AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRES IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability of infrastructural facilities for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in universities in South East Nigeria. One research question guided the study with two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population was 116 employees from eight Entrepreneurship Centres in South East Nigeria. A researcher-developed questionnaire comprising 11 items and validated by experts in the field was used to collect data. A pilot test was conducted with the instrument and the application of the Cronbach Alpha on the data collected yielded co-efficient value of 0.76. Mean ratings and standard deviation were used to analyze data in respect of the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that infrastructural facilities needed for the smooth operation of Entrepreneurship Centres in universities were available in line with the NUC guideline. It was recommended among others, that Government and other stakeholders in education should continue to provide infrastructural facilities and equipment in all entrepreneurship centres. It was also recommended that a review of the state of infrastructure and equipment in the centres should be carried out on a regular basis so as to avoid dilapidation and spoilage.

Keyword: Availability, Infrastructural facilities, Entrepreneurship, Study, Centres

Introduction

The need to improve the human capital of a nation and reduce the rate of unemployment among graduates of tertiary institution in Nigeria has increased government call for the promotion and integration of entrepreneurship education.According to Oyetola (2010), entrepreneurship education is a better approach to the eradication of poverty and unemployment in any nation. For Oyetola through entrepreneurship education youths are empowered to be self-reliant and job creators.Adesanya (2017) identified entrepreneurship as a means of providing employment and income generation in the country.Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) further noted that entrepreneurship education brings about entrepreneurship in a country. This is so because through entrepreneurship education individuals are trained and educated on the benefits and gains of entrepreneurship. In support of the views of Izedonmi and Okafor (2010) who asserted that entrepreneurial training develops skills and capacity for employment and wealth creationwhich leads to national development.

This is why the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced entrepreneurial education in institutions of higher learning in 2007/2008 academic session so as to equip the youth with necessary skills to be self-sufficient and self-reliant (Izedonmi&Okafor, 2010). It is in light of this, that the Department of Student Support Services (DSSS) (n.d) asserted that for students to imbibe entrepreneurship principles and the requisite skills for achievements in real and

concrete terms, it is important that the entrepreneurship principles be inculcated in them. This can be as part of the entrepreneurial training process which can only be achieved if Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) are established to put theory into practice. Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009) further noted that a draft entrepreneurship curriculum has been designed for full implementation as part of university programmes. Also, centres for entrepreneurship development and knowledge transfer are to be established through clear directives from the National Universities Commission (NUC).

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC) through its Department of Student Support Services (DSSS), the vision of the Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) is to serve as a nerve centre or a hub for the education, research, growth and development of sustainable entrepreneurial culture among university students for the creation of wealth and socio-economic growth through value addition. The DSSS stated that the mission of the ESCs is to provide facilities and expertise that will propel the growth and development of entrepreneurial mindsets in students and faculty through sustainable quality, effective and dynamic entrepreneurial activities on campus, networking with industry and similar organizations world-wide.

The National University Commission (NUC) through the Department of Student Support Services (DSSS) stated that the provision of infrastructure is a very important criterion required for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres (ESCs) in universities in Nigeria.The Department of Students Support Services (DSSS) (n.d.) stipulated that for any entrepreneurship study centre in any Nigerian university to exist, there should be the presence of infrastructure in the form of a constructed separate building or a renovated existing building which will accommodate fifty students and personnel at a time.The DSSS further asserted that entrepreneurship centres will consist of the following infrastructures:

1. Physical facilities: DSSS noted that to ensure the centres are functional and the training is more meaningful to the students and faculty, the following facilities must be acquired:multi-purpose foyer, halls, seminar rooms and staff offices
2. Library Facilities: to achieve the objective of the centre, the library services must be continually improved to respond to the needs of the students through Information and Communication Technology for optimum utilization. The DSSS document specifically noted that there shall be an e-library which must be directly linked to the NUC resource and knowledge centre for the use of available resources.

For Afolabi, Yusuf, Ogunjobi and Idowu (2014), architectural services are very pertinent to the establishment of entrepreneurship education centres. According to Afolabi et al (2014), the architect plays a prominent role in the procurement of suitable plans for the entrepreneurship education centre. Furthermore, Onyesom and Okolocha (2013) noted that the importance of infrastructures like offices in the training of students for the demands of the real world. Onyesom and Okolocha opined that infrastructures like the model offices in business education are a working prototype of operations which reflect the real environment of a business office as closely as is practically possible. This can also be said of entrepreneurship laboratories; they should reflect the real business environment. This will enable students get used to the situation in school before graduation.

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Unfortunately, there have been reports that most entrepreneurship study centres have failed to meet the infrastructural budgeting and human resourcesrequirements expected for its establishment in most universities in Nigeria (Adejimola&Olufunmilayo, 2009). According to Aja, Onoh and Igwe (2018), level of infrastructural development provided by the government is still very low therefore affecting to a very high extent the level of productivity and entrepreneurial activities in the country. This seems to have resulted in high rate of many business enterprises winding up prematurely as a result of lack of possession of appropriate entrepreneurial skills by educated and uneducated youths. However, the level of infrastructural provision in the entrepreneurship study centres in south east Nigeria is still not clear. It is against this background that the study determined the availability of infrastructural facilities provided for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in universities in South East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the rate of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria has risen astronomically. This has increased the call for the institutionalization of entrepreneurship education in universities in 2007/2008 session. However, over ten years now the rate of unemployment in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria in general has not ceased. The researcher is worried that the entrepreneurship study centres seem to have failed in meeting the targets for which they are established. This is evident in the high number of graduates'unemployment in the zone. This situation has been blamed for the in increased rate of crime and violent activities among youths in the zone. Scholars like Aja, Onoh and Igwe (2018) have blamed the failure of entrepreneurhipcentres to adequately prepare students for self-employment on the lack of availability of infrastructural facilities in some centres. The researcher wonders if this assertion is true. Thus the study is aimed at determining the availability of infrastructural facilities for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in universities in South East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the availability of infrastructural facilities for the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in universities in South East Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the availability ofInfrastructural facilities for the operation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities relative to the NUC stipulations?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the availability of infrastructural facilities for the operation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities based on gender (Male/Female).
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the availability of infrastructural facilities for theoperation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities as a result of ownership of institution (Federal and State).

