



Strategies for Counselling Nigeria Undergraduates Towards Entrepreneurship

KEYWORDS

Strategies, Counselling, Entrepreneurship, undergraduates.

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ABSTRACT The main purpose of this study was to find out the strategies that would be used by counsellors for entrepreneurship development among Nigerian undergraduates. The population for the study was 114 university counsellors in the South East universities in Nigeria. No sampling was done. One research question and two hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a researchers-made questionnaire which was duly validated by experts. Reliability co-efficient of 0.84 was calculated using test retest. Mean was used to answer the research question while z-test was used for the hypotheses. Findings from the study revealed that counsellors accepted the items as strategies for entrepreneurship development. Based on the findings the authors made some recommendations including that the counsellors in conjunction with University authorities and Government should organize conferences, workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship development for students using the identified strategies.

Introduction

The importance of entrepreneurship development to the economy has been the subject of increased attention in Nigeria and the world-over in recent years. In effect engendering entrepreneurship so that economy can grow and prosper has therefore become of increasing importance to the state and federal governments of Nigeria in this contemporary period. Gibson (2001) defined entrepreneurship as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high great potential. Henry (2003) views entrepreneurship as the engine driving the economy of nations, creating new industries, young entrepreneur, employment and wealth. Also Agbionu (2008) opined that entrepreneurship involves a process aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth and development of the environment.

In developing countries, the primary barrier to economic growth is often how to develop entrepreneurship to produce dynamic entrepreneurs who can bring new innovations into the system. Drucker (2005) defined entrepreneurship development as a process of enhancing entrepreneurship skill and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. These entrepreneurship skills include human and public relations, accounting, students self-esteem, communication and computer applications, (Ikeanyionwu, 2006). Moreso, Okwuanaso and Nwazor (2000) pointed out that many graduates who work via entrepreneurship route fail because of their little knowledge of what it takes to manage a business effectively. It is for this reason that Anyamene (2009) opined that entrepreneurship education is very important since it is a cross-curricular approach to learning. Continuing, Anyamene (2009) asserts that this entrepreneurship education encourages students to be creative, self reliant and subsequently gain the ability to generate, recognize and seize the intervening opportunities. Furthermore, Ely (2004) recognized the very positive impact that entrepreneurship can have on employment levels as well as the competitive advantages that small firms can introduce to the market place and advocated for entrepreneurship development programme. Considering the fact that the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth is quite complex, many different approaches toward encouraging entrepreneurship have been applied but have yielded no appreciable dividend. However Anabogu & Nwokolo (2006) had advocated the need to adopt guidance and counselling as this will appeal to the conscience of the students to get involved in entre-

preneurship development. This is because entrepreneurship development focuses on the individual who wishes to start or expand a business and bring in innovation into the business.

In Nigeria today, many of our university graduates are unemployed and cannot develop their own business because of lack of knowledge and skills. This predicament has made unemployment in Nigeria, approach an alarming proportion as rightly noted by (Aronu, 2008., and Anyamene, 2009). Cases of stealing, kidnapping, restiveness, prostitution, political thuggery, drug abuse, rape among others are all resultant effects of this negative trend. The parents, community leaders, educationists, fresh graduates, undergraduates and the society have had series of stress, tension and even fright as a result of this menace (Nwafor, 2008). It is for this reason that some institutions of higher learning are creating the type of learning environment that is conducive to encouraging and supporting student enterprise and graduate entrepreneurship. Going beyond employability, entrepreneurship capacities enable graduates by self determination to create their own future, exploit the opportunities that emerge in their complex unpredictable worlds and contribute better to economic development and social well-being (Anyamene, Anyachebelu, Nwokolo and Izuchi, 2009). Entrepreneurship is all about assisting people start and grow dynamic business. It is the counsellor's role to build capacities to ascertain that undergraduates imbibe intrinsic attitudes about the importance of entrepreneurship development through effective counselling strategies.

