

Assessing The Richness of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum Content: Empirical Evidence

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Abstract: *The study examines the content and support mechanism of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The content and support mechanism remain fundamental in curriculum issue. The study used teachers' population and 216 samples were employed. Questionnaire instrument was used in data collection process and descriptive statistics was employed in analysing the data. The findings of the study show that content and support mechanism of the curriculum were adequate. The implication of the study revealed that content and support mechanism are capable of providing students with entrepreneurship skills require and it is recommended that periodic review of content and support mechanism in order to ensure consistency of curriculum with time and global trend.*

Key words: *Curriculum, entrepreneurship, skills, content and support mechanism.*

I. Introduction

Nigeria is among the countries that embrace entrepreneurship education being an effective mechanism for skills development and employment especially among youth. The country is blessed with substantial human capital and estimated that about 21% of the population are youth (NPC, 2006).

Entrepreneurship has widely been recognized as the engine driving the economy and society of most nations (Carree & Thurik, 2002). Today entrepreneurship is considered the essential lever to cope with the new competitive landscape (Hitt and Reed, 2000). Entrepreneurship is a worldwide phenomenon with economic growth across the globe positively impacted by the emergence of new and innovative start-ups.

Shane and Venkataraman (2002) view entrepreneurship as a "process through which opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, articulated and exploited" They argued that the field of entrepreneurship involves the study of sources of opportunities, the process of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities. In this context the entrepreneur is defined as the individual who discovers, evaluates, and exploits opportunities.

II. Variables

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a new field in the academia but has achieved a growing recognition that it can contribute towards the creation of an enterprise culture among learners Kuratko (2003). Entrepreneurship Education is the increasing interest in the development of education programs to encourage and enhance entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education is an educational programme that provides the students with knowledge, skills and motivation needed to start up a small scale business.

Kenton and Ervin (2000) define entrepreneurship education as an educational discipline that prepares people especially youth to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers that contribute to economic development and sustainable communities.

Entrepreneurship education develops the individual in the skills, attitudes, competencies, beliefs and the perspective of conceiving, planning, starting an enterprise for sustained benefits. Entrepreneurship involves risk-bearing, property right and responsibility as well as freedom which is the power of independent decision making by an entrepreneur or groups without external interference.

Ojo and Gbinigie (2006) opined that an education system that helps the youth to develop a mind set on creation of jobs at an early time in life may just be the solution. This can be achieved through the designing and teaching of a combination of course usually drawn from the social and management science. Entrepreneurship education involves opportunity recognition, commitment of resource and creation of a business of value to deliver the goods and service (Nwosu, 2004).

The goal of entrepreneurship education is to empower graduates irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills that will enable them to engage in income yielding venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sector. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators (Bassey and Archibong 2005).

Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different contexts. These behaviours can be practiced, developed and learned.

Entrepreneurship Education in Educational Institutions

There is growing recognition of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as a driving force to economic development and job creation. Globally it is noticeable that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education has gained an international recognition a field in the academia. The growing number of universities and colleges offering entrepreneurship is an acknowledgement of entrepreneurship as a course that can be taught. Solomon, Duffy and Tarabishy (2002) point out that the dilemma is not that the demand is high, but that the methods of teaching selected meet the new innovative and creative mindset of student. What should be taught and how it should be taught constitute the relevant question regarding Entrepreneurship education. This question invites an analysis of the content and teaching methods suitable for a real entrepreneurship education. It is then essential to discuss issues in an entrepreneurship education curriculum.

To achieve this mission, institutions are called upon to contribute through education and training (Finkle and Deeds 2001; Laukkanen, 2000). Today, entrepreneurship is currently taught at more than 1500 colleges and universities around the world (Menzies, 2003; Charney and Libecap, 2000).

Entrepreneurship and small business education has exploded to more than 2,200 courses, 277 endowed positions, 44 refereed academic journals, mainstream management journals devoting more issues, to entrepreneurship, and over 100 established and funded centers Kuratko, (2003). This indicates that Entrepreneurship education is well catered for in the USA, as far as the educational infrastructure for entrepreneurship is concerned.