Method

The study was conducted in South East Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study.The population of this study comprised 116 employees of the Entrepreneurship Centres from eight (8) universities with functional Entrepreneurship Centres in the zone.The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the reviewed literature and research questions guiding the study. The instrument is titled "Questionnaire on Implementation of Guidelines for Entrepreneurship Centres in Universities" and has two main sections- A and B. Section A contained three items on respondents' background information covering gender and ownership of institution while Section B contained 11 items on a 5- point rating scale. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot test. The instrument was administeredto a sample of ten (10) employees of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies, Delta State University, Abraka who were not included in the population of the study. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability method on the obtained data yielded a score of 0.76 for internal consistency which was deemed high for the study.

The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. Items with mean ratings between 2.50 and above were regarded as available while those items with mean ratings below 2.50 were regarded as not available.

For the hypotheses testing, where the calculated t value is less than the critical value of t, it meant that the variable does not significantly affect respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was accepted. Conversely, where the calculated t value is greater than or equal to the critical t value, it meant that the variable has a significant effect on the respondents' mean ratings and the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question: What is the availability ofInfrastructural facilities for the operation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities relative to the NUC stipulations?

Table 1: Respondents Mean ratings on the extent to which infrastructure are provided for the operation of entrepreneurship centres in universities N=108

S/N	Items on Infrastructure	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Multi-purpose Foyer	4.39	0.69	Available
2.	Lecture Halls	4.20	0.84	Available
3.	Board rooms	4.20	1.00	Available
4.	Seminar rooms	4.00	1.03	Available
5.	Staff offices	4.22	0.89	Available
6.	Workshops	4.11	1.02	Available
7.	Laboratories	3.76	1.08	Available
8.	Computer center	3.96	0.92	Available
9.	Separate entrepreneurship center building	4.05	1.05	Available
10.	ICT facilities	4.06	0.98	Available
11.	Electricity	3.94	1.18	Available
	Grand Mean	**4.08**		**Available**

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents opined that infrastructural facilities are available for the Entrepreneurship Study Centreswith mean scores ranging from 3.76 to 4.39. The grand mean of 4.08 indicates that items of infrastructures are available for the operation of the entrepreneurship study centres in universities in South.

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Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the availability of infrastructural facilities for the operation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities based on gender (Male/Female).

Table 2: t-test analysis of respondents' mean ratings on the availability of infrastructure for the operation of entrepreneurship centres in universities based on gender

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	a	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	56	4.07	0.88	106	0.05	-0.06	1.96	NS
Female	52	4.08	0.98					

Data in Table 2 show that the calculated t-value of-0.26 at 106 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents based on gender, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the availability of infrastructural facilities for theoperation of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in universities as a result of ownership of institution (Federal and State).

Table 3: t-test analysis of respondents' mean ratings on the availability ofinfrastructure for the operation of entrepreneurship centresin universities based on ownership of institution

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	a	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Federal Uni.	58	3.57	1.04	106	0.05	0.89	1.96	NS
State Uni	50	3.64	1.01					

Data in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 0.89 at 106 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.960. This shows that there is no significant difference in the respondents mean ratings as a result of ownership of universities, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

Findings indicated that infrastructures are available for the operation of the entrepreneurship study centres in universities in South East. This is in line with the guideline of the Department of Students Support Services (DSSS) (n.d.) which stipulated that for any entrepreneurship study centre in any Nigerian university to exist, there should be the presence of infrastructure in the form of a constructed separate building or a renovated existing building which will accommodate fifty students and personnel at a time. The importance of infrastructure to the entrepreneurship centres was highlighted in Onyesom and Okolocha (2013) who noted the importance of infrastructures like offices in the training of students for the demands of the real world. Onyesom and Okolochafurther opined that infrastructures like the model offices are a working prototype of operations which reflect the real environment of a business office as closely as is practically possible. This can also be said of entrepreneurship laboratories; they should reflect the real business environment. This will enable students get used to the situation in school before graduation.

The test of the first hypothesis revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the availability ofinfrastructure for the operation of entrepreneurship .study centres(ESCs) in universities based on gender and ownership of institution. This might have been as a result of the adherence to the guidelines for establishment of entrepreneurship centres by the management of tertiary institutions in the zone and the strict monitoring and supervision of the NUC on its implementation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that infrastructural facilities are available for the establishment of entrepreneurship study centres in universities in Nigeria. This indicates that structures and facilities are in place for the entrepreneurial development of students in the universities in the south East. It is imperative that measures are put in place to facilitate that the facilities provided are put into good use.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Government and other stakeholders in education should continue to provide infrastructural facilities and equipment in all entrepreneurship centres.
2. A review of the state of infrastructure and equipment in the centres should be carried out on a regular basis so as to avoid dilapidation and spoilage.
3. The administrators of the entrepreneurship study centres should ensure that proper inventory of the infrastructural facilities are kept. For example the number of office chairs and tables, air conditions, fans etc should be known and recorded to prevent theft.

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