



TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION (EE) IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN NIGERIA

Kelechi Chinemerem Mezieobi¹ ORCID: 0000-0002-5817-3081, Ginikanwa Genevieve Agulanna², Ayodele Onyeatoelu Okobia³, Juliet Nkonyeasua Ossai⁴, Charles Kelechi Okeke⁵, Uchechukwu Ali⁶, Anashie Annastasia Iwang⁷

Abstract:

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has been viewed as a crucial tool for a country's economic growth. Every country in the world attempts to develop and strengthen its economy by considering all available options. Nations are attempting to or have already implemented the teaching and learning of EE in schools in response to the discovery of EE as a tool for economic development. In higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria, entrepreneurial education has been offered as a field of study, discipline, or area of expertise. Researchers currently criticise the way EE is learned at colleges and universities for a variety of reasons, such as the use of generalist teachers, the dearth of adequate teaching materials, the inadequate financing of EE programmes, the low rate of graduates choosing entrepreneurship as a career, and more. Additionally, higher education students in Nigeria have not received appropriate orientation towards the value of EE for their present, future, families, and general well-being. Additionally, it has been noted that the context-free methodology used in Nigeria's colleges and universities to teach EE makes it challenging for students to comprehend. The scope of this paper is mainly on pedagogy and not necessarily on policy. Therefore, this paper examines a definition of EE that is focused on Nigeria, the objectives of EE with a focus on its learning and teaching in HEIs, the environment for EE teaching and learning in HEIs, how EE teaching and learning can be improved, and EE teaching and learning. Some suggestions and recommendations are equally flagged.

Keywords: *Teaching, Learning, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education (EE), Higher Education and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)*

INTRODUCTION

The competition between various countries of the world to out-grow one another economically has caused the exploration of one strategy or approach by these countries. We live in a vastly competitive global society, according to Alonso, de Soria, Orue-Echevarria, et al. (2010), which necessitates a quick evolution of the labour market to meet societal demands for goods and services. It is also interesting to note that politicians and economists

¹Department of Arts and Humanities Education, Faculty of Education, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria
Mobile: +23 48101086667
Email: kcmmez2016@gmail.com/kelechi.mezieobi@funai.edu.ng

²Department of Life Science Education, Faculty of Education, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria
Email: agulannagg@gmail.com

³Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria
Email: ayodeleokobia2016@gmail.com

⁴Faculty of Education, University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria
Email: julietossai74@gmail.com

⁵Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria
Email: okekechazdar175@gmail.com

⁶Department of Educational Foundations, School of Education, Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria
Email: druchekukwuali@gmail.com

⁷Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross Rivers State, Nigeria

often believe that a country's rate of economic growth and innovation are inversely correlated with its level of entrepreneurship (Sanchez, 2013). Van Praag and Versloot (2007) noted that there are also strong relationships between entrepreneurial activity and economic performance, including the teaching of EE, as well as a need to create an environment for international trade in which entrepreneurship plays a significant role (Lado & Vozikis, 1996). This is further elevated by the creation of EE centres and institutes in HEIs, similar to what several HEIs in Nigeria have done. Furthermore, it is believed that education, particularly EE, can help people achieve elevated levels of entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2006). The United States of America and China, two rivals of the European Union, have both taken action, which is indicative of the widespread idea that entrepreneurship is essential to competitiveness and satisfaction (Smelstor 2007; Wang 2007). This belief is also pervasive in emerging nations like Nigeria. As a result, EE has been seeing a significant resurgence in recent years all over the world. For instance, it is well known that entrepreneurship and EE have advanced significantly in the United States (Solomon, Duffy & Tarabishy 2002; Finkle, Kuratko & Goldsby 2006; Solomon 2007). Furthermore, Solomon & Fernald (1991) demonstrate that there were 428% more new degree programmes in entrepreneurship in 1986 than there were in 1979, growing from 25 to 107. In recent years, there has been an even greater growth (Busenitz et al. 2003, Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019). To coordinate what is known as "the migration from manager sector to the entrepreneurial economy," a current study of 164 significant business schools in Europe found out that 42% of the business schools in Europe had set up dedicated centres for entrepreneurship (Thurik & Wennekers 2004). Over 80% of higher learning institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria, including universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics, have developed EE centres and institutes (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019). In Nigeria, a recent survey of 10 significant business schools, including the Lagos Business School (LBS) found that over 60% of them had set up centres for entrepreneurship (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019; Anyanwu, 2020; Nnamocha, 2021). In Africa generally, every university has an established centre, institute of EE and/or EE programme (Ndugbu, 2018; Onah, 2020; Akamike, 2021).