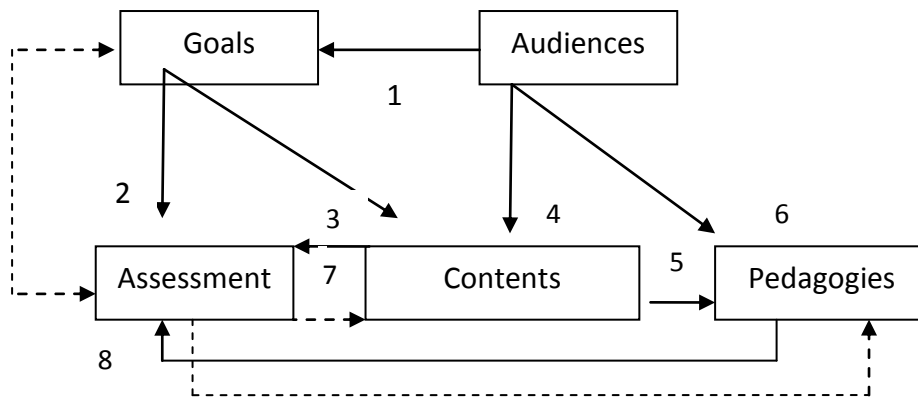
In Nigeria, the Federal Government directed the National Universities Commission (NUC) National Commission for Collages of Education (NCCE), and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to ensure that institutions under them establish centres for entrepreneurship development. The strategic objectives of this national policy are improving the capacity of youths to develop positive independent and innovative thought, process and overall entrepreneurial mindset, and the development of vocational skills as a way of stimulating future graduates towards venture creation.

Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum

Curriculum for entrepreneurship education is being developed, refined and debated because it is evident that entrepreneurship education is a field of interest for universities and colleges globally. However, the rationale for developing and refining the curriculum is based on empirical evidence that not only the curricular have concentrated on preparing the students towards the “take-a job” option instead by the “make-a job” option Kourilsky and Walstad (2000) but also that venture creation is a possible and desirable option Brenner, Pringle and Greenhaus (1991).

Curriculum Content of Entrepreneurship Education

Content of entrepreneurship education curriculum has been identified as one of the five main issues alongside audience and objectives, pedagogies and assessment methods in debating how to develop entrepreneurship through education (Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004) identify five main issues in debating how to develop entrepreneurship through education, namely the variety of audience and objectives, the contents of entrepreneurship course, pedagogies and assessment methods. Developing creative curriculum that meet the rigours of academia whilst keeping a reality-based focus and entrepreneurial climate in the learning experience environment remains major challenge for educators (Soloman, Duffy and Tarabishy 2002).



Brown (2000) states that entrepreneurship education should be “viewed in terms of the skills that can be taught and characteristic that can be engendered in student’s in order to help them develop new and innovative plans. In this respect Brown mention that the curriculum has to focus on the features needed to conceive of and start a new business. Other component of entrepreneurship content include

Skill Acquisition

A society develops the type of theoretical or practical knowledge which is consonant with its values. These values are social, cultural, political and economic, which have been developed through ages. Ekong (2008) contended that the introduction of the entrepreneurship skill acquisition into educational system will enable the youth to become enterprising, innovative and creative. They will be job creators rather than job seekers in the economic system of any country. The introduction of the entrepreneurship education in the educational system will naturally consolidate developed partnerships that will promote the possibility of harnessing diverse ideas, knowledge, expertise, experiences and skills for national development. The resultant effect will be effective and efficient resources management, sustained economic development as well as scientific and technological breakthrough.

Entrepreneurship skills acquisition could lead to viable economy with more employers rather than employees thereby having a cream of capable men and women who will positively influence the national economy and who could participate in the development process. The national environment will become a business economy, rationalizing social inequalities in pursuant of the human-centred socio-economic development and reforms.