Counselling is a help or assistance that is given by a professionally trained personnel called the counsellor to an individual or group of people who have challenges, to help them understand themselves and their environment with a view to solving their problems, make necessary adjustments, bring about right decisions and finally to live a satisfactory and productive life now and in the future. In line with above, Nwoga (1998) asserted that a new direct and effective counselling strategies has to be used to guide the undergraduates towards harnessing their ideas, skills and hidden potentials. Therefore counsellors should initiate, develop and co-ordinate these strategies which Clue (2006) listed as devoting time to entrepreneurship development programmes, assisting the undergraduates to understand and channel their talents, teaching them how to use effective communication skills, exposing the students to various careers, organizing seminars for students on entrepreneurship development, bringing resource people to talk on different issues on enter-

prises among others. Also Anyamene et al (2009) mentioned inviting these undergraduates to symposium organized by stakeholders, exposing the undergraduates to work trend, building interpersonal relationships in work place, adjusting and accepting others' expectations as counselling strategies for entrepreneurship development.

In view of these developments the problem of the study is to empirically establish the counselling strategies that would be used to develop the entrepreneurship potentials of undergraduates thus reducing the rate of employment in our society and the resultant harmful effects that go along with it.

The purpose of the study therefore is to find out from university counsellors, strategies that will help the undergraduate develop the spirit of entrepreneurship. To guide the study, the following Research Question was formulated.

Research Question

What are the counselling strategies considered effective by counsellors for entrepreneurship development of undergraduates?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to strengthen the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of Federal and State University counsellors on entrepreneurship development strategies.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female University counsellors on entrepreneurship development strategies.

Method

The design for the study was a descriptive survey research. It was considered appropriate because it involved the use of questionnaire and it focused on the perception and description of the existing situation among a large number of respondents.

The target population is all the 114 professional counsellors from all nine Universities in the south east zone of Nigeria. It was a census survey because of the manageable nature of the population. Gay (2005) defined a census survey as one in which all the members of a given population are used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Counselling Strategies for Entrepreneurship Development" CSED. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part A sought information on the respondents' personal data and Part B consisted of 22 items. These items were derived from reviewed literature and discussions with the counsellors and undergraduates.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts from Guidance and Counselling department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A four point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree was used to score the response of the respondents. Mean ratings of 2.50 and above were taken as agreement with a strategy while below 2.50 were taken as disagreement.

The instrument had reliability co-efficient index of 0.84 established using test re-test method after two weeks interval. Data were collected by the researchers with the help of nine trained research assistants. One research assistant was assigned to one university. All the distributed copies of the CSED were retrieved. The research question was answered using mean, while z-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The findings of the study are presented according to research question and hypotheses in the tables below.

Research Question

What are the Effective Strategies needed for entrepreneurship development of undergraduates?

Table 1: Mean scores of counsellors response on the counselling strategies for promoting entrepreneurship development.

| S/N | STRATEGIES SUGGESTED | MEAN SCORE |
|-----|--|------------|
| 1 | Ensure normal growth of student development through preventive counselling. | 2.2 |
| 2 | Help students make appropriate vocational plans through vocational counselling | 3.5 |
| 3 | Make appropriate referral to relevant specialists such as farmers. | 3.1 |
| 4 | Listen attentively to suggestions made by others in planning entrepreneurship ventures. | 3.3 |
| 5 | Plan direct group activities that promote positive human relations experiences for others. | 3.6 |
| 6 | Render information services to students regarding entrepreneurship development | 3.2 |
| 7 | Create awareness to sell the entrepreneurship development programme to students. | 2.9 |
| 8 | Organize group activities to discuss entrepreneurship development programme. | 3.0 |
| 9 | Train the students to awaken the latent potentials | 2.8 |
| 10 | Train students in assertiveness | 3.1 |
| 11 | Help students create business opportunities | 2.8 |
| 12 | Encourage interpersonal relationship among students | 2.9 |
| 13 | Take the students to visit various entrepreneurship ventures | 3.4 |
| 14 | Give students effective job hunting skills | 3.3 |
| 15 | Assist the students to understand how to channel their talents | 3.8 |
| 16 | Seminars/symposiums should be organized to explain entrepreneurship development. | 3.5 |
| 17 | The students should be encouraged to have insight on entrepreneurship development | 3.6 |
| 18 | Address their poorly articulated goals such as wealth creation avenues. | 2.6 |
| 19 | Help them to develop positive attitudes of self confidence in undertaking self-employment ventures | 2.8 |
| 20 | Promote self evaluation in students | 3.6 |
| 21 | Encourage them to use their talents | 3.2 |
| 22 | Help to promote self examination in students | 3.4 |

From Table 1 all the items except item one have mean scores 2.50 with assisting the students understand how to channel their talents – taking the lead with 3.80 mean. This shows that the counsellors accept the items as strategies that would promote entrepreneurship development.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Federal and State University Counsellors in the effective strategies for entrepreneurship development.