Higher education in the Nigerian context refers to a university, college of education or a polytechnic (Elom & Ossai, 2018). According to Tom et al (2013) higher education is generally seen as a major (potential) catalyst towards sustainable development in particular through its traditional mission of education, research and public service. Higher education advances and promotes teaching and learning, as well as research and community services. In Nigeria, HEIs have established centres and institutes of EE. Most higher education institutions in Nigeria offer general courses in EE for all first-year (100 Level) students.

Various countries of the world, including Nigeria, strive to improve, build and develop their economies through different techniques, strategies and approaches (Anyanwu, 2020). One significant technique used by many countries to improve and build their economies is the development of EE as a field of study, discipline, or area of expertise in schools. Additionally, the desire to provide the Nigerian people with appropriate goods and services led to the creation of entrepreneurship courses in universities of HEIs. There must be a steady supply of qualified and talented graduates from colleges and universities (HEIs) where entrepreneurship education is taught to serve as either workers or employers in order to guarantee that such quests are satisfied. Therefore, HEIs are required to turn out graduates who have acquired work-related or company start-up knowledge, abilities, and attitudes so they may function well in established companies or launch their own businesses and provide employment for others (Ehiobuche, Okolie, Nwali & Igwe, 2022). This is crucial in view of the expanding student enrollment, the dearth of graduate jobs, the rising unemployment rate, and the underemployment rate (Karmel & Carroll, 2016; Valentin, 2000). In some countries, such as Nigeria, 40% of the population, or about 83 million people, do not have a job to support themselves and live below the poverty level of 137,430 Naira (\$381.75) per year (World Bank, 2019). This is evident in the study conducted by Onah (2020) where he found out that in recent times, 70% of graduates from HEIs in Nigeria prefer establishing one business or the other to seeking employment elsewhere. This implies that if this can be achieved, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria will be reduced and more employment for people will be created (Akamike, 2021).

In the 21st century, entrepreneurship has turned out to be the order of the day. With the advent of globalisation, nations strive to promote entrepreneurship by encouraging more of their citizens to get involved in one entrepreneurial venture or the other. It is believed that with the introduction and eventual teaching and learning of EE in schools, more people will be encouraged to venture into entrepreneurial activities thereby advancing and improving the nation's economy with particular emphasis on internally generated revenue. In any discussion on teaching and learning, pedagogy and policy need to be considered. This paper looks at the why and how of teaching EE in schools. It will further explore or unravel the education level most appropriate for the first introduction of EE to students using Nigeria as a case study. This paper further explores Nigeria-oriented definition of EE and the various ways the teaching and learning of EE can be enhanced.

Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education and Nigeria-Oriented Definition of Entrepreneurship Education

The history of entrepreneurship and EE in Nigerian schools remains unknown (Akamike, 2021; Ndugbu; 2021). This is because several scholars have differing opinions on when and how entrepreneurship and EE were introduced in Nigerian schools. Furthermore, the first time a student begins to hear of EE is in upper basic education level schools (that is JSS 1-3) through HEIs – universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. But the truth remains that EE would be more effective if it is introduced to the child in early childhood education (Uzomah, 2022). During break time, EE can be introduced to a child in nursery school and kindergarten in form of role play or drama. Therefore, entrepreneurship means different things to different researchers. Some old definitions of entrepreneurship still hold sway. For example, as far back as 1970 till to date, the definitions of entrepreneurship by Kilby (1971) and Timmions (1987) have remained relevant. Kilby (1971) defines entrepreneurship as the ability to adapt to production processes to suit the local situation. This implies that a developing nation like Nigeria benefits more by merely modifying the existing technology to suit local variation rather than developing that technology itself from the start. Entrepreneurship seeks to find out how best graduates of HEIs can convert their education to intellectually productive ventures in order to bring out the best economic-yielding establishment and idea in an individual. Entrepreneurship is the act of creating and building something of value from practically nothing, and the creation and distribution of something of value and of benefit to the individual (Timmions, 1987). In support of these old definitions of entrepreneurship, Onah (2020) noted that the definitions of entrepreneurship then and now have no significant difference. The only known difference is the improvement in technology and the inclusion of technology as an innovation in entrepreneurship. This agrees with Gana (2011) with his description of entrepreneurship defined as the intention and capacity of an individual to look for business opportunities and to establish on the identified opportunities. Furthermore, entrepreneurship is the willingness, skill, ability, capacity and drive to identify and harness an investment opportunity (Madu, Uzoeshi, Agu & Kanu, 2020). This implies that non-business opportunities are included in EE. Thus, the entrepreneur must have entrepreneurship behaviour.

