



ASSESSING THE EXECUTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH FROM PHILOSOPHICAL AND ECONOMIC ANGLES

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Abstract

This study assesses the execution of entrepreneurial education policies in selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria, engaging analytical approach from philosophical and economic angles. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 270 participants comprising academic staff and final-year students across three institutions—Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, University of Lagos, and Yaba College of Technology. A structured 26-item questionnaire, validated by experts and yielding a Cronbach alpha of 0.85, provided the basis for analysis through descriptive statistics, t-tests, and Spearman Rank Correlation. Findings revealed moderate implementation of entrepreneurship education policies, with gaps in resource allocation, monitoring, and curriculum alignment. A significant positive correlation was observed between the level of policy implementation and its perceived economic relevance to student self-reliance. The study concludes that effective entrepreneurial education requires stronger institutional frameworks, enhanced resources, and closer industry collaboration. Recommendations include curriculum review, improved funding, faculty capacity-building, and systematic evaluation to ensure that entrepreneurship education effectively prepares students for innovation and self-employment in Nigeria's challenging economy.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Policy Implementation, Self-Reliance, Higher Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Entrepreneurship education has become a cornerstone of higher education reform in Nigeria, reflecting a paradigm shift from producing job seekers to nurturing job creators. In response to persistent youth unemployment and the need for a diversified economy, the Federal Government mandated entrepreneurship education across universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education (Buhari, 2018). Complementary initiatives, such as the Tertiary Institutions Entrepreneurship Scheme (TIES) launched

by the Central Bank of Nigeria, highlight the strategic role of entrepreneurship education in national development by fostering self-reliance and innovation among graduates (Emefiele, 2021; CBN, 2021).

Despite these initiatives, significant concerns remain regarding the gap between policy formulation and effective implementation. Empirical studies and reports have noted challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding,

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poorly trained personnel, and weak industry linkages (YEDIS, 2021; Ogunyemi, 2020). These challenges raise critical questions: Are entrepreneurship education policies being implemented as intended? Do they align with the philosophical ideals of experiential and problem-solving pedagogy? And, most importantly, are they equipping students with the competencies to thrive in Nigeria's dynamic labor market?

Philosophically, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is anchored in pragmatism, emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, and hands-on learning (Adebayo & Michael, 2021). Economically, it is envisioned as a catalyst for sustainable development by preparing students for self-employment and contributing to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of Nigeria's economy (Shittu, 2021). However, the extent to which these ideals are realized within tertiary institutions remains underexplored.

This study, therefore, evaluates the implementation of entrepreneurship education policies in three leading institutions in Lagos State—Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, University of Lagos, and Yaba College of Technology. It specifically investigates the level of policy implementation, the philosophical underpinnings shaping it, its economic relevance to self-reliance, and the challenges undermining effective delivery. By combining empirical evidence with philosophical and economic analysis, the study aims to provide insights that can

Inform more robust policies and practices in entrepreneurship education, both in Nigeria and other developing contexts.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, suitable for evaluating the implementation of entrepreneurial education policies through the perceptions of both academic staff and students. The population comprised 360 individuals: 60 lecturers and 300 final-year students from three institutions—Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka (FCET Akoka), University of Lagos (UNILAG), and Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH).

Using a combination of purposive, convenience, and stratified random sampling, a total of 270 respondents were selected, including 45 lecturers and 225 students. Purposive sampling ensured the inclusion of those directly engaged with entrepreneurship education, while stratification guaranteed proportional representation across institutions and respondent categories.

Data were collected through a 26-item structured questionnaire, divided into five sections: demographic information; level of policy implementation; philosophical underpinnings; economic relevance; and challenges to implementation. The instrument employed a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). Validity was established through expert review by specialists in entrepreneurial studies, educational evaluation, and economic policy. Reliability testing via Cronbach's



alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.85, confirming strong internal consistency.

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis (frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations) addressed the research questions, while inferential tests provided deeper insights. An independent samples t-test compared staff and student perceptions, and Spearman's Rank Correlation examined the relationship between policy implementation and economic relevance. All analyses were conducted with SPSS (Version 25) at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Findings indicated moderate implementation of entrepreneurial education policies. While entrepreneurship courses were taught regularly ($M = 3.32$), weaknesses were noted in resource allocation ($M = 2.80$) and monitoring mechanisms ($M = 2.66$). This suggests that although institutions adhere to policy mandates, insufficient infrastructure and evaluation systems constrain full effectiveness.

