



Perceptions of adult educators on the integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum in south east Nigeria

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Abstract

Adult education has proven to be an aspect of education which eludes the shortcomings of other forms of education in its entirety. It is a discipline which not only provides opportunity for formal education but also creates avenue for other forms of education which enhances self-reliance and national development. This study seeks to explore the adult educators' perception on Integration of Entrepreneurship Courses in Adult Education Undergraduate Curriculum in South - East Nigeria. A research question and hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive research design was used for the study. The population of the study was made up of 66 adult educators in the seven tertiary institutions which offer adult education courses in South-east Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The research question was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation. Z-test was used to test the hypothesis. The study reestablished that integration of more entrepreneurship courses in the curriculum of Adult Education programme would serve as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills which would help them become independent on graduating. Adult educators with different years of service experience do not have significant different opinion in the integration of more entrepreneurship courses in the academic programmes of adult education. It was recommended among others that Government, Federal Ministry of Education and Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should integrate more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills. This will enable them to be relevant on graduation and competent enough to set up their own enterprises for necessary entrepreneurship.

Keywords: adult education, self-reliance, national development

Introduction

There has been increasing national concern over the continuous rates of unemployment in the country in comparison to the rising number of students who graduates from tertiary institutions. This may be partly attributed to the fact that the tertiary education curriculum seem to have some deficiency on the strategies that equip students with self-reliant skills (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011) ^[8]. In Nigeria specifically, there exist unemployment challenges and widespread work deficits. Several school leavers and employable adults are either finding it difficult to secure employment or are laid off work for one reason or the other which would have been different if the graduates possess self-reliant skills. Oyesiku, (2010) ^[19] pointed out that the policy of increased admission and graduation from Nigeria universities since 1976 was aimed at easing problem of unemployment. It was hoped that by providing this opportunity, the manpower gap in labour force will be filled. He further asserted that the incidence of graduate unemployment is indeed an unfortunate problem, because the graduates find it difficult to embark on labour activities to generate growth and develop the economy. However, the reverse would have been the case if the curriculum used in schools were suffused with entrepreneurship courses.

The National Bureau of Statistics NBS, (2020) affirmed that no fewer than 13.9 million youths are unemployed in Nigeria and millions of graduates from tertiary institutions

enter the labour market every year which would not have been the case if adequate entrepreneurship courses are integrated in the students' curriculum for self-reliance at the time of graduation. According to Oluwadare, Taiwo and Adekunle (2016) ^[18] integrating entrepreneurship courses in education curriculum will provide meaningful education outcome for self-reliance and subsequently encourage youths to derive profit and be self-independent. Okafor (2011) ^[16] opined that in the South - east Nigeria, many adults and young people encounter difficulties in accessing employment opportunities. Some youths of South-east Nigeria opt into businesses while some engage in different nefarious criminal and ritual acts to make ends meet especially in states such as Anambra, Imo, Abia, Enugu and the Northern states. Nigeria as a developing nation needs a comprehensive and functional education that will impart and impact the right knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as stir up the productive potentials of the citizenry to achieve self-reliance.

Godfrey (2008) ^[9] posits that self-reliance refers to independency which implies that an individual is able to depend on himself and do things without assistance from others. Self-reliance is related to what a person does using his body and soul which can transcend into income or other benefits to the person involved, directly or indirectly. Self-reliant skills are competences acquired through learning which one uses independently to garner economic resources

to meet one's needs in life without assistance from anybody. Nigeria as a developing nation need a comprehensive and functional education that will impart and impact the right knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as stir up the productive potentials of the citizenry to achieve self-reliance. In the rapidly changing world, the quest for self-reliance through education has been the desire of many nations especially with the present global economic challenges. Part of this giant stride can be taken by adult educators in tertiary institutions if the curriculum for undergraduates is infused with entrepreneurship courses.

Adult educators in the study imply those who facilitate the learning of students in academic departments of adult education in tertiary institutions. They are professionals and experts with specialized knowledge, skills and interests in adult education who teach adult education courses in various higher institutions of learning. Adult educators in different tertiary institutions in the South-east Nigeria have different length of service experiences. They are knowledgeable and savvy enough to express their opinion on issues emanating from the undergraduate curriculum in the various departments.