Entrepreneurship behaviour can manifest itself in any individual in any locality provided there is the willingness, skill and drive to harness all available resources in order to achieve a given objective. It requires conscious devotion to time and effort. Only individuals that are enterprising will appreciate the significance of the time and effort required to make something new and operational. It also involves risks with very impressive rewards which give the individual personal satisfaction. According to Tchamyu (2014), entrepreneurialism is exceedingly dangerous in Africa, including Nigeria (Alagidede, 2008; Asongu, 2012). World Bank's Doing Business Indicators did not fully reflect the impact of labour regulations on the African continent (Paul et al., 2010). This supports a previous claim made by Eifert et al. (2008) that the World Bank's measures undervalue the performance of African enterprises.

The level of success of an entrepreneur is indicated by the profit. There are entrepreneurs who lack the requisite abilities but are passionate about developing and running a business idea. Contrarily, EE is described as any educational method or programme that fosters the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and abilities (Fayolle & Klandt, 2006). Despite the fact that entrepreneurship education has been related with/to acquiring more academic information as opposed to practical entrepreneurial abilities (Al-Awlaqi, Aamer & Habtoor, 2018). Entrepreneurship learning, as described by Hahn, Minola, Gils & Huybrechts (2017), is the "essential process via which the students build entrepreneurship knowledge that permits them to discover and act on entrepreneurial possibilities." The process of fostering in students' business-oriented skills, ideas, and information, to enable them to become autonomous after graduation, is another definition of EE (Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021).

It is believed that entrepreneurial learning, as defined by Zozimo, Jack and Hamilton (2017), is essential for expanding knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship (Wang & Chugh, 2014). This has prompted numerous requests for greater knowledge and understanding of how people pick up skills from other entrepreneurial skills' acquisition sectors (Cope 2005; Hamilton 2011; Pittaway & Thorpe 2012; Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton 2015), and in particular how different businesspeople pick up skills from observing other business people and people they communicate with, in social settings and who are frequently viewed as essential role models (Bosma et al. 2012; Hoffmann, Junge & Malchow-Meller 2015). Everything pertaining to education in Nigeria must incorporate the notions of teaching and learning. The notion that EE, which encompasses the pedagogical programmes, and procedures supplied to students to increase or reinforce their entrepreneurial qualities, attitudes, and abilities (Bae et al. 2014; Fayolle, Gailly & Lassas-Clerk 2016), is one of many initiatives that have been implemented by educational institutions. This is encouraged by policymakers in response to the popular belief that entrepreneurship functions as an engine for economic growth. Universities as HEIs in Nigeria, face the challenge of preparing undergraduates for a job market where the willingness to act and think in an entrepreneurship and proactive manner is a key success factor

(Audretsch 2014; Urbano & Guerrero 2013). Hahn, Minola, Gils & Huybrechts (2017) assert that the primary objective of EE has switched from encouraging students to launch new enterprises to emphasizing entrepreneurship as an important style of rational thinking and strategic behaviour (Leitch, Hazlett & Pittaway, 2012; Mustar, 2019). According to Mezieobi and Okeke (2019), the majority of Nigerians who have been successful in entrepreneurial pursuits have never enrolled in an entrepreneurship programme(s). Apprenticeship can be advantageous in this circumstance. In fact, the European Commission (2018, p. 7) emphasizes that the benefits of EE are not limited to start-ups, innovative ventures, and new jobs, but also to an individual's ability to put ideas into action. As a result, entrepreneurship education is a key competence for all, enabling young people to be even more creative and self-assured in whatever they pursue, be it business, wellness, family, family planning, and so on. In order to promote entrepreneurial learning (EL) (Neck & Greene, 2011), entrepreneurial thought, entrepreneurial actions and EE in Nigeria should contain the aforementioned objectives.

