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MANAGEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL HUMAN CAPITAL IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined management of entrepreneurship education for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted. The population comprised all the 41 Directors in the 3 public universities in Rivers State. Out of these Directors, 28 are males whereas 13 are females. The entire population, which represents 100%, was used as the sample which infers the use of census sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was 17 item self-structured questionnaire entitled: "Management of Entrepreneurship Education for Developing Entrepreneurial Human Capital Questionnaire (MEEDEHCQ)." The questionnaire was structured after the four-point modified Likert rating scale, and was duly validated by three experts. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha method. Reliability coefficients of 0.74 and 0.77 were obtained respectively for the various sections of the instrument, which showed that it was reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that the extent to which entrepreneurship education is managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State is very low. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the universities' Management should ensure that Entrepreneurship Courses are assigned to lecturers who specialise in them, and also ensure that the lecturers constantly attend training programmes that will enable them to diversify their pedagogies in line with the global best teaching practices.

Keywords: Management, Entrepreneurship Education, Developing, Entrepreneurial, Human Capital.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has been widely acknowledged as an investment. This is why countries that invest in education are developed through the contributions of their human capital. Universities are charged with developing high-level manpower that expedites national economic growth and development. Providing quality education to individuals can make them become creative, innovative and apply the knowledge they have acquired in building a productive society. In recognition of this fact, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) mandated universities to make optimum contributions to national development by intensifying and diversifying the academic programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation.

Today's knowledge-based society yearns for individuals with the right type of education and entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to function effectively in the society, create jobs, generate wealth, reduce poverty and compete favourably in this competitive world. In order to ensure diversification of higher education curriculum to meet the needs of the labour market and the knowledge-based society, the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship education and made it a compulsory course for all undergraduate and postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. Hence, it is societal expectation that entrepreneurship education will develop entrepreneurial human capital that will be job creators; rather than job seekers.

Human capital is a transformational tool for ensuring economic progress and sustainable development of nations. Human capital is a concept used by economists, which refers to the knowledge, skills, technical know-how, attributes, among others, that an individual acquired through education, training and experience that enhance productivity in an organisation and society at large. Deming (2022) defined human capital as a collection of activities such as all the knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, intelligence and trainings possessed by individuals in a society, which represent forms of wealth that can be directed to accomplish the goals of the nation.

Salau et al. (2016) described human capital as productive capacity and potential of individuals in the labour force. Thus, human capital is a means of production. World Bank (2017) viewed human capital as consisting of all the knowledge, skills, and attributes that people accumulate throughout their lives that enable them to realise their potentials as productive members of society. Human capital development therefore, is investing quality education and trainings in people that will enable them to compete effectively in the global economy and improve their standard of living.

Universities' role in developing professionally qualified-competent workforce with diverse set of skills and knowledge that has economic value is hinged on Human Capital Theory, which expounds that investment in human capital through education engenders production. To support this, Salau et al. (2016) posited that increase in education level of an economy leads to increase in economic growth rate, which leads to poverty reduction. Similarly, Deming (2022) noted that when human capital increases in areas such as science, technology, engineering, education and management, it leads to increase in innovation, social well-being, equality, increased productivity and improved rates of participation that contribute to economic growth. In corroboration, Obanya (2014) maintained that by investing in education, countries can improve the skills and knowledge of their manpower, which can lead to increased productivity, higher wages and sustained economic growth. Thus, this assertion substantiates the Chinese adage: "If

you wish to plan for a year, sow a seed; if you wish to plan for ten years, plant trees; if you wish to plan for a life time, develop man.” Hence, developing entrepreneurial human capital is a key driver for productivity and economic growth.

Entrepreneurship education is the process of nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills which allow an individual to be responsive to his or her environment and identify business opportunities. Schupeter, an Australian economist and Father of Entrepreneurship (1936), as cited in Gautam and Singh (2015), defined entrepreneurship as the force of creative destruction whereby established ways of doing things are destroyed by the creation of new and better ways to get things done. Similarly, Hisrich et al. (2019) defined entrepreneurship education as the process of training individuals to generate ideas and venture into business risks created by dynamic environment and making the best opportunity for profit purpose.

Nwosu and Ohia (2009 as cited in Akpan and Etor (2013) viewed entrepreneurship education as 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. Ayeni et al. (2018) described entrepreneurship education as the gateway to job opportunities and job creation which would constantly enhance self-reliance and self-employment among university graduates. Thus, effective management of entrepreneurship education will produce creative and critical manpower that can apply their problem-solving, critical thinking and analysing skills to building a productive society.

Management is the systematic planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of available human and material resources to efficiently and effectively achieve organisational goals. In public universities in Rivers State, the management of entrepreneurship education lies solely on Heads of Department, Directors/Coordinators of Entrepreneurship Centres and General Studies Units. Onwuchekwa (1998) as cited in Ezeani (2012) defined management as the organisation and mobilisation of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the organisation.

