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IMPEDIMENTS TO THE ACQUISITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES BY PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO: IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF-RELIANCE.

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is the hub upon which skills acquisition for self-reliance revolves though not without some impediments. This study identified the essential entrepreneurship competencies required by pre-service teachers as well as the impediments to their acquisition of the competencies. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Survey design was employed in the study. The population consisted of all 523 final year students in the seven departments in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo during the 2015/2016 academic session from which a sample of 193 was drawn using purposive sampling technique. The researcher developed instrument tagged "Entrepreneurial Competencies and Impediments questionnaire (ECIQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three validates from the Faculty of Education. The reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using Cronbach alpha statistics. Mean and t-test were used in answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses respectively. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers require essential entrepreneurship competencies (managerial, knowledge and personal/professional characteristics). Findings also revealed that female pre-service teachers experienced greater level of impediment than male counter parts in acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. It is recommended that the essential competencies of managerial, knowledge content and personal professional characteristics should be emphasized during instructional delivery as well as extending the period of teaching of entrepreneurship education with authentic successful business ventures to motivate pre-service teachers to become entrepreneurs.

Key words: Impediment, Acquisition, Entrepreneurial, Competencies, Self-reliance.

Introduction

Education is a social transformation process that provides knowledge, skills and values through which people can participate in and contribute to their well-being and that of the society. At tertiary level of education such as the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities, the entire education process

becomes a business stimulus necessary for creating job opportunities to improve the socio-economic status of the individual and the society. The communiqué of the World Conference on Higher Education 2005 held in Spain, implored tertiary institutions to aim at producing entrepreneurial oriented graduates, develop high level man power and mobilize citizens to fight poverty toward sustainable economy

(UNESCO, 2005). This led to the introduction of entrepreneurship education as an integral part of all the developmental plans and research activities in tertiary education.

The objectives of entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level of education as identified by Nwangwu (2007) include: providing functional education for youths so as to enable them be self-employed and self-reliant, providing graduates with adequate training that will ensure creativity and innovativeness in identifying novel business opportunities and offering graduate training in the acquisition of skills that will enable them meet the manpower needs of the society. Binuomote and Okoli (2015) posited that the introduction of entrepreneurial education in tertiary institutions was to ginger the mindset of the beneficiaries toward business orientation and therefore make the students to become self-reliant through self-employment after graduation. Though the teaching of entrepreneurship education at tertiary level is increasing, majority of Nigerian graduates still roam the streets due to lack of entrepreneurship competencies. This is worrisome, as the level of poverty and unemployment with the attendant social problems in the country seem to increase at an alarming rate despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigerian higher institutions. The high rate of unemployment can be linked to various challenges to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies for self employment and ultimate self-reliance.

Entrepreneurship education is described by Ubah (2006) as a way of providing opportunities to students to acquire knowledge, skills, new orientations as well as develop managerial competencies and confidence to take risk in their chosen career and consequently enhance self employability and selfreliance in the field of work. Ekong (2008) noted that an entrepreneur that would be relevant to Nigerian society to be a person who has creative ideas, is business-like, has self-confidence and the courage to accept challenges as motivating elements. Leghara and Mbah (2009) noted that a self-reliant or an individual who would be self employed must acquire the right attitude, habits and saleable skills to explore his environment as well as use them as means of survival in the face of unemployment. It therefore means that entrepreneurship education is to equip pre-service teachers with appropriate entrepreneurship competencies that would help them to excel in their jobs as well as cope with economic adversities.

Teacher preparation programme is basically academic and remote from the challenges confronting the youths in Nigeria. The emphasis on academic content delivery, examination and certification seem not allow creativity, innovation and job creation among pre-service teachers. It becomes necessary to x-ray what entrepreneurial education means, the challenges of entrepreneurship education in

Nigeria, entrepreneurial competencies, the impediments to the acquisition of the competencies as well as the implications for self reliance.

Entrepreneurship Education.

Entrepreneurship education is concerned with knowledge, skills and attitude development and acquisition for self reliance. Entrepreneurship education is viewed differently at different levels of education. At the primary and secondary school level, the aim is mainly to create awareness about career options as well as develop the basic academic skills for future applications in related fields. At the tertiary level of education, entrepreneurship education is perceived not only as a career opportunity but as a way of upgrading young persons' abilities to succeed as employees as well as entrepreneurs (Unachukwu, 2009). Ekong (2008) defined entrepreneurship education as education that is provided to develop an individual in skills, attitude, competencies, beliefs and in the perspective of conceiving, planning, starting and managing business outfits for sustained benefits.