The inculcation of entrepreneurship skills in the students of technical and vocational training tertiary institutions will lead to the creation of awareness and understanding of the socio-economic and environmental situation for sustainable national development. It will ensure stable national growth in the provision of employment options for Nigerian graduates. Entrepreneurship education could lead to capacity building of the beneficiary mentally, physically and intellectually thereby placing them on the advantage of acquiring, interpreting, extrapolating information and consequently applying such capacities in building self in particular and the nation general. The inculcation of entrepreneurship skills acquisition in the education could provide the needed solution to the complex developmental problems of the nation such as resource wastage, hunger, disease control, etc. It will lead to opportunities for individual and collective development of latent potentialities for self-fulfillment and actualization. Moreover, the general avoidable ignorance and poverty will be reduced if not totally eliminated among graduates in as much as entrepreneurship skills acquisition is embraced.

III. Method

Population

The population comprises of academic staff from twelve technical and vocational tertiary institutions in the North West geo-political that include Abdu Gusau polytechnic Talata Mafara ;Federal College of Education Technical (Female) Gusau; Federal polytechnic K/Namoda Kaura Namado; Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic; Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic Kazaure; Jigawa State Polytechnic, Dutse; Kaduna Polytechnic,; Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic,; Kano State Polytechnic,; Federal College of Education Technical Bichi, Bichi; Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Birnin-Kebbi and Sokoto State Polytechnic.

A total population of 1513 was discovered as presented in the table 1.1

Table 1.1: Population

S/N	Institution	Teachers
1.	Abdu Gusau polytechnic Talata Mafara Zamfara state	128
2.	Federal College of Education Technical (Female) Gusau Zamfara State	181
3.	Federal polytechnic K/Namoda Kaura Namado Zamfara State	120
4.	Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic Katsina State	135
5.	Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic Kazaure Jigawa state	108
6.	Jigawa State Polytechnic, Dutse, Jigawa State.	85
7.	Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State.	255
8.	Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Kaduna State	79
9.	Kano State Polytechnic, Kano State.	148
10.	Federal College of Education Technical Bichi, Bichi Kano State	163
11.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Birnin-Kebbi Kebbi State	48
12.	Sokoto State Polytechnic, Sokoto State	63
	Total	1513

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Eight institutions were selected out of the twelve existing school present the North West geo-political zone. Within the sampled schools, a sample of 310 staff were selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table.

Proportional stratified random sampling technique was employed in the sampling procedure.

Table 1.2 Sample Size

SN	Institutions	Teachers
1	Abdu Gusau polytechnic Talata Mafara Zamfara state	27
2	Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi	27
3	Federal polytechnic K/Namoda Kaura Namado Zamfara State	27
4	Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic Katsina State	27
5	Jigawa State Polytechnic, Dutse, Jigawa State.	27
6	Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State.	27
7	Kano State Polytechnic, Kano State.	27
8	Sokoto State Polytechnic, Sokoto State	27
	Total	216

Instrument

The instrument used in data collection was a Teacher Assessment Questionnaire (TAQ) which is designed to gather information about the content, support mechanism, teaching, and assessment methods of entrepreneurship courses and consists of two sections. Section 'A' covers the demographic information such as Gender, Educational qualification, Age, experience and subject taught. The information will help in describing and assessing the relationship among the component variables. Section B covers the main tasks and comprises of content, support mechanism, teaching, and assessment methods of entrepreneurship courses.

The reliability of the instrument, was established test retest. In test-retest technique the assumption is that there is not a significant change in the construct that is being measured, and that the constructs are not expected to change. Olaofe (2010) postulated that test-retest is a process of performing the same survey with the same respondents at different moments of time, the closer the results, the greater the test-retest reliability of the survey instrument. However, Kerlinger, (1975) recommended the use of pilot study to test the reliability of the research instrument.

The psychometric properties of the instrument was adequate with internal consistency of .657 indicating that the instruments fulfilled the criteria by Kerlinger (1978) who proposed that any instrument that has reliability value of .60 indicates high reliability. In terms of validity, construct validity has been established. All factors have fulfilled the requirement of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of sampling adequacy which was .875 above the recommended value of .5. The communalities and diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5 further confirming that most of the items shared some common variance with other items.

Principle components analysis was used because the primary purpose was to identify and compute composite involvement scores for the factors underlying the questionnaire. The initial Eigen values showed that the first factor explained 2.72% of the variance, the second factor 3.99% of the variance and the third factor was 3.447% of the variance. The factor solutions were examined, using varimax rotations of the factor loading matrix and the 8 factor solution, explained 91.92% of the variances.