Adult education is a practical oriented field of study which offers students and graduates with courses in non-formal education which is technical and vocational oriented. In addition, the Department offers an entrepreneurship course named practicum which is a course that encourages practice in self-reliant skills such as arts and craft. However it is still worrisome that the graduates of the Department of Adult Education queue in the labour market for paid employment. Integration of entrepreneurship courses implies incorporation of skilled based activities in curriculum for the learners to develop the capabilities and competencies for self-employment on graduation. According to Pinta and Fittoka (2014)^[20] integration of entrepreneurship focuses on incorporating strategies and skills on entrepreneurship to the topics taught in schools. These strategies include those needed by different people for entrepreneurship in order to build the nation. In building technology, emphasis on entrepreneurial application need to be made in the various class activities such as building supervision, rehabilitation, designing, landscaping and damage control. Sometimes, some of these additional topics can even be presented in form of infusion where they may be illustrated as instances outside the main content of the topic, but related to skills being developed in the main topic which are necessary in the world of work.

Martin (2015)^[11] considered integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education programmes as a process to providing students with knowledge, skills, and motivations that will encourage them succeed in entrepreneurial activities in a variety of settings. Integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education academic curriculum would offer students tools which will enable them think creatively, analyze business ideas objectively, solve problems effectively, and evaluate projects optimally. Bubou and Okrigwe (2011)^[7] asserted that the importance of integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education curriculum will enable a student to become more confident in relation to setting up a business because entrepreneurship education is oriented towards different ways of realizing opportunities. They noted that management education is focused on the best way to handle resources, while

entrepreneurship education focuses on the realization of available opportunities. In the same vein, Ikeme and Onu (2007)^[10] posited that integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education academic curriculum seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. From the views of the authors, incorporating entrepreneurship courses in adult education curriculum will aid students and graduates from different socioeconomic background to think outside the box and nurture unconventional talents and skills.

Hence, there is need to determine from the views and opinions of adult educators who are experts in their insight on integrating entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum in South-east Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

One of the aims of every society is to prepare her citizens to be by equipping them with self-reliant skills; creativity, originality and independence. The failure of any society to actualize this goal results to massive unemployment which has diverse negative effect. In Nigeria, it is worrisome that many graduates of tertiary institutions do not have entrepreneurship skills. This leads to incompetency in the world of works which could be attributed to existing gap in the curriculum.

This situation has not only posed a great challenge to the economy but also retarded the economic growth of the country (Agboola, 2014)^[1]. Frustration and hopelessness among graduates breed severe and dreadful effects such as insurgency (an example is Boko Haram), terrorism, kidnapping, murder, armed robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking, human trafficking, money ritual and poverty. In addition, due to unemployment, many young and productive Nigerians migrate to other countries to seek for greener pastures.

An ideal employment situation in any progressive nation is reflected on the extent at which all available labour resources are used in the most economic and efficient way. The need therefore arises that educators who are experts in their areas of specialization should come up with solutions on how to encourage and promote self-reliance in students and graduates on graduation, hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine from the opinion of adult educators strategies for equipping adult education graduates with self-reliant skills in South - east Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. The perception of adult educators on integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of adult educators on the integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Adult educators with longer years of service experience (15 years & above) and those with fewer years of service experience (14 years & below) do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on whether integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum will serve as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills.

Method

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive research design. The design involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. It was considered appropriate for this study because it involves collecting and describing in a systematic manner data obtained from the adult educators on their perceptions on the integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum for self-reliant skills. The population of the study was made up of 66 adult educators in the seven tertiary institutions in the South-east Nigeria that offer Adult Education Programmes. The choice of lecturers from the Department of Adult Education in these institutions is that they are the ones who teach the students and have garnered lots of experiences, which will reenact their opinion on the importance of integrating more entrepreneurship courses on adult education undergraduate curriculum that is necessary for self-reliance. The entire population was used for the study hence, no sampling was done. The instrument for data collection was the researcher’s made questionnaire titled “Perceptions of Adult

Educators on the Integration of Entrepreneurship Courses in Adult Education Undergraduate Curriculum in South-east Nigeria (PAEIEC)”. The instrument consists of six sections. Sections A and B. Section A has an item and elicited information on the respondent’s years of service experiences while section B has 9 items and elicited information on the integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. The validity of PAEIEC was determined by three experts from the field of study. The reliability of the instrument was established with a pilot test carried out on 10 lecturers drawn from Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba, Delta State. Their responses were collected and analyzed. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The coefficient reliability yielded internal consistency of 0.91. The research question was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of adult educators on the integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills?