In underscoring this, Ukala and Adieme (2022) noted that effective management of the available resource materials and infrastructural facilities is central to achieving the educational goals. Managing entrepreneurship education effectively will build and develop human capital that can thrive in the world of work and create jobs that foster economic growth. World Bank (2020) observed that Nigeria lagged behind in the Human Capital Index (HCI). This obviously is as a result of the inability of the higher institutions to produce employable graduates that are saleable in the labour market. In supporting this assertion, Kofarbai and Abdullahi (2021) maintained that higher education is expected to play an important and increasing role in developing intellectual capital with innovative ideas and creativity for national economic growth.

Human resource management is an integral part as they are the ones that can utilise other resources to achieve organisational effectiveness. Arowolo (2014) pointed out the importance of university lecturers, who teach entrepreneurship education to constantly improve their pedagogical approaches and skills. Onyene (2014) posited that lecturers should endeavour to engage students in hands-on or practical activities as the teaching approach builds an entrepreneurial mindset and skills in them. Agu et al. (2022) conducted a study to ascertain the pedagogies lecturers adopt in teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities and discovered that most of them adopted the theoretical approach which enrich the cognitive domain to the detriment of the psychomotor domain.

Johnson (2011) asserted that equipping human capital with entrepreneurial skills that are practical-based will curb unemployment rate among youths. Buccata and Taleaga (2023)

suggested that recruiting and managing talent/lecturers are critical if universities are to have a significant impact on the educational landscape, maintain student engagement and provide a world-class education. O'Neill and Bagchi-Sen (2022) noted that for universities to maintain academic excellence, reputation and competitiveness, there should be strategic approach to managing human resource, which encompasses the processes of recruiting, training, developing and retaining employees to achieve educational goals.

Effective management of resources in entrepreneurship education engenders the production of highly skilled workforce. For any educational programme to achieve its goals and objectives, it must be supported with appropriate resources. Obanya (2014) described educational resources as the total sum of everything that goes into the education system. Availability of resources is critical to the successful implementation of entrepreneurial education. The research findings of Asiyai (2013) revealed that establishing entrepreneurship programme centres, providing adequate information and communication technology facilities, recruiting the right lecturers and inviting successful Nigerian entrepreneurs to train students are strategies for effective management of entrepreneurship education.

Rafiana (2024) observed that the quantity and quality of resources determine the quality of entrepreneurial skills students acquire in order to be innovative, creative, independent and identify opportunities in their environments. Akpan and Etor (2013) posited that adequate infrastructures, learning equipment and instructional materials are integral for effective management of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. Thus, as technologies are evolving on daily basis, the provision of digital tools and their integration are very essential to build entrepreneurial human capital that will thrive in this digitalised world.

Quite a number of researchers have revealed some challenges most Nigerian universities encounter in implementing entrepreneurship education. Anyaogu (2009) as cited in Akpan and Etor (2013) discovered decayed infrastructural system, incompetent lecturers, frequent power interruption, inadequate funding and poor budgetary allocations to the education sector as major constraints to effective teaching and management of entrepreneurship education. In a related study, Ayeni et al. (2018) observed that non-practical-oriented curriculum content, lack of funds, poor entrepreneurial mindset, inconsistent government policy and poor infrastructure are challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

In another study, Asiyai (2013) revealed that lack of skilled personnel to teach entrepreneurship education and teaching methodologies are factors inhibiting the management of entrepreneurship education. Njoku and Onyegbula (2017) identified dearth of infrastructural facilities such as workshops, laboratories, equipped classrooms, among others. Johnson (2011) discovered that human capital is not adequately equipped with the needed technical and generic skills that will enable them to thrive in the world of work. Hence, the lecturers who are assigned to teach entrepreneurship education should be those that are grounded in the course, willing to learn the novel methodologies in teaching and can go extra miles to ensuring that the appropriate instructional materials are utilised.

Developing entrepreneurial human capital will invariably lead to wealth generation, job creation and poverty reduction. It is pertinent to note that the major objectives of entrepreneurship education are to develop enterprising youths and inculcate an attitude of self-reliance in them using appropriate teaching-learning processes. Njoku and Onyegbula (2017) corroborated that the quality of human capital in any nation depicts that nation's developmental strides. Recognising that education plays a pivotal role in fostering economic growth through developing critically thinking workforce that boosts national economy, the Nigerian Government

stipulated that one of the goals of tertiary education is to ensure the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (FRN, 2014). Thus, producing entrepreneurial human capital that can contribute to national development depends largely on how entrepreneurship education is effectively managed in Nigerian universities.

Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment and unemployability are global phenomena that have been on the front burners of national discourse. It is no gainsaying the fact that any country that invests in its human capital is productive. Thus, developing entrepreneurial human capital will make Nigeria a productive nation instead of a consumptive one. The inability of graduates to secure gainful employment opportunities necessitated the introduction of entrepreneurship education more than two decades ago after the United Nations declaration for Entrepreneurship. In response, the Federal Republic of Nigeria mandated the National Universities Commission (NUC) to introduce entrepreneurship education into the tertiary education curriculum, and make it a compulsory Course for every student. The Nigerian Government also built Entrepreneurship Centres for the universities in order to ensure that entrepreneurship education is being implemented effectively. In a bid to answer the clarion call, the Rivers State Government also established Entrepreneurship Faculties in the universities, and recruited lecturers to equip students with entrepreneurial skills that will make them self-reliant upon graduation.

However, despite all the concerted efforts Nigeria and Rivers State have been making to ensure self-reliance among the youths, unemployment issues remain unabated. It seems the implementation of entrepreneurship education has little or no effect on the teeming unemployed graduates, who ordinarily would have contributed to the growth of Nigerian economy. The researchers are worried about this scenario. For the past two decades entrepreneurship education was introduced into the education system, does it mean that it is not effectively managed in public universities in Rivers State? This underscored this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine how entrepreneurship education is managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State; and
- Ascertain the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State?

- To what extent are instructional facilities managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at .05 alpha level:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

METHODS

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The population comprised all the 41 Entrepreneurship Directors in the 3 public universities in Rivers State. These include: University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE). AS at the time of this study, UNIPORT has 11 Directors, RSU 14 and IAUE 16 respectively. Out of these Directors, 28 are males whereas 13 are females. The entire population, which represents 100%, was used as the sample which infers the use of census sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a 17-item self-structured questionnaire entitled: “Management of Entrepreneurship Education for Developing Entrepreneurial Human Capital Questionnaire (MEEDEHCQ).” The questionnaire was structured after the four-point modified Likert rating scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent with weights of: 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively.

The instrument was validated by three experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation of Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach’s Alpha method. The reliability coefficient for MEEDEHC was 0.76. The subscale reliability for the extent to which lecturers are managed and the extent instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital are 0.74 and 0.77 respectively; hence, they were adjudged to be reliable for the field study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test at .05 level of significance.

A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to ascertain “High Extent” or “Low Extent”. The decision rule therefore was that any mean score less than the criterion mean of 2.50 were tagged “Low Extent” while mean scores of 2.50 and above represented “High Extent.”

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations on the opinions of male and female directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State

s/n	Items	Male Directors			Female Directors		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	To what extent are lecturers who specialise in entrepreneurship education assigned to teach it?	1.39	1.66	VLE	1.32	2.51	VLE
2.	To what extent do lecturers undergo trainings to equip themselves with entrepreneurship education best teaching practices?	2.18	1.50	LE	2.35	2.21	LE
3.	To what extent do lecturers' pedagogical approaches instill entrepreneurial mindset in students?	2.64	1.42	HE	2.58	2.14	HE
4.	To what extent are students sent for internship programmes?	1.26	1.68	VLE	1.23	2.53	VLE
5.	To what extent do lecturers engage students in hands-on-activities?	2.57	1.43	HE	2.53	2.17	HE
6.	To what extent do lecturers adopt business plan strategies in teaching entrepreneurial skills?	2.85	1.38	HE	2.89	2.05	HE
7.	To what extent do lecturers engage students in field surveys/trips to factories, businesses, entrepreneurs, etc?	1.18	1.70	VLE	1.92	2.33	VLE
8.	To what extent do lecturers utilize instructional materials that make students experience real situations?	2.76	1.39	HE	2.78	2.08	HE
9.	To what extent are successful entrepreneurs/skilled resource persons invited to train students on some entrepreneurial skills?	2.91	1.36	HE	2.86	2.06	HE
Aggregate Mean/Standard Deviation		2.19	1.50	LE	2.27	2.23	LE

NB: Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.00-3.50; High Extent (HE) = 2.50-2.99; Low Extent (LLE) = 2.00-2.49; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0.00-1.99

Data on Table 1 revealed the mean responses of male and female Directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State. Their responses indicate that lecturers are managed to low extent. This is evidenced in their aggregate mean scores of 2.19 and 2.27 respectively.

