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An Evaluation of Students' Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education in some Selected Universities in North East Nigeria

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Abstract- The aim of this study is to examine the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of students' attitude and to examine the overall attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The respondents were students from five selected universities in north eastern Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used in selection of the universities, while simple random sampling was employed in selection of the respondents. The instrument used was structured questionnaire based on Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on four points. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed, but only three hundred and seventy five were successfully retrieved and analysed. SPSS version 16 was used in the analysis of the data. The study falls within the domain of descriptive study. The results indicated that the students cognitive component of attitude is rated at 84.31%, affective at 83.34%, while behavioural component at 78.72%. The overall attitude is at 82.12%.

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An Evaluation of Students' Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education in some Selected Universities in North East Nigeria

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Abstract - The aim of this study is to examine the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of students' attitude and to examine the overall attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The respondents were students from five selected universities in north eastern Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used in selection of the universities, while simple random sampling was employed in selection of the respondents. The instrument used was structured questionnaire based on Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on four points. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed, but only three hundred and seventy five were successfully retrieved and analysed. SPSS version 16 was used in the analysis of the data. The study falls within the domain of descriptive study. The results indicated that the students cognitive component of attitude is rated at 84.31%, affective at 83.34%, while behavioural component at 78.72%. The overall attitude is at 82.12%.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been recognised as the determinant or pivotal element of economic growth and development (Kidane and Harvey, 2009; Nafukko and Muyia, 2010 and Kavitha et al, 2013). This is because Entrepreneurship leads to the creation of small and medium scale businesses, providing employment opportunities, income generation, uplifting of standard of living, and utilisation of human, material and financial resources of a country in the right direction. Many countries have placed intensive and frantic efforts and programmes towards development of Entrepreneurship. Because of the importance and role of Entrepreneurship in the economy, the federal government of Nigeria through national universities commission introduced Entrepreneurship education course under general studies programmes which is mandatory for all undergraduate students in the country. It is believed that

it will facilitate the development of favourable attitude towards Entrepreneurship and its education. Similarly, the federal government has established Entrepreneurship study centres in all the federal universities in the country in order to facilitate towards development of entrepreneurs.

According to federal government through the Ministry of Education in conjunction National Universities Commission (2011) has approved the establishment of Entrepreneurship Study Centres (ESCs) in all federal own Universities in the country. The establishment of the centres is to be funded by Educational Trust Fund (ETF). The ministry has also approved the establishment of project implementation committee to fast track the establishment and development of entrepreneurship education in the universities (NBF News, 2011). The primary role of the centre is stimulation of entrepreneurial competencies among students, staff and the community. The Entrepreneurship Study Centre is expected to: Develop and offer courses, seminars, workshops and conferences to advance and propagate entrepreneurship, Offer a 2-credit units course to semi-final/final-year students, Provide entrepreneurial clinical services in entrepreneurship to students, staff and members of the public, Serve as a National Centre for the training and development of experts in entrepreneurship, Promote research and experimentation in entrepreneurship.

Similarly, another role assigned to the Entrepreneurship Development Centre according to Inegbenebor (2005) the Centre is expected to: Identify all innovations and inventions in the Universities for the purpose of assisting the innovators/inventors to commercialize them and establish contacts with potentials business partners, Provide inventors/innovators technical and professional expertise to patent and further develop their inventions/innovations (University of Benin, 2002).

Therefore, Individuals/students may form and implement an Entrepreneurial action in anticipation of outcome. When the perceived outcome is poor or pessimistic, they tend to develop negative attitude. Reverse is the case when they perceived the outcome to be positive or optimistic, they tend to develop and retain

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positive attitude towards the attitude object (Entrepreneurship Education).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

- i. To examine the cognitive component of students attitude towards Entrepreneurship education:
- ii. To examine the affective component of students attitude towards Entrepreneurship education:
- iii. To examine the behavioural component of students attitude towards Entrepreneurship education:
- iv. To examine the overall attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship education.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) *Entrepreneurship Education*

Entrepreneurship and the education of the entrepreneurs are the indispensable foundation of any country's economy. The reason for this fact is the entrepreneurs' position as the corner stone within the economic system. Entrepreneurship Education focuses on developing understanding of Entrepreneurs behaviour, skills and attributes in widely different context (Akponi, 2009). Entrepreneurship Education has been described as a scholarly field that seeks to understand how opportunities to bring into existence future goods and services are discovered, created and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences (Venkatraman, 1997). It is concerned with the creation and recognition of opportunities, as well as the pursuit of those opportunities by turning them into wealth creating businesses during a limited window of time (Sexton, 1997; Smilor, 1997). According to Postigo & Tomoborni (2002) Entrepreneurship Education develops and stimulates Entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new venture.