IV. Results

Demographics

Age of the respondents shows that teachers aged 31-40 are the majority 80 (37%), then 41-50 years accounting for 71 (32.9%), 20-30 with 58 (26.9%) and the least are those within 51-60 years accounting for 5 (2.3%). The results demonstrate that most of the teachers in the sampled schools are within 31-40 years of age.

The gender of the respondents revealed that male were the majority with 188 (87%) while female counterpart were the least with 21 (9.7%). The finding revealed that male academic staff accounts for the highest number among the academic staff.

The results for academic qualification of the respondents indicates academic staff with first degree account for 84 (38.9%), Masters 69 (31.9%), PhD 4 (1.9%) while others accounts for 48 (22.2%). The results indicate respondents with degree were the majority while the least were academic staff with PhD.

Work experience of the respondents revealed that respondents with less than 10 year work experience account for 108 (50%), those with 10-20 years were 78 (36.1%) and respondents with 20-30 year work experience were 22 (10.2%). The results show that respondents with less than 10 year work experience were the majority.

The curriculum Content

The descriptive statistics for the content of entrepreneurship education is presented in the table below and the results statement 'The content of entrepreneurship education is adequate' shows that out of 216, 4 (1.9%) have indicated strongly disagree, 25 (11.6%) disagree 99 (45.8%) have indicated agree while 83 (38.4%)

indicated strongly agree. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents 182 (84.2%) have agree with statement with mean 3.23 (SD = .74).

Besides that, the results for the question statement ‘The provision for practical skills is adequate’ demonstrates that 8 (3.7%) have indicated strongly disagree, 44 (20.4%) disagree, 108 (50%) agree while 50 (23.1%) strongly agree. The overall result depicts that majority of the respondents 158 (73.1%) have agree with statement with mean 2.95 (SD =.77). Similarly, the results for the question statement that ‘The training in entrepreneurship courses is well focused’ show that 7 (3.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 44 (20.4%) responded disagreed, 114 (52.8%) agree and 49 (22.7%) responded strongly agreed. The overall result demonstrate that majority 163 (75.5%) of the respondents have agree with statement with mean 2.98 (SD =.74). However, the results for the question statement that ‘The time allotted to the courses is adequate’ show that 25 (11.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 49 (22.7%) responded disagreed, 92 (42.6%) agree and 42 (19.4%) responded strongly agreed. The overall result demonstrate that majority of the respondents 134 (62%) have agree with statement with mean 2.72 (SD =.92).

Table 1.3: content of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum

SN	Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
	The content of entrepreneurship education is adequate	4 (1.9%)	25 (11.6%)	99 (45.8%)	83 (38.4%)	3.2370	.73079
	The provision for practical skills is adequate	8 (3.7%)	44 (20.4%)	108 (50%)	50 (23.1%)	2.9524	.77498
	The training in entrepreneurship courses is well focused	7 (3.2%)	39 (18.1%)	114 (52.8%)	49 (22.7%)	2.9809	.74654
	The time allotted to the courses is adequate	25 (11.6%)	49 (22.7%)	92 (42.6%)	42 (19.4%)	2.7260	.92046

Support Mechanism

the descriptive statistics for support mechanism of entrepreneurship education and the results about statement ‘Making entrepreneurship training a part of the curriculum’ shows that out of 3 (1.4%) have indicated strongly disagree, 15 (6.9%) responded disagree, 98 (45.4%) of the respondents indicated agree while 95 (44%) indicated strongly agree. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents 193 (89.4%) have agree with statement with mean 3.35 (SD = .67). Besides that, the results for the question statement that ‘Getting entrepreneurs into classroom to talk about their ventures’ demonstrates that 2 (.9%) of the respondents have indicated strongly disagree, 10 (4.6%) responded disagree, 129 (59.7%) agree while 69 (31.9%). The overall result depicts that majority of the respondents 198 (91.6%) have agree with statement with mean 3.26 (SD =.58).