Research Question 2: To what extent are instructional facilities managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviations on the opinions of male and female directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State

s/n	Items	Male Directors			Female Directors		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
10.	To what extent are students exposed to state-of-the-art learning facilities?	2.27	1.49	HE	2.18	2.26	HE
11.	To what extent are the available instructional materials managed in teaching entrepreneurship education?	2.38	1.47	LE	2.41	2.19	LE
12.	To what extent are ICT infrastructural facilities such as Internet, WiFi, etc used in the teaching-learning process?	1.16	1.70	VLE	1.13	2.56	VLE
13.	To what extent do students utilise digital tools in entrepreneurship education classes?	1.29	1.68	VLE	1.22	2.53	VLLE
14.	To what extent are maintenance culture carried out on the available learning equipment?	2.39	1.46	LE	2.34	2.21	LE
15.	To what extent are entrepreneurship education workshops equipped for practicals?	2.26	1.49	LE	2.21	2.25	LE
16.	To what extent are furniture adequate for teaching hands-on skills in entrepreneurship education classes?	2.59	1.43	HE	2.56	2.15	HE
17.	To what extent are well-equipped Entrepreneurship Centres established in your school?	2.36	1.47	LE	2.33	2.21	LE
Aggregate Mean/Standard Deviation		2.09	1.52	LE	2.05	2.29	LE

NB: Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.00-3.50; High Extent (HE) = 2.50-2.99; Low Extent (LLE) = 2.00-2.49; Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0.00-1.99

Table 2 displays the mean responses of male and female Directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State. Their responses indicate that instructional facilities managed to low extent. This is evidenced in their aggregate mean scores of 2.09 and 2.05 respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State

Gender of Directors	N	Mean	SD.	DF.	t-value	Sig.	Decision
Male Directors	28	2.19	1.50	39	-.112	.052	Not Significant
Female Directors	13	2.27	2.23				

Data in Table 3 revealed that male Directors have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.19 and 1.50 while that of female Directors are 2.27 and 2.23 respectively. With degree of freedom

of 39, the calculated t-value of -.112 is not significant because of the significant value of .052. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test on the difference between the mean ratings of male and female directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State

Gender of Directors	N	Mean	SD.	DF.	t-value	Sig.	Decision
Male Directors	28	2.09	1.52	39	.161	.067	Not Significant
Female Directors	13	2.05	2.29				

Data in Table 4 revealed that male Directors have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.09 and 1.52 while that of female Directors are 2.05 and 2.29 respectively. With degree of freedom of 39, the calculated t-value of .161 is not significant because of the significant value of .067. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Directors on the extent to which instructional facilities are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study revealed that the extent to which lecturers are managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State is low. These include: not assigning entrepreneurship education courses to lecturers who specialise in it; lecturers not attending frequent trainings to equip themselves with entrepreneurship education best teaching practices and students are not sent for internship programmes. It was also revealed that students' exposure to field surveys/trips to factories, businesses, entrepreneurs are to very low extent. The implication of this finding is that lecturers still do not teach entrepreneurship education in line with global teaching best practices. This finding corroborates with Agu et al. (2022), who conducted a study to ascertain the pedagogies lecturers adopt in teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities and discovered that most of them adopted the theoretical approach which enrich the cognitive domain to the detriment of the psychomotor domain. It is also in consonance with Asiyai (2013), who revealed that recruiting the right lecturers and inviting successful Nigerian entrepreneurs to train students are strategies for effective management of entrepreneurship education. In agreement, Buccata and Taleaga (2023); O'Neill and Bagchi-Sen (2022) suggested that recruiting and managing lecturers are critical if universities are to produce world-class graduates and maintain global competitiveness.

Another finding of this study revealed that instructional facilities are managed to a low extent in public universities in Rivers State. These include: poor maintenance culture on the available learning equipment, workshops and Entrepreneurship Centres. It was also discovered that ICT infrastructural facilities such as Internet, Wi-Fi, digital tools are not available let alone

managing them. This implies that students are not exposed to technological devices in this digitalised evolving world due to dearth of instructional facilities. This finding is line with Asiyai (2013), who posited that establishing entrepreneurship programme centres and providing adequate instructional facilities are strategies for effective management of entrepreneurship education. It is also line with Rafiana (2024), who observed that lack of exposure to state-of-the-art facilities and technologies hinder students in developing technopreneurial mindset. The finding is in agreement with Ayeni et al. (2018); Akpan and Etor (2013); Njoku and Onyegbula (2017), who discovered in their various studies that adequate infrastructures, learning equipment and instructional materials are integral for effective management of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that the extent to which entrepreneurship education is managed for developing entrepreneurial human capital in public universities in Rivers State is very low. This poses a serious threat to our national economic growth because a nation's human capital determines its productivity and development. Hence, managing entrepreneurship education effectively is central to developing and empowering human capital to be critical thinkers, problem-solvers, job creators, enterprising and productive youths that can transform the economy of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- The universities' Management should ensure that Entrepreneurship Courses are assigned to lecturers who specialise in them, and also ensure that the lecturers constantly attend training programmes that will enable them to diversify their pedagogies in line with the global best teaching practices.
- Directors of Entrepreneurship Centres/Programmes should endeavour to partner with managers of industries and companies in order to assist them with the procurement of necessary resource materials needed to build entrepreneurial human capital.

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