Entrepreneurship education therefore seeks to provide youths at different levels of education with appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies and motivations to ensure success in a business enterprise, venture or engagement. In simple terms, entrepreneurship education is focused on enhancing entrepreneurial competencies through training, planning, setting up and managing business ventures for meaningful and effective living. The

teaching of entrepreneurship education to pre-service teachers is to make them more creative, business inclined, discover and utilize existing opportunities to cope with, in the work place and society. Entrepreneurship status is attained through hard work and life experience as only a few persons are born with reasonable lifelong skills for self reliance (Unachukwu, 2009). It could therefore, according to Unachukwu (2009), be posited that entrepreneurs are "not born" but "come" through exposure to life experiences inherent in entrepreneurship education programme.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria.

Despite the laudable objectives of entrepreneurship education, its full benefits seem yet to be achieved in Nigeria. This is due to the lingering problems that the University system in part is facing in terms of inadequacy in human and material resources for meaningful teaching and learning of entrepreneurial education. Balogun (2005) enumerated the problems that affect entrepreneurship education to include inadequate skilled lecturers, poor teaching methods, and non collaboration in practical work, large class size, inadequate power supply and poor mind-set of students. In a case study by Joshua, Abdullahi and Gbobo (2012) on assessment of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills acquisition by University of Calabar students in Nigeria, lack of established and functional practical training centers and poor methods of teaching were found out as some of

the problems or hindrances. The findings indicated that lecturers themselves were not good mentors or role models as entrepreneurs. This is a serious challenge to the practical application of the knowledge impacted.

According to Enu (2012) to achieve entrepreneurial objectives, entrepreneurship education should not only be taught in the Universities, but be practicalised. Entrepreneurship education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learners to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to the learners to survive in the world of business. According to Ekong (2008), it covers the possession of relevant skills and competencies for wealth creation, resource production and reinforcing the available resource inputs for sustained benefits. Given the importance of entrepreneurship education to economic growth and job creation, it is therefore pertinent to examine the impediments to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies by pre-service teachers.

Entrepreneurial Competencies: What are they?

The term competency can be described as skills acquired or inert ability to function effectively in a task. An entrepreneur needs an array of entrepreneurial competencies to start any business, which include among other competencies, management, knowledge, marketing and personal characteristics like

vision, team spirit, determination, self esteem and passion (Olagunju,2004). These are critical skills for entrepreneurial development and success in competitive market. According to Oxford Thesaurus (2006), competency refers to ability, proficiency, expertise, skills or capability. Hence competencies can be defined as the relevant characteristics that pre-service teachers ought to acquire as basic knowledge, managerial and personal/professional skills to successfully plan and run a business venture.

A critical role of higher institutions of learning is to promote innovation by supporting effective implementation of entrepreneurial education with emphasis on pedagogies that allow students to experience and acquire the essential competencies to become successful entrepreneurs. Adeyemo (2009) defined entrepreneurial competency as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental or innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. For purpose of this study,¹ the essential entrepreneurial competencies are classified into managerial, knowledge and personal/professional competencies. It is therefore right to stress the linkage between entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial competency acquisition.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the attempts being made by government, at different levels for overall development of pre-service teachers to become self-sustaining in the face of unemployment opportunities after training through entrepreneurial education, the attainment of such

goal seems doubtful. Most pre-service teachers cannot venture into business because they are faced with challenges of non-acquisition of essential entrepreneurial competencies while in school to become entrepreneurs on graduation. The problem hinges on the obstacles to the acquisition of the relevant entrepreneurial competencies while in the higher institutions.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed at identifying the essential entrepreneurship competencies required by pre-service teachers. It also sought to find out the impediments to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies by pre-service teachers while in school.

Research questions

This study provided answers to the following questions

1. What are the essential entrepreneurship competencies required by pre-service teachers?
2. What are the impediments to pre-service teachers' acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies?

Null Hypotheses

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

Ho₁ There is no significant difference between male and female pre- service teachers on their perceptions of essential entrepreneurial competencies required.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers in their perceptions of impediments to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of all the 523 final year students in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo during the 2015/2016 session. From the population, a sample of 196 students (28 from each of the seven departments) was drawn using purposive sampling technique for representation of the departments in the Faculty of Education. One researcher developed instrument tagged "Entrepreneurial competencies and impediments questionnaire (ECIQ)" was validated by three validates from the Faculty. The reliability coefficient was 0.81, obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistic. The instrument had two sections, A and B. The responses in Section A were classified into three categories as follows: 3.50 -4.0 = strongly agrees (SA), 2.50-3.49 = agree(AG) and 1.0-2.49 = disagreed (DA). Section B contained 20 items on impediments to the pre-service teachers acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies with a four point response options of very high = 4, high -3, low = 2 and not at all = 1. The responses in Section B were classified into three categories as follows: 1-2.49 = low (L); 2.5 0 2.99 = high(H) and 3.0 -4.0 = very high(VH). The data generated were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Out of 196 copies of instrument, 193 were returned giving 98% rate of return.