Therefore, in the Nigerian context, EE is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and initiatives that can make an individual excel in business, commerce and trade. But EE should not be limited to the economy, trade, commerce or business, it should be the acquisition of skills to excel and succeed in all areas of life including health, oil and gas, engineering, governance, human welfare, management (Ndugbu, 2018; Nnamocha, 2021) and so on. Furthermore, EE should not just be the transfer of entrepreneurial knowledge through teaching and learning from one individual to another, but entrepreneurial knowledge can be acquired through observations, practice, getting involved in entrepreneurial-oriented activities (Uzomah, 2022; Iheanacho, 2022) and so on.

For some Nigerians, EE, or what Sibanda & Iwu (2021) referred to as entrepreneurship literacy (EL), advances knowledge of starting up a business and the ability to handle and manage the numerous challenges that come with business complexities for the betterment of the society and the enhancement of the nation's economy. They see entrepreneurs as those individuals that have established top-ranking businesses (Nnamocha, 2021; Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021) like Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu, Mike Adenugo, Femi Atedola, Folurunsho Alakija, Innocent Chukwuma, Frank Nneji, Alex Mbata, ABC Orjiako, Uchenna Mezieobi and so on. They do not recognize street hawkers, truck pushers, wheelbarrow pushers, taxi and bus drivers and all petty traders as entrepreneurs. Higher education institutions form part of the EE teaching and learning environment (Mazzarol 2014), thus suggesting that a thriving economy is achieved partly through quality education (Sibanda & Iwu, 2021). In Nigeria, the quest for achieving quality education especially in HEIs is being promoted by the various unions that make up higher education institutions. Quality education improves pass rates and helps to decrease dropout rates (Iwu, Ezeuduj, Iwu, Ikebuaku & Tengeh 2018). Therefore, with quality education, the teaching and learning of EE in Nigeria can be effective and efficient. Furthermore, this will reduce the high rate of unemployment among graduates of HEIs in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Teaching and Learning of Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria

There is ongoing discussion regarding whether and/or under what circumstances this sort of education helps the students' EE/entrepreneurial learning, according to Hahn et al. (2017), despite the global increase in entrepreneurship education given at HEIs. This is why outlining the objectives of EE is very essential. Even though Osuala (2012) has noted that "not all the colleges and institutions... teach entrepreneurship education...", it is still important that it is introduced and taught in HEIs in Nigeria. Ekefre and Aloba (2012) outlined the following as objectives of EE in Nigeria. They are:

- To give youngsters that meaningful education that would empower them to become self-reliant, and afterward encourage them to generate profit and be self-sufficient.
- To provide small and medium-size businesses with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to the management of the small business centres.
- To provide graduates with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium-size businesses.
- To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty be possible and easy.
- To motivate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
- To provide graduates with training in the skills that will make them meet the manpower need of society.
- To encourage industrial and economic growth in rural and underdeveloped areas, and
- To give graduates sufficient training to enable them to think creatively and innovatively while seeking out new business prospects.

Achieving the above objectives is not usually easy for Nigerian schools and teachers. This is because of the corruption and selfishness on the part of the school's management and the government. In some case, inadequate funding of the schools makes it impossible for the above objectives to be achieved. On the other hand, ineffective and inefficient utilization of available funds becomes a problem. But Ekefre and Aloba (2012) mentioned that "to attain the... objectives, the course content of EE should be all-embracing". This means that it should include all information that has to do with starting new businesses, sustaining them and advancing them. Some information that EE should contain are:

- Sources of finance to start-up small business;
- Basic managerial skills;
- Knowledge of the business enrolment especially various businesses;
- Organization of small-scale businesses;
- Risk management;
- Principles of managing businesses;
- Interaction in business and so on (Ndugbu, 2018; Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019)

Entrepreneurial Training Environments for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The setting in which EE is taught and learned, whether in theory or in reality, is crucial and can encourage and promote learning. The success of EE today connects the political, academic, professional, and scientific realms and permeates every social stratum in western society (Toutain, Fayolle, Pittaway & Politis, 2017). With specifically Nigeria and Africa in general, this is not the case. This is because the environment for teaching and learning is still evolving. The three educational elements of teaching about the entrepreneur (about), teaching to become an entrepreneur (for), and educating through committing to entrepreneurial (through) are all experiencing significant growth in training course development (Blenker et al., 2011).

