

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROBLEMS AS PERCEIVED BY UNDERGRADUATE OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE ISHIAGU, EBONYI STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*The research investigated entrepreneurship problems as perceived by undergraduates of federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ebonyi State. One hundred and twenty undergraduates consisting of sixty (60) males and sixty (60) females were randomly selected from federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu, Ebonyi State. An instrument named Tertiary Institution Perception of Entrepreneurship Challenges Inventory (TISPECI) was administered to one hundred and twenty undergraduates sampled from the institution. One research question and one hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Result revealed significant gender difference in the perception of male and female undergraduates in the institution. It was recommended that tertiary institutions should deliberately provide sector specific skills needed for development of human capital, use professional entrepreneurs as instructors and mentors among others were made.*

### **Introduction**

Nigeria faces a number of challenges that can only be met if she has innovative, well-educated, and entrepreneurial citizens who, whatever their walks of life, have the spirit and inquisitiveness to think in new ways, and the courage to meet and adapt to the challenges facing them. At same time, given the current socio-economic and political stance of the country, a thriving economy would require a greater number of young people who are willing and able to become entrepreneurs; who can launch and successfully develop their own commercial or social ventures, and who will become innovators in the wider organisations in which they work. It is a common experience that many graduates from the Nigerian universities find it difficult to get employment every year. This is partly due to the curricula of the universities and other tertiary institutions which lay emphasis on training for white-collar jobs (Osibanjo, 2006).

These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing nations thereby calling for the training of educated man and woman who can function effectively in the society in which they live. Available information by National University Commission (NUC) (2004) reiterate the massive unemployment of Nigerian University graduates in the country. This problem is said to be traceable to the dis-equilibrium between labour market requirement and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates. This obvious critical skills gaps inhibit the development of youth and entire nation.

More than half of the Nigerian population are under the age of 30 according to the National Population Commission (2001), therefore it can be asserted that the economy of Nigeria is a youth economy. This reality leaves them without any meaningful means of sustainable livelihood. To make ends meet, they simply indulge in prostitution (both male and female, armed robbery and so on. (Osuala, 2004)

The youthful period which is very critical one has been noted as an essential time for training in Entrepreneurship, provides positive distractive alternatives from the self-destructive and aggressive behaviours that are frequently associated with adolescents and growing up (Woolfolk, 1998). This critical age however is the right time to teach them the concept of entrepreneurship to help them learn wealth creation. The question then is what is entrepreneurship? Entrepreneurship has been defined by various professions to mean many things since the middle age. Steinholf and Burgers (1983) define entrepreneurship as the process of creating values by pulling together unique package of resources to exploit opportunity. However, the summary of what entrepreneurship means will reflect the individual's definer's points of view.

### **Conceptual Framework: what is Entrepreneurship and who is an entrepreneur?**

The term entrepreneurship has a history that dates back to 1732, when the Irish economist Richard Cantillon used the word in reference to individuals with "a willingness to carry out forms of arbitrage involving the financial risk of a new venture" (Minniti & Lévesque, 2008). Defining entrepreneurship is complex and there is no universal theory of it. Entrepreneurship has been defined by various professions to mean many things since the middle age (Igbo, 2006). However, the summary of what entrepreneurship means will reflect the individual's definer's point of view is (Oviawe, 2010). Drucker (1985) called entrepreneurship as an "innovative act, which includes endowing existing resources for new wealth-producing capacity." While this definition may seem plausible, many researchers argue that entrepreneurship as such is still a field with no clear boundaries and that it lacks a clear conceptual framework (Bruyat & Julien, 2001; Busenitz et al., 2003; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Gartner (1985) described it as the "creation of a new organization." It is important to note, however, that entrepreneurship, a primary source of innovation, may involve the development of new visions and business methods for established companies as well as the creation of new organization.