Table 1: The Mean Responses of Essential Entrepreneurial Competencies Required by Pre-service Teachers

SN	COMPETENCY ITEMS	X	SD	RMKS.
A Managerial				
1	Financial management.	3.51	.66	SA
2	Human and material resource management	3.30	.66	AG
3	Effective time control and productivity management	3.30	.67	AG
4	Risk / conflict management skill	3.23	.68	AG
5	Leadership skill	3.33	.85	AG
6	Customer orientation management skill	3.15	.79	AG
7	Good in accounting.	3.18	.70	AG
8	Organizing and coordinating.	3.22	.74	AG
B Knowledge				
9	Practical experience on different types of business	3.12	.69	AG
10	Language Communication.	3.20	.64	AG
11	Designing /writing a business plan	3.29	.71	AG
12	Collaboration and processing business plan.	3.34	.72	AG
13	Creativity and innovative.	3.47	.57	AG
14	knowledge of book keeping	3.06	.81	AG
15	Marketing /Sales technique.	3.05	.87	AG
16	Recognizing and utilizing business opportunity.	3.21	.71	AG
17	Knowledge of sourcing for resources for business takes off.	3.33	.67	AG
18	Business ethics.	3.30	.65	AG
19	Monitoring and facilitating business	3.22	.69	AG
C Professional/Personal Characteristics Items				
20	Vision/ focus	3.64	.52	SA
21	Good team player.	3.47	.72	AG
22	Assertive.	3.27	.68	AG
23	Self motivated	3.58	.53	SA
24	Independence/Self Confidence.	3.64	.47	SA
25	Competitive spirit.	3.41	.56	AG
26	Determination.	3.40	.67	AG
27	Expertise	3.33	.81	AG
28	Self esteem	3.35	.73	AG
29	Passion/ persistence.	3.27	.85	AG
30	Hardworking/ proactive	3.38	.52	AG

From Table 1 pre-service teachers strongly agreed to financial management while items 2,3,4,5,6, 7 and 8 of managerial competencies were agreed upon as essential entrepreneurial competencies. All the nine items under knowledge competencies were agreed upon as being essential. Also items 20, 23 and 24 which are vision/focus, self motivation and self confidence were strongly agreed while good team player, assertiveness, competitive spirit, determination, expertise, self-esteem, passion/persistence and hard work were agreed as essential professional/personal

characteristics competencies required by pre-service teachers. Deduction from Table 1 is that managerial, knowledge and professional/personal characteristics are essential entrepreneurial competencies required by pre-service teachers in University of Uyo.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Extent of Impediments to Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Competencies by Pre-Service Teachers.

S/N	IMPEDIMENTS.	\bar{X}	SD	RMKS
1	Gender disparity.	2.26	1.0	LOW
2	Political instability.	3.00	.81	VH
3	Fear of failure	3.12	.91	VH
4	Poor instructional delivery used by instructors.	3.13	.71	VH
5	Religious beliefs	2.49	.84	LOW
6	Parental influence.	2.76	1.1	HIGH
7	Type of career/ discipline.	2.81	.95	HIGH
8	Lack of appropriate role models in entrepreneurship.	3.05	.87	VH
9	Low level of confidence	3.17	.87	VH
10.	Low motivation.	2.97	.89	HIGH
11	Ethnic and cultural diversity.	2.75	.93	HIGH
12	Poor personal motivation.	3.04	.86	VH
13	Poor government regulations for entrepreneurship	3.18	.79	VH
14	Inadequate facilities for learning.	3.27	.79	VH
15	Large class size.	3.01	.98	VH
16	Low morale from instructors.	2.88	.87	HIGH
17	Insecurity of entrepreneurs.	2.73	.91	HIGH
18	High crime rate in the society.	2.94	.99	HIGH
19	Short time of training	2.88	.90	HIGH
20	Shallow curriculum content	2.78	.93	HIGH

Table 2 presents data on pre-service teachers responses to which the 20 items constitute impediments to their acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies for successful business venture. Of all the items, gender disparity had mean of 2.26 and religious belief, mean of 2.49 being low impediments to the acquisition of relevant competencies for motivation and passion for business. From Table 2, nine items constituted very high impediments namely political instability, fear of failure, poor instructional delivery used by instructors, lack of

appropriate role models in entrepreneurship, low level of confidence, poor personal motivation, poor government regulations for entrepreneurship, inadequate facilities for learning and large class size and nine items were rated high namely parental influence, type of career/discipline, low motivation, ethnic and cultural diversity, and low morale from instructors, insecurity of entrepreneurs, high crime rate in the society, short time of training and shallow curriculum content.

Table 3: t- test Analysis of Male and Female Pre- service Teachers' Perception of Essential Entrepreneurial Competencies Required.