Similarly, the results for the question statement that ‘Offering apprenticeships for students to work with experienced entrepreneurs’ show that 4 (1.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 21 (9.7%) disagreed with the statement, 111 (51.4%) agreed with the statement and 76 (35.2%) have strongly agreed with statement. The overall result demonstrate that majority 187 (86.6%) of the respondents have agree with statement with mean 3.22 (SD = .69).

However, the results for the question statement that ‘Implementing entrepreneurship training programmes in tertiary institution’ show that 8 (3.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 22 (10.2%) disagreed with the statement, 88 (40.7%) agree with the statement whereas 92 (42.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. The overall result demonstrate that majority 180 (83.3%) of the respondents have agree with statement with mean 3.25 (SD =.79).

Moreover, the results for the question statement that ‘Introducing a degree course in Entrepreneurship’ show that 17 (7.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 41 (19%) disagreed with the statement, 76 (35.2%) agree with the statement whereas 76 (35.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. The overall result demonstrate that majority 152 (70.4%) of the respondents have agree with statement with mean 3.00 (SD =.94).

Meanwhile, the results for the question statement that ‘Matching entrepreneurship training with industrial training schemes’ show that 22 (11.2%) of the respondents have strongly disagreed with the statement, 25 (11.6%) disagreed with the statement, 72 (23.2%) agree with the statement whereas 92 (42.6%) of the respondents have strongly agreed with the statement. The overall result demonstrate that majority 164 (65.8%) of the respondents have agree with statement with mean 3.10 (SD =.98).

Table 1.4: Support Mechanism

SN	Items	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
1	Making entrepreneurship training a part of the curriculum	3 (1.4%)	15 (6.9%)	98 (45.4%)	95 (44%)	3.35	.67629
2	Getting entrepreneurs into classroom to talk about their ventures	2 (.9%)	10 (4.6%)	129 (59.7%)	69 (31.9%)	3.26	.58936
3	Offering apprenticeships for students to work with experienced entrepreneurs	4 (1.9%)	21 (9.7%)	111 (51.4%)	76 (35.2%)	3.22	.69725
4	Implementing entrepreneurship training programmes in tertiary institution.	8 (3.7%)	22 (10.2%)	88 (40.7%)	92 (42.6%)	3.25	.79506
5	Introducing a degree course in Entrepreneurship.	17 (7.9%)	41 (19%)	76 (35.2%)	76 (35.2%)	3.00	.94082
6	Matching entrepreneurship training with industrial training schemes	22 (11.2%)	25 (11.6%)	72 (23.2%)	92 (42.6%)	3.10	.98196

V. Discussion

The demographic information of the respondents captured in the study comprised of age, gender, educational qualification and work experience. The findings of the study demonstrate that the majority of the academic staff in the sample falls within 31-40 years of age indicating that they are within the youthful stage in life. This indicates that they have adequate energy and capable of contributing maximally towards the development and expansion of entrepreneurship education.

Besides age of the respondent, the findings also revealed that majority of the respondents were male which accounted for 87% of the total number of the participants in the study. The finding portrays that male teacher dominate the teaching of Entrepreneurship education with less participation of female counterpart in the schools. The gender in balance in the teaching of entrepreneurship education demonstrates that the skills acquisition programmes being provided in the schools favours male than female counter parts.

Moreover, the findings also revealed that majority of the academic staff teaching entrepreneurship education in the school possesses bachelor degree. The finding shows that the teachers require more professional qualification so that they can handle entrepreneurship education better. Meanwhile, the findings regarding work experience among the teaching staff revealed that teachers with less than 10 year work experience were the majority, depicting that the level of experience of handing Entrepreneurship education is not yet adequate. The finding however, suggests that teachers handling the subject matter should have more experience and training for better service delivery.

The findings regarding content, support and method of assessment of entrepreneur education have been found to be adequate for meeting the objectives of entrepreneurship education. The finding is consistent with the findings of Zeithaml and Rice (1987). The study demonstrates that content of the entrepreneurship education curriculum is rich to meet the demand for entrepreneurship education. Cooney (1970) contended that curriculum is generally understood to mean all the processes, products and human activities intended for the realization of the society's aspirations through schools. The objectives of Entrepreneurship Education as forwarded by Yahaya (2011) cited in Anene and Imam (n.d) include

- (1) Address the problem of unemployment and underemployment
- (2) To encourage Universities to generate knowledge and other competencies that will build an entrepreneurial human capital for national development.
- (3) Challenge Universities to evolve ways to foster entrepreneurship especially in diffusing innovations through research activities.
- (4) To enable Universities move further up from traditional enclaves to include possible commercialization of untapped research activities which could be new sources of revenue
- (5) To help build an innovative and entrepreneurial culture in order to create a productive and socially responsible generation of graduate among others.