According to Gana (2001), entrepreneurship is the ability to seek investment opportunities and establish an enterprise based on identified opportunities. The entrepreneur takes risks, is focused and energized by an inner drive. The ability to develop a new venture or apply a new approach to an old business is sole idea of entrepreneurship (Steinfiuff and Durges, 1993). In other words, the individual gives the market place a product or service by using resources. According to Gana (2001), entrepreneurship is the ability to seek investment opportunities and establish an enterprise based on identified opportunities. The entrepreneur takes risks, is focused and energized by an inner drive. The ability to develop a new venture or apply a new approach to an old business is sole idea of entrepreneurship (Steinfiuff and Durges, 1993). In other words, the individual gives the market place a product or service by using resources.

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully (Inegbebor, 1987). The entrepreneur is essentially a person who owns or controls a business through which income is gained. National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (1989) in Onyebueke and Ochonogo (2002) defined entrepreneurship as the art which involves recognizing a business opportunity, mobilizing resources and persisting to exploit that opportunity in a new way. Esomonu (1998) defined entrepreneurship as the effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in a creative performance. This singular risk taking act leads an individual to create something of value from practically nothing.

On the other hand, the active form of entrepreneur, "entreprendre", can be translated as "to undertake or start something". Researchers and "economists such as Kirzner (1973, 1997) and, Baumol (1990,2002) are among the most influential contributors to our understanding of entrepreneurial behaviour..." (Minniti & Levesque, 2008). The entrepreneur has been seen as an actor, innovator or a developer of technology. In general terms an entrepreneur is described as "one who organises, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise" (Woolf, 1980). Carnier, (1996) sees the entrepreneur as the centre of an integrated model of economic development, incorporating a theory of profit and interest, as well as a theory of the business cycle and the capitalist system. The entrepreneur is an innovator, one who carries a combination of the following: the introduction of a new product; the opening of a new market; the conquest of new sources of materials; and the organization of new industry. According to Morrison's (1999) study, the profile of an entrepreneur is one who: (1) is intelligent and analytical, (2) is an effective risk manager and a networker, (3) possesses a strong set of moral, social and business ethics, (4) exhibits a basic trader's instinct, and (5) is dedicated to life-long learning in many forms. The talents included in Morrison's definition are important requirements for becoming successful entrepreneurs in the knowledge era. Furthermore, Anayakoha (2006) described an entrepreneur as one who chooses or assumes risks, identifies business opportunity, gathers



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resources, initiates actions and establishes an organization or enterprise to meet such demand or market opportunity.

Watson, Hogarth-Scott and Wilson's (1998) and Morrison's (1999) studies also contend that entrepreneurial spirit needs appropriate social and cultural background to initiate motives for venture creation and aspiration for excellence in various academic areas in order to create successful venture. Lee and Peterson (2000) state that even those individuals who are motivated by such factors as financial rewards, achievement, social, career, and individual fulfillment need a national culture that supports and encourages entrepreneurial activity. Watson et al. (1998), Morrison (1999), and Lee and Peterson (2000) agree that great entrepreneurs do not grow by themselves, but that they are products of entrepreneurship-oriented societies and cultures.

Shane & Venkataraman (2000) proposed three major sets of research questions: "(1) why, when, and how opportunities for the creation of goods and services come into existence; (2) why, when and how some people and not others discover and exploit these opportunities; and (3) why, when and how different modes of action are used to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities" (Shane et al., 2000).

More recently, The 2008 European Commission Report entitled 'Entrepreneurship in higher education, especially within non-business studies' favours the following definition:

"Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity". The same report also has: "Entrepreneurial programmes and modules [which offer] students the tools to think creatively, be an effective problem-solver, analyse a business idea objectively, and communicate, network, lead, and evaluate any given project. Students feel more confident about setting up their own business as they can now test their own business ideas in an educational, supportive environment" (p10-11 European Commission -

Entrepreneurship in higher education, especially within non-business studies - Final Report of the Expert Group, March 2008). Furthermore, it can be postulated that the growing importance of entrepreneurial imagination is born by the need to embrace change as an opportunity in terms of way of thinking, identifying an opportunity, realizing that opportunity and taking it up with positive mindset.