Variable	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Competency	Male	117	97.059	9.41	191	4.85*	1.97	Rejected Ho
	Female	76	103.73	9.22				

Significant at $p < .05$

The result of hypothesis 1 shown in Table 3 reveals that the t calculated (4.85) is greater than t-critical (1.97) with degree of freedom 191 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers on their perceptions of essential entrepreneurial competencies required is rejected in favour of

female which has a higher mean score. This result means that male pre-service teachers differ significantly from the female counterparts on their perceptions of required essential entrepreneurial competencies.

Table 4: t- test Analysis of Pre-service Teachers Perceptions on Impediments to Acquisition of Entrepreneurial Competencies by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Impediments	Male	117	54.05	5.73	191	11.58	1.97	Rejected Ho
	Female	76	64.90	7.21				

Significant at $p < .05$

Table 4 reveals the result of analysis for hypothesis 2 on impediments to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies with a mean score for male 54.05 and female 64.90. The t-calculated value 11.58 is greater than t-crit-1.97 with 191 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers in their perceptions on the impediments to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies is rejected in favour of female which has a higher mean score. Thus, female pre-service teachers significantly differ from male counterparts in their perceptions on impediments to acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings on research question 1 indicate that all the pre-service teachers have strong desires for entrepreneurial competencies requirement to become entrepreneurs. Although all the 30 items were agreed upon as essential competencies but financial management and professional/personal characteristics like vision/ focus, self motivation, independence/self confidence were considered to be very essential for pre-service teachers. This findings directly agree with the findings of Mitchelmore and Rowley (2008) and Adeyemo (2009) who found that entrepreneurial competencies depend largely on the level of formal education as well as prior managerial capacities and must be developed through training, practice and experience.

The findings on research question 2 further revealed that pre-service teachers experience some obstacles such as political instability, poor instructional delivery used by instructors, lack of appropriate role model in entrepreneurship, low confidence, large class size, inadequate facilities for learning, poor personal motivation and poor government regulations for entrepreneurship in acquiring the relevant entrepreneurial competencies. This supports the assertions by Balogun (2004), Unachukwu (2009) and Joshua, Abdullahi and Gbobo (2012) who in their different studies identified inadequate skilled lecturers, poor teaching methods, non collaboration in practical work, large class size, inadequate power supply, poor mind-set of students, lack of established and functional practical training centers as some of the problems hindering the development of entrepreneurship skills.

The result on testing the null hypothesis 1 presented in Tables 3 revealed that the female pre-service teachers have higher perception on the essential entrepreneurial competencies required than the male counterpart. The null hypothesis 2 presented in Table 4 showed that female students face higher impediments in establishing business ventures than male students. This means that the entrepreneurship program in tertiary institutions is not impacting effectively on the pre-service teachers especially among the female folks. That is the reason Unachukwu (2009) posited that entrepreneurs are not born but come through exposure to life experiences and these are inherent in entrepreneurship education programme. For instance, Ekong (2008) mentioned that entrepreneurship education is to develop an individual in skills, attitude,

competencies and beliefs for starting and managing business outfits for sustained benefits. It should be added that the quality of competencies acquired by pre-service teachers would go a long way in helping the graduate teachers establish business ventures and become self-reliance.

Conclusion

The paper examined the essential competencies and the impediments to acquiring entrepreneurial competencies by pre-service teachers. Entrepreneurship education has come to stay as a general course in all institutions of higher learning. In spite of the laudable objectives of this programme that aims at producing entrepreneurs who would become self-employed, the study shows that the products from this programme are faced with a lot of challenges. The paper identified some of the impediments, prominent among them are political instability, fear of failure, type of career/ discipline, lack of appropriate role models in entrepreneurship, low level of confidence, poor personal motivation, poor government regulations for entrepreneurship, inadequate facilities for learning and large class size.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. The essential competencies in the areas of managerial, knowledge content and personal professional characteristics should be emphasized and fully incorporated into the entrepreneurship curriculum of the University.
2. University authority should provide adequate facilities to reduce large class

during training of pre-service teachers to enhance acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance.

3. Instructors should improve on instructional delivery and use more practical based instructional materials for effective acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies.
4. Universities should extend the period of engagement of students with authentic successful business ventures to boost students' confidence and enhance their entrepreneurship competencies.

Implications of the Findings.

The findings of this study have the implications for entrepreneurial development of pre-service teachers. If the pre-service teachers acquire essential entrepreneurial competencies, they will be in position to take their job (teaching) as business, plan it well and become enterprising in their teaching. And of course, will be in a position to manage it effectively as a personal business that yield profits through the entrepreneurship competent knowledge.

On the other hand if the impediments to pre-service teachers' acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies are removed, they will have the opportunity of acquiring entrepreneurial competencies and effectively utilizing and stabilizing them in entrepreneurship ventures thereby becoming self-reliance.

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