Bink (2005) is of the opinion that Entrepreneurship Education refers to the pedagogical process involved in the encouragement of entrepreneurial activities, behaviours and mind-sets. Entrepreneurship Education has come to denote all forms of knowledge delivering that seek to empower the individuals/students to create real wealth in the economic sector, thereby, advancing the cause of development of the nation as a whole (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011). Similarly, Entrepreneurship education is the process of imparting knowledge and teaching skills to potential entrepreneurs on how to venture into business that is relatively small in nature for future development or advancement (Aminu, 2009).

The Centre for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurship Education (CELCEE, 1999) defined Entrepreneurship Education as the process of imparting individuals/students with the concepts and skills to recognized opportunities that others have overlooked, and to have the insight, self-

esteem and knowledge to act where others have hesitated. Entrepreneurship Education has been view as a systematic training and instruction that transmit entrepreneurial knowledge and development of skills in students. Entrepreneurship education is meant to change students' behaviour pattern in the desired direction. Therefore, it is a continuing development of relevant Entrepreneurial skills and habits whose understanding and application enable the students to contribute meaningfully towards the growth and development of Nigerian economy. Though there is no consensus definition, but they all the definitions serve as complementary to one another.

b) *Entrepreneurial Attitude*

Different authors have defined attitude, however, the elements that constitute these definitions are similar and complementary. Attitude is the degree or extent to which an individual like or dislike something. Attitude is defined as the predisposition to respond in a general favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to the object of the attitude (Ajzen 1987). According to Allport cited in Banu (1984) an attitude is a mental neural state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. According to Hawkins et al (1983) Allport's definition raises three points: (a) Attitude is a state of readiness leading the individual to perceive things and individual around him in certain ways; that is to be more ready with certain categories and interpretations than with others. (b) Attitude is not innate, they are learned, they develop and they are organized through experience. These states of readiness are relatively enduring but they are modifiable and subject to change. (c) Aspect of Allport's definition follows from that attitude is dynamic. Attitude is not merely latent states of preparedness awaiting the presentation of an appropriate object for their activation. They have motivational qualities and can lead an individual to seek (or avoid) the objects about which they are organized.

An attitude is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Here stimuli may be object, individual, idea or anything else that an individual can react negatively or positively to it. The reaction may take verbal, physical, mental or behavioural form (Banu, 1984). Simpson and Oliver (1990) defined attitude as emotional trends in response to affairs, persons, locations, events or ideas. According to them the phrase such as "I like Entrepreneurship Education" or "I enjoy Entrepreneurship Education course" is enumerate as attitude. An attitude is an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive process with respect to some aspect of the environment (Hawkins et al 1983).

Therefore, attitude may be positive or negative, optimistic or pessimistic, rational or irrational, desirable

or undesirable. Particular attitude may therefore be a problem or solution to a problem depending on the environmental factors that influence the attitude of an individual. According to Sorenson as cited in Balama (1992) explains that individual/student acquire attitude from their environment, and learners (students) along with their school books. He further explained that if a student has a positive attitude towards a course he may amaze the teacher with an ability to learn it that outstrip what might have been expected of him. Reverse is the case when a student holds negative attitude towards a course, he may strongly resist learning that the teacher's effort no matter how thorough and ingenious are futile.

The research findings of Peterman and Kennedy (2003) indicated that offering entrepreneurship education course is helping students in development of favourable entrepreneurial attitude. Similarly, empirical findings of Autio et al (1997), Tounes (2006), Trenan, Renfrow and Watson (2003), and Audet (2000) indicated that taking entrepreneurship education course has positive effects on students' entrepreneurial attitude. There are many others findings that supported the positive effects of entrepreneurship education on development of entrepreneurial attitude of students, (Lens and Wong, 2003; Teixeira and Davey, 2008; Gorman et al, 1997; and Memitrova et al, 2012). Guerero, Riaph and Urbano (2008) affirm that attitude towards entrepreneurship is one of the determinant factors on decision of becoming an entrepreneurs.