Table II: Z-test summary of Federal and State University Counsellors opinion for entrepreneurship development.

| Score | N | X | SD | Z-cal | P | z-crit | Decision |
|--------------------|----|------|------|-------|------|--------|----------|
| Federal counsellor | 63 | 3.30 | 0.48 | 1.22 | 0.05 | 1.96 | Accept |
| State counsellor | 78 | 3.35 | 0.46 | | | | |

The result in Table 2 shows that federal university counsellors had a mean rating of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.48 while state university counsellors had a mean of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.46. These yielded a calculated – Z value of 1.22 which is less than the critical – Z of 1.96. This was considered non-significant. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female university counsellors in the counselling strategies on entrepreneurship development.

Table III: Z-test summary of Male and Female University Counsellors opinion of counselling strategies for entrepreneurship development.

| Score | N | X | SD | Z-cal | P | z-crit | Decision |
|--------|----|------|------|-------|------|--------|----------|
| Male | 21 | 3.10 | 0.85 | | | | |
| | | | | 1.56 | 0.05 | 1.96 | Accepted |
| Female | 93 | 3.3 | 0.92 | | | | |

The result in Table 3 reveals that calculated Z of 1.56 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female counsellors on the strategies for entrepreneurship development. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the study showed that helping students make appropriate vocational plans through vocational counselling, making appropriate referral to relevant specialists, planning and directing group activities that promote positive human relations experiences, taking the students to visit various entrepreneurship ventures, organizing group activities to discuss entrepreneurship development programme, helping students create business opportunities, encouraging the students to use their talents, providing information on skill acquisition among others are all effective strategies for promoting entrepreneurship development. The finding tallies with earlier findings of Anyamene et al (2009) and Clue (2006) who listed similar strategies in their own studies. The respondents disagreed with only one item – ensuring normal growth and development through preventive counselling. This disagreement could be because the item was not clear enough and not on prevention of entrepreneurship development.

The study also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the counsellors based on Federal or State University. This is surprising because all the universities may not have the same curriculum or the same experience. The implication of the above result is that both federal and state university counsellors should work together in formal and non-formal setting in order to promote entrepreneurship development among the undergraduates in their different universities. This will in no doubt boost Nigeria economy.

Furthermore, the study revealed that there is no significant difference between the female and male counsellors in their opinion on the counselling strategies for promoting entrepreneurship development. This is not surprising because both the female counsellors have uncommon experiences in terms of communication system. This implies that the university counsellors should attend the same conferences, workshops and seminars where they would have interactive sections to enhance their knowledge, skill, techniques and application. This is why Anyamene (2009) emphasized that the university counsellors should educate the undergraduates for entrepreneurial knowledge and skill.

Conclusion

It was discovered that the counsellors accepted all but one of the strategies for promoting entrepreneurship development among undergraduates of all the Federal and State Universities in the south-east of Nigeria. The implication of the above findings is that counsellors should use their acquired skills and techniques to instill these strategies in the undergraduates who will in turn utilize these strategies to create wealth for themselves and for the society at large thereby reduce frustration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made.

1. The Government should collaborate with our universities to create a learning environment that is conducive to entrepreneurial studies.
2. The counsellors in conjunction with the university authority and the Government should organize conferences, workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship development for all students using the identified strategies.
3. The Government should sponsor the counsellors for national and international conferences or workshops on entrepreneurship development so that they can return to disseminate the learned skills to the undergraduates.
4. Government should provide fund every year for financing graduates who intend to float their own business. They should set up a monitoring financial agency to make sure the money is judiciously and properly used.

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