
- Fayolle, A., & Gailly, B. (2015). The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial attitudes and intention: Hysteresis and persistence. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53(1), 75-93.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) *National Policy on Education. (revised edition)*. NERDC Lagos.
- Hisrich, R. D., & Peters, M. P. (2002). *Entrepreneurship* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Jonathan, F. (2005). *Business Management*, Pearson Education Limited, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow.
- Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N., & Walmsley, A. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 16(2), 277-299.
- Oosterbeek, H., van Praag, M., & Ijsselstein, A. (2010). The impact of entrepreneurship education entrepreneurship skills and motivation. *European Economic Review*, 54(3), 442-454.
- Okunanazor, S. I. & Nwazor, J. C. (2008) Association of Business Educators of Nigeria. *Conference Proceedings*, 2 (1) 73.
- Opatola, M. O. & Jegede, C. T. (2014). The road of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ozonised Table Water Factory in the Development of OAU Community. *Abstract – First International Conference on Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education. OAUICEEE 2014.*

- Nwachukwu, C. L. (2012). Administration and Supervision in Business Education Challenges and Way forward. *Book of Readings (ABEN)*, 2 (1), 66 -73.
- Simon, C. (2005). *Business Management*, Pearson Education Limited, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow.
- Ugochukwu, S. C. (2015). Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Polytechnic Students: Panacea to Unemployment in Nigeria. *Conference Proceedings. Association of Business Educators of Nigeria*. 2 (1).