Therefore, there is strong ascertaining that attitude plays very important role in determining the learning behaviours of students in schools. This called for continued effort by the researchers/teachers to make sure that students develop positive attitude and behaviour towards Entrepreneurship Education.

IV. COMPONENTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE

The components of attitude comprise cognitive, affective and behavioural components.

a) Cognitive Component (Belief, thought and knowledge)

This consists of students' beliefs, thought and knowledge about an attitude object (Entrepreneurship Education). Belief may be correct or incorrect, true or not true, what is needed is only for the belief to exist. Similarly, beliefs are descriptive thoughts that an individual hold about something. According to Amdam (2011) belief reflects an individual's knowledge and assessment of attitude object. He further explained that belief is the accumulated feelings and priorities that individuals have about something. Kotler (2000) maintain that the belief and values in a society has high degree of persistence, they shape and colour attitudes and behaviours of individuals/students. Belief is formed by an individual as he/she grow up into the society or

associate with reference group. As the relationship of interaction continues to exist cordially, an individual will learn and formulate beliefs. Beliefs are influence mostly by social environment of an individual (family, reference group, and so on). The belief student is having towards Entrepreneurship Education course will help him/her to develop favourable component of this attitude as time goes on.

b) Affective Component (feeling, emotion)

It is the student's emotional reaction and feelings to an attitude object (Entrepreneurship Education). This has concurred with the research finding of Bird (1988) that perceived desirability of Entrepreneurship and its Education may be formed through intuitive thinking. That means perceived desirability of Entrepreneurship is formed through affective attitudinal judgement (Mitchell, et al 2002). The expression I like Entrepreneurship Education course or I hate Entrepreneurship Education course, is the expression of the emotional evaluation of the Entrepreneurship Education to the student. In the words of Hawkins et al (1983) due to individuals' unique motivational, personality, past experience, reference group, and physical conditions may evaluate the same feelings and emotions differently. That means some individuals/students may have a positive feelings towards the entrepreneurship education, while others could respond with a negative reaction.

c) Behavioural Component (behaviour, overt response and willingness)

It is the way in which individuals/students responds or react to a specific set of attitudinal object. According to Mani (2008) this component reflects the willingness of students' behavioural intentions in form of goals, objectives and aspiration and expected responses to the attitude object (Entrepreneurship Education). For example, a student who intend to become an Entrepreneur before or after graduation, may form and plan behaviour towards attending and having keen interest in Entrepreneurship and its Education.

V. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research method was used for this study utilizing frequency and simple percentage. The sample for this study is undergraduate students drawn from five Universities in North East geopolitical zone. This is because all undergraduate students are offering Entrepreneurship Education course from the Division of General Studies of the respective universities. Purposive sampling was employed to select five Universities. The reasons for using this method is to compose a sample that has federal (UNIMAID and ATBU) and state (ADSU and GSU) Universities. Secondly, is to involve conventional (UNIMAID, ADSU and GSU) and special University (ATBU). Thirdly, to

involve private University (AUN), and fourthly, is because the Universities are spread across the study area with exception of Yobe and Taraba states that are having infant Universities.

Simple Random Sampling was used to select four faculties and respondents. The sample size for this study is four hundred. The respondents were collected proportionally from the five selected Universities. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire adopted from the work of Mc Stay (2008) with modifications. The questionnaire was divided into four main sections. The first section is about demographic

characteristics of the respondents. The second section measured cognitive component of attitude. Third section measured affective component of attitude, while the fourth section measured the behavioural component of attitude. Structured questionnaire and Likert scale was used. The responses ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree (4 point scale). Four hundred questionnaires were administered and 375 were successfully retrieved and analysed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 16) was used in the analysis of the collected data.

VI. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 : Cognitive Component of Students towards Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Freq.	Agreed		Disagreed	
		%	Freq.	%	
Identify new business opportunities	343	91.50	32	8.50	
Create products that fulfil customers' needs	315	84.00	60	16.00	
Successfully develop a new business	334	89.10	41	10.90	
Feasibility study & analysis of starting new business	316	84.30	59	15.70	
Identify new sources of business finance	308	82.10	67	17.80	
Development of business relationships	310	82.70	65	17.30	
Tolerate unexpected changes, setbacks and Risks	287	76.50	88	23.50	
Mean		84.31		15.69	

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The results in table 1 show that the students averagely are having favourable cognitive towards entrepreneurship education with mean of 84.31%, while 15.69% indicated unfavourable cognitive. 91.50% of the students believe that they can identify new business opportunities. 84.00% of the students believe that they can create products that fulfil customers' needs. 89.10% gave affirmative response to successfully develop new business. The responses in relation to

carrying out of feasibility study and analysis related to starting a new business, 84.30% of the students responded. 82.10% of the students responded positively in relation to their ability to identify new sources of financing businesses. Developing good relation with people to assist in finding business opportunity received 82.70% affirmative response. The students' responses show with 76.50% the strength to tolerate unexpected changes, setbacks and risks in their businesses.