The rich content of entrepreneurship education illustrates that the curriculum is capable of producing entrepreneurs with diverse education and experience. US Department of State/Bureau of Information Program identify personal attributes that an entrepreneur should have that comprise of the followings:

1. Creativity, which is the spark that drives the development of new products or services or ways to do business as it pushes for innovation and improvement as well as continuous learning, questioning, and thinking outside of prescribed formulas.
2. Dedication is what motivates the entrepreneur to hard work, especially in the beginning, to get the endeavor off the ground. Planning and ideas are joined by hard work to succeed while dedication makes it happen.

3. Determination is the extremely strong desire to achieve success and it includes persistence and the ability to bounce back after rough times. It persuades the entrepreneur to keep efforts. For the true entrepreneur, money is not the motivation but success is the motivator while money is the reward.
4. Flexibility is the ability to move quickly in response to changing market needs. It is being true to a dream while also being mindful of market realities. Entrepreneur modifies vision to accommodate the needs of the customer.
5. Leadership is the ability to create rules and to set goals. It is the capacity to follow through to see that rules are followed and goals are accomplished.
6. Passion is what gets entrepreneurs started and keeps them there. It gives entrepreneurs the ability to convince others to believe in their vision. It can't substitute for planning, but it will help entrepreneur to remain focused and to get others to look at their plans.
7. Self-confidence comes from thorough planning, which reduces uncertainty and the level of risk. It also comes from expertise. Self-confidence gives the entrepreneur the ability to listen without being easily swayed or intimidated.
8. Smarts deals with common sense joined with knowledge or experience in a related business or endeavor. Smartness gives a person good instinct while knowledge gives expertise. Employment, education, and life experiences all contribute to smarts.

However, the findings indicate that curriculum content must be responsive enough to address short comings in the school system. It is in recognition of that Ogunkunle (2009 Cited in Bete, 2012) remarked that global changes in recent times call for innovations in the school curriculum. The content of entrepreneurship education curriculum will help in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as it response to the current and anticipated needs, problems and aspirations of the learner (Emah, 2009 cited in Bete, 2012).

VI. Conclusions

The study highlighted some important aspects of entrepreneurship education and its relevance to the development of life skills. Nigeria educational system recognizes the importance of entrepreneurship education with diverse initiatives and policies. The presence of entrepreneurship issue in the national policy on education and emphasis being given to it in tertiary institutions are some of the proof that priority attention has been given to this issue.

The emphasis accorded to entrepreneurship education revealed that innovation is increasingly recognized as important drivers of economic growth, productivity and employment in the present era of global competition. This stimulating innovation and growth-oriented entrepreneurship is a key to economic and societal challenge in which universities and other tertiary institutions have much to contribute (United Nations, 2011).

Recommendations

There is a growing awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education across all levels. But to make people get used to entrepreneurship education and to establish it as a normal element in education, its popularity has to be increased. More actions from the government should be taken to include entrepreneurship education in the school system, like it had been done parts of the world. Also more governmental funding and involvement in entrepreneurship education should be raised, since entrepreneurship has benefits on several levels.

More entrepreneurship educational programmes should be promoted for the specific populations such as disadvantaged communities and special need people since entrepreneurship education have a positive impact on social inclusion. Bigger programmes that will create a good image of entrepreneurship education need to be initiated.

The ministry of education should ensure that policies and programmes that are geared towards entrepreneurship education and ministry of education should help students to get motivation, strategy and practical vision.

The students should be equipped with strategy to make their product of service distinguishable from others. The strategy will help students to acquire techniques of competition either through price or through the use of large quantities as it is widely believes that large firms that produce huge quantities have the advantage in lowering costs.

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