All these three educational dimensions of EE need strategic consideration, harnessing and implementation in the Nigerian context. Furthermore, the teaching and learning of EE should not be confined to the classroom, instead fieldwork, site-seeing and exploration of innovative strategies should be encouraged.

EE in Nigerian schools is taught in theory. Practicalising the content of EE has not been easy because of lack of funds to adequately fund EE activities and programmes in HEIs (Ihemadu & Mezieobi, 2021; Iheanacho, 2022). In the teaching of entrepreneurship education, making emphasis on successful entrepreneurs in Nigeria motivates the students to want to practicalise entrepreneurship. This also impacts on their expectations at becoming entrepreneurs and engaging in entrepreneurial activities after graduation (Anyanwu, 2020; Nnamocha, 2021).

How can the Teaching and Learning of Entrepreneurship Education be Enhanced?

It is possible for one to say that EE covers entrepreneurship teaching (ET) and entrepreneurship learning (EL). The link between entrepreneurship teaching (ET) and entrepreneurship learning (EL) is so pronounced that without entrepreneurship teaching, there would be no entrepreneurship learning and with effective entrepreneurship learning, the purpose of EE can be achieved. This, therefore, means that enhancing the teaching and learning of EE will entail strategic repositioning of the entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria's HEIs. Additionally, in the modern day, knowledge, innovation, and business are crucial components of a country's and an economy's development. According to Audretsch (2007), "knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship are essential to economic and societal progress in contemporary globalized and competitive environment." Therefore, EE needs to be a priority. Furthermore, the following have to be considered for EE to be improved through its teaching and learning at HEIs:

- EE content, pedagogical approaches and didactic tools should be relooked.
- The EE curriculum should be re-visited and modernised to conform to best practices and international standards.
- Contextualisation of the content of EE should be encouraged.
- Ideal and reflective thinking by EE teachers and students on EE should be considered.
- HEIs should allow professional teachers in EE to run the affairs of the centre or Directorate of EE as the case may be.
- The separation of the centre for EE from the school/faculty of education should be discouraged.
- The services of professionals in EE should be engaged.
- The government should make policies making EE very compulsory in HEIs.

- EE teaching and learning can only be effective if practicalised. After theoretical learning, practical learning should take place.
- Workshops on various careers or businesses should be established in Nigeria's HEIs.
- Creativity and innovations should be introduced in the teaching and learning of EE (Mezieobi & Okeke, 2019; Anyanwu, 2020; Onah, 2020).

The above information was supported by Anyanwu and Nnamocha (2021), when they stated that factors like EE content, pedagogical approaches, didactic tools, ideal and reflective thinking, practicalisation of EE, creativity and innovation, contextualizing the teaching and learning of EE and so on should be considered in the process of improving the teaching and learning of EE in higher education institutions (HEIs) especially in Nigeria. This is because there are borrowed information in EE that do not fit into its teaching and learning in Nigeria.

Education in Entrepreneurship: Teaching and Learning

In Nigeria's HEIs, there is no widely recognised model for the learning and teaching of EE. Additionally, during the past 20 years, there has been a significant growth in research on EE, activities, and programmes (Katz 2013; Kuratko 2015). Despite certain improvements in the general pedagogical structure, there are still a lot of crucial concerns that need to be resolved. According to Verzat, O'shea and Jore (2017), these include how to describe appropriate learning objectives for addressing the complex and difficult EE concept, how to design appropriate and adequate teaching methods and methodologies, and the various measures that can be used to assess their overall efficacy. Current literature reviews (Rizza & Varum 2011; Byrne, Fayolle & Toutain 2014; Naia et al. 2014); as well as individual insights from a subject-matter expert (Fayolle 2013), all suggest that researchers are still unable to fully explain and describe why and how we should teach what, to whom in the entrepreneurship classroom and learning process. The definition, teaching, and learning of soft skills related to EE and the entrepreneurial attitude is one of the most ambiguous areas (Blenker et al. 2014). In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of EE is still vague. It is extensively utilised and promoted as a crucial capacity for lifelong learning despite its ambiguity.