Table 2 : Affective Component of students Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
I desperately want to work for myself	309	82.40	66	17.60
The idea owning my own business is pleasing	313	83.50	62	16.50
Considered self-employment highly desirable	323	86.10	52	13.90
Personal satisfaction with self-employment	30	81.30	70	18.70
Mean		83.34		16.66

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Affective component of attitude refers to the students feeling and emotional reaction towards entrepreneurship education. Therefore, the results in table 2 shows that students a having strong feeling towards entrepreneurship education with average of

83.34%. 82.40% indicated that they want become entrepreneurs. Having pleasure of been entrepreneurs indicated is rated at 83.50%. The students also showed high desirability for entrepreneurs with 86.10%, while personal Satisfaction was rated at 81.30%.

Table 3: Behavioural Component of students Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
I enjoy Entrepreneurship education lectures	303	80.80	72	19.20
My interest in a career in this course has increased	293	78.10	82	21.90
The same importance with my major courses	262	69.90	113	30.10
This course prepares me to make good career choices	305	81.30	70	18.70
I am happy to learn Entrepreneurial skills	313	83.50	62	16.50
Mean		78.72		21.28

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Behavioural Component measured the willingness and ability of the students' behavioural intention in relation to entrepreneurship education, which will help the students in having keen interest towards entrepreneurship education lectures, thereby, influencing their intention to be entrepreneurs. The results in 3 indicated that the students a having positive behavioural tendencies towards entrepreneurship education averagely with 78.72%. The students showed

that they enjoy entrepreneurship education lecture with 80.80%, interest to be an entrepreneur was rated with 78.10%. The respondents agreed that entrepreneurship education course is of the same importance with their major courses with 69.90%. 81.30% agreed that entrepreneurship education have prepared them to make a good career choice as entrepreneurs, while they agreed that they are happy to learn entrepreneurial skills and knowledge with 83.50%.

Table 4: Overall Attitude of students Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
Cognitive Component	84.31	15.69
Affective Component	83.34	16.66
Behavioural Component	78.72	21.28
Mean	82.12	17.88

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The results in table 4 show that generally the students are holding very strong attitude towards entrepreneurship education. The results indicated that the students are having very strong attitude that is rated at 82.12%. This indicates that the student will like to become entrepreneurs.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results indicated that the overall attitude of students is 82.12%. That means they hold strong positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education. Students with strong positive attitude tend to interpret that going into entrepreneurial activities is feasible and hence desirable. This has agreed with the findings of Mitchell et al (2002), Bird (1988), Shapero and Sokol (1982). Furthermore, the findings of Ajzen (1991) agreed with this result, where if students perceive that entrepreneurship and its education will help them in achieving their goals, they tend to develop positive attitude towards it. These results also agreed with the findings of Ifedili and Ofogbu (2011), where students

indicated 81% positive attitude toward entrepreneurship education. It also agreed with the finding of Veciana (2000), which shows the level of students' attitude at 92.2%. Same with the findings of Cheung and Chan (2011) indicated positive attitude of 90%. The research findings of Keal (2011) responded with 75.4% positive attitude. A more favourable attitude would increase the intention of students to become entrepreneurs. Similarly these findings also concurred with the findings of Peterman and Kennedy (2003), Dimitriva et al (2012), Tounes (2006), Trenan et al (2003), Len and Wong (2003) and Texeira et al (2008), Where the empirical research findings revealed positive relationships between offering entrepreneurship education course and students attitude.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study evaluated students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigeria universities. The results showed that the students are holding strong favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

This means exposure entrepreneurship education is one of the factors that influence the development of favourable attitude entrepreneurship and its education.

Therefore, Nigerian universities should strive to inculcate sound and qualitative entrepreneurship education to their students. This would lead to development of favourable attitude, and when students are having favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship education, they tend to develop and sustain intention to start businesses. Finally, the intention may lead to actual venturing into business activities.

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