Respondents strongly affirmed that the curriculum is grounded in pragmatic principles such as critical thinking, independence, and real-world problem-solving. Items such as "policy encourages critical thinking and innovation" ($M = 3.31$) and "curriculum promotes self-reliance" (M

$= 3.21$) underscore alignment with philosophical ideals of entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education was perceived as economically relevant, particularly in preparing students for self-employment ($M = 3.31$) and reducing dependence on white-collar jobs ($M = 3.20$). These results highlight the potential of entrepreneurship policies to address youth unemployment if implementation challenges are overcome.

Major challenges included inadequate funding ($M = 3.45$), inconsistent government support ($M = 3.35$), and limited access to incubation facilities ($M = 3.17$). Student motivation ($M = 2.95$) and lecturer preparedness ($M = 3.00$) were also noted as constraints. These findings point to systemic barriers that undermine policy execution despite strong philosophical and economic rationale.

Hypothesis testing showed significant differences in staff and student perceptions of course scheduling ($p = 0.005$) and institutional support for practical activities ($p = 0.044$), with lecturers reporting more favorable views. Spearman's rho indicated a moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$) between implementation and economic relevance, suggesting that stronger policy implementation enhances perceptions of entrepreneurial viability.

Discussion of Findings

The results demonstrate that entrepreneurial education policies in Nigerian tertiary institutions are being implemented, but inconsistently. While entrepreneurship courses are taught as scheduled and the



curriculum reflects elements of critical thinking and innovation, weak monitoring systems and inadequate resources continue to limit impact. This aligns with earlier studies (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2020; Ogunyemi, 2020) that emphasized gaps between policy intentions and institutional realities.

Philosophically, the findings confirm that policies are grounded in pragmatism and constructivism, prioritizing hands-on learning, self-reliance, and real-world problem-solving (Adebayo & Michael, 2021). However, the discrepancy between ideals and practice—particularly the lack of sufficient incubation facilities and experiential opportunities—suggests that the philosophical foundations are not fully realized in practice. Similar challenges have been reported in other developing contexts, where entrepreneurship education has struggled to balance theoretical instruction with practical exposure (Olayinka & Bello, 2021).

Economically, the study validates entrepreneurship education as a viable tool for enhancing graduate self-reliance and reducing dependence on salaried jobs, consistent with Shittu (2021) and Adedeji (2019). The positive correlation between implementation and economic relevance demonstrates that better-resourced, consistently delivered programs directly increase students' perception of entrepreneurial viability. Yet, systemic issues—such as inadequate government support and lecturer training—hinder the translation of these policies into measurable job creation outcomes.

The perceptual gap between lecturers and students also deserves attention. Lecturers reported more favorable views of course delivery and institutional support than students, highlighting a possible disconnect between teaching intentions and student experiences. Addressing this gap is crucial for aligning curriculum design with student needs and labor market realities.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the implementation of entrepreneurial education policies in three tertiary institutions in Lagos State from both philosophical and economic perspectives. The findings indicate moderate but uneven implementation, with systemic challenges undermining effectiveness. While policies are rooted in pragmatic philosophies and carry strong economic potential, gaps in resources, monitoring, and industry linkages limit their ability to fully prepare students for entrepreneurial self-reliance.

The study makes two key contributions: first, by empirically linking policy implementation levels with economic relevance, it provides evidence of the critical importance of resourcing and institutional commitment. Second, it highlights the philosophical misalignment between policy ideals and practice, showing that without practical exposure, entrepreneurship education risks becoming theoretical rather than transformative.

Recommendations

1. **Enhance Resource Allocation:** Government and institutional administrators should prioritize funding for entrepreneurial laboratories, workshops, and incubation



centers to provide students with the infrastructure to translate ideas into practice.

2. Curriculum Review and Alignment: Entrepreneurship curricula should be periodically updated to reflect local economic realities, emphasizing experiential components such as project-based learning and real-world problem-solving.

3. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish institutional mechanisms for continuous monitoring of policy implementation, with clear benchmarks for curriculum delivery, resource utilization, and student outcomes.

4. Industry Collaboration: Expand partnerships with local businesses and

industries to provide structured internships, mentorship, and seed-funding opportunities. A six-month minimum industrial attachment, integrated into entrepreneurship courses, could bridge the gap between classroom learning and entrepreneurial practice.

5. Capacity Building for Lecturers: Continuous professional development should be mandated for lecturers teaching entrepreneurship, ensuring they are equipped with both pedagogical strategies and practical business insights.

6. Student Engagement Strategies: Institutions should introduce incentive-based programs such as business plan competitions, entrepreneurship clubs, and start-up seed grants to enhance student motivation and participation.

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