EE considers several pieces of information for its effectiveness and efficiency. Some of these activities or information considered by EE especially for effective teaching and learning are: regional development, safety, education services, culture, environmental services, recreation, transport, economic development, international engagement and health services.

Additionally, on the basis of the above assertions, this paper highlights the following as a guide to the teaching and learning of EE in Nigeria:

- Students of HEIs need EE from entrepreneurship educationists, but also through the use of didactic tools that can teach them to be creative in their own businesses.
- Students of higher education institutions (HEIs) and EE lecturers need to have ownership of their own creative ideas and be held responsible for the reflective process and its outcome.
- HEIs, that is universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, in the Nigerian context can benefit from engaging the community in entrepreneurship activities (or the producer of entrepreneurs) by bringing outside expertise/skills to their classrooms.
- Students of higher education institutions (HEIs) ought to have the freedom of learning, but within a freedom framework, a controlled environment in which they are free to experiment with their entrepreneurial ideas and thoughts

CONCLUSION

The teaching and learning of EE entail a lot of creativity, reflective thinking and innovation. The value of EE cannot be over looked because the high rate of unemployment can be reduced through effective and efficient teaching and learning of EE. In as much as Nigerians see business as an area for the uneducated and unemployed, every individual should be encouraged to get involved in one business or the other in order to increase salaries that can be enough for human survival. Government should create an enabling environment for entrepreneurs to strive even amidst economic meltdown or recession. Furthermore, business start-up sponsorships should be provided by the various state and federal governments, charity organisations, and private individuals.

Enhancing the teaching and learning of EE in HEIs will give students impressive experiences. This can be achieved by involving students in practical aspects of entrepreneurial teaching and learning. However, students with the ability to learn EE and become entrepreneurs should be encouraged by the various stakeholders of education including the government, institutions of learning, investors, international organisations, non-governmental organisations,

the community and so on. This will help in the reduction of the unemployment rate of graduates of HEIs. It is crucial to encourage graduates, whether or not they have a passion for business, to get involved in one or more trades in their local community, given the rising number of people receiving various degrees from universities of HEIs and Nigeria's rising unemployment rate. This study builds on earlier research that examined the teaching and learning of EE in various educational settings and contexts. It is situated in Nigeria and uses an integrative literature review methodology for critical and analytical evaluation, and synthesises the literature on entrepreneurship, EE, and a Nigeria-specific definition of EE with a focus on HEIs in the nation. Through this method, colleges and universities (HEIs) in Nigeria can improve the teaching and learning of EE by creating a new theoretical framework and perspective. The study adds to the body of information about EE, EE teaching and learning, and the numerous ways EE teaching and learning may be improved in higher education institutions in Nigeria and other areas of the world. Additionally, it has applications for those interested in entrepreneurship, EE, and the delivery of EE in HEIs.

Recommendations

It is a fact that there are fewer entrepreneurial methods/strategies in education. Therefore, this paper recommends that:

- Policy makers in education should ensure that courses in EE are taught by entrepreneurship educationists in collaboration with entrepreneurs –business owners/traders/market men and women/investors and so on (for practical purposes).
- All levels of educational endeavours—lower (primary 1-3), middle (primary 4-6), and upper (JSS 1-3) basic education level schools, senior secondary schools, and HEIs—should teach and learn about entrepreneurship.
- The curriculum of the school should include instruction in entrepreneurship.
- EE should be an independent course.
- If it is possible, apart from teaching EE in schools, avenues of out-of-school tutoring/apprenticeship should be created and encouraged.
- It is crucial to reposition the instructors in EE. They need to receive proper instruction.
- In schools and the general public, periodic seminars, workshops, conferences, and symposia on EE should be held.

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