Table 1: Mean ratings of adult educators on the integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum N= 63

Items on Entrepreneurship Courses	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Teaching students how to do feasibility study and developing business plan will equip them with self-reliant skills	3.48	.64	Agree
2. Introduction of courses such as financing small scale business will equip them with self-reliant skills	3.10	.61	Agree
3. Teaching students how to start-up and manage small scale business will equip them with self-reliant skills	3.40	.71	Agree
4. Sending students on industrial attachment will enable them acquire relevant skills	3.35	.65	Agree
5. Teaching students prospects in starting up small scale business will equip them with self-reliant skills	3.32	.62	Agree
6. Teaching students how to solve problems and take decisions will enable them to acquire self-reliant skills	3.02	.73	Agree
7. Teaching students how to discover new business ideas will encourage them to have interest in self-reliant skills	3.14	.82	Agree
8. Introduction of courses in communication skills will enable them develop entrepreneurship skills	2.68	.95	Agree
9. Introducing courses which will enable them develop entrepreneurship skills	2.84	1.00	Agree
Mean of Means	3.15	.75	

Table 1 shows the mean of means and standard deviation scores of 3.15 and .75 respectively. The mean ratings range from 2.68 to 3.48 and this implies that the respondents (Adult educators) agree on all the items that more entrepreneurship courses should be integrated in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Adult educators with longer years of service experience (15 years & above) and those with fewer years of service experience (14 years & below) will not differ significantly in their mean ratings on whether integration of more entrepreneurship courses in the academic programme of adult education will serve as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills.

Table 2: Z-test of significance difference between educators on the integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education curriculum

Source of variation	N	Mean SD	df	z-cal	P-value	Decision
Longer Years of Service Experience	26	3.24 .36	61	1.92	.059	Not Sig
Fewer Years of Service Experience	37	3.08 .32				

Table 2 shows that the mean score and standard deviation for adult educators with longer years of experience ($M=3.24$, $SD=.36$) was not significantly higher than that of those with fewer years of experience ($M=3.08$, $SD=.32$) z - $cal = 1.92$ and the corresponding p - $value=.059$. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that more entrepreneurship courses should be integrated in the under graduate programme of the Department of adult and continuing education as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills agreed with Udofia, Akpan and Udo, (2016) [21]. The authors asserted that integration of more entrepreneurship courses in adult education under graduate programme will ensure self sufficiency of graduates in Nigeria. Martin (2015) [11] considers integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education programme as means of making students more creative, opportunity oriented, proactive and innovative; this is in agreement with the most common reason why researchers and experts promote entrepreneurial education as a major engine for economic growth and job creation. This finding also agrees with Millman and Matlay (2008) [12] and Ojeifo (2012) [15] who asserted that integration of entrepreneurship courses in adult education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for the pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in different contexts. Agholor and Obiazi (2011) [2] affirm that entrepreneurship education is designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. This finding supports the view of Anyanwu (2009) [6] who noted that entrepreneurship programmes are quite indispensable and imperative to any progressive organization hence, paucity of these programmes is part of the reasons most graduates stay idle after graduation. Entrepreneurship programme enable people to update their knowledge.

The test of null hypothesis shows that adult educators with longer years of service experience and those with fewer years of service experience do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on whether integration of more entrepreneurship courses in the academic programmes of adult education will serve as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills. The agreement in their opinions may be because most jobs and productive economic activities in the present age are all driven by entrepreneurship reasoning and innovation. Thus, integration of entrepreneurship courses in the curriculum of adult education programme is not overemphasized since the graduates of the field of study will not be dependent on white collar jobs for them to be relevant to themselves and the society at large. The agreement in their mean rating may also be because the attendant problems of unemployment in Nigeria is quite alarming and is a concern to all groups in the population.

Recommendations

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

1. Government, Federal Ministry of Education and

Nigerian University Commission (NUC) should integrate more entrepreneurship courses in adult education undergraduate curriculum as a strategy for equipping adult education students and graduates with self-reliant skills, by so doing, various skills could be acquired for reduction of criminal activities in the country and to raise productivity of graduates on graduation.

2. In order to achieve such lofty objectives and practicable curriculum, the government and NUC should organize, periodic training for the educators to build their capacity on implementing a skill based curriculum because teachers cannot give what they do not have.
3. Government, NUC and Universities should make provision for adult educators to alternate between further studies and work through leave of absence without fear of losing their job. Students should also be posted for industrial training. This alternation between work and development programme is the essence of recurrent education.
4. Tertiary institutions should be well equipped with business incubation centres, modern facilities and relevant workshop to aid equipping students with self-reliant skills. Students and educators should be encouraged to use these equipment effectively.
5. Tertiary institution authorities should constantly organize in-service training for educators so as to keep them abreast with trending development in order to meet up with the recent global practices in entrepreneurship and development.

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