### Literature Review

Experts have expressed their views on the need for assessment of the perception of undergraduate students on challenges on Entrepreneurship especially in Nigerian Universities. However it appears as if much conclusive researches have not been carried out on the topic. This may be the reason why a number of researches have been carried and a number of writers stressed the need to survey the perception of the beneficiaries (University undergraduates) prior to the implementation of any entrepreneurship programme.

Igbo (1995) supported the idea by re-affirming the need that a number of challenges have exacerbated the entrepreneurship problems of students of tertiary institutions. Work (1998) and Brown (2012) also on a particular area of concern in relation to implementation of entrepreneurship programme.

Nigerian education is presently at cross road as far as producing individual who will work to deserve and justify their pay, work independently, globally and bring creativity into their work place (Brown, 2012).

The current mismatch between what Nigerian economy needs and what Nigerian youth are made to study in schools is becoming very appalling. The result of a three week large scale, rapid national survey in 2004 jointly sponsored by National Universities Commission (NUC) and Education Trust Fund (ETF) to determine the needs of the labour market that Nigerian University undergraduates are failing to meet revealed that 100 individual and 20 organizations visited, 44 percent rated Nigerian science graduates as average in competence, 56% rated them as average in innovation, 50% rated them average in rational judgment, 68% as average in leadership skills, 44% as average in creativity. On needed skills like literacy, oral communication, information technology,



entrepreneurship, analytical problem-solving and decision making 60% rated them as poor. These data can be said to explain why there has been an obvious increase in employment rate (Brown, 2012). One of these reasons given was that those graduates were simply unemployable.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Entrepreneurship is aimed at the overall training of an individual and university undergraduates for useful living. To benefit from this laudable programme, students are trained to acquire skills. But a clear observation by the researchers in the sample tertiary institutions is that some students have different perceptions of what constitute entrepreneurship challenges. Knowledge of entrepreneurship challenges especially as perceived by the university undergraduates is necessary for a successful entrepreneurship programme. Some of the challenges may include poor knowledge based economy, lack of relevant materials, and inadequate capital as well as lack of proper understanding of the appropriate characteristics needed for effective entrepreneurship to mention but a few. It is on this ground that this study set out to determine the perception of undergraduate students of tertiary institutions of Ebonyi State in order to have up to date data to base the planning and implementation of appropriate entrepreneurship programmes.

### **Research Questions**

What is the difference in the perception of male and female undergraduate students of tertiary institution on the entrepreneurship challenges?

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the mean score on the perception of male and female undergraduate of tertiary institution on the entrepreneurship challenges.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students in federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu. The sample consisted of one hundred and twenty males and females undergraduate students in Federal College of Agriculture Ishiagu. They were randomly selected from federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used for the study was Tertiary Institutions Perception of Entrepreneurship Challenges Inventory (TISPECI) developed by the researchers. The instrument consists of two sections (A and B). Section A requires the respondents' relevant personal information (Bio-data) while section B elicits responses on entrepreneurship challenges rated on 5 point Likert Scale indicating extremely serious and not serious. The face validity of the instrument was established by three experts in test and measurement (three senior lecturers in the federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu). As regards to the reliability test-retest method used in establishing reliability for the instrument. The reliability coefficient was 0.80. This was considered high enough for the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test statistics for hypothesis testing results.

### **Research question**

What is the difference in the perception of male and female undergraduates of tertiary institutions on the entrepreneurship challenges?

Mean Response of Student on Entrepreneurship Challenges in federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu. S/N	Items	Mean(X) Male student	Mean (X) Female students
1	Lack of capital	3.52	3.85
2	Poor government support	3.21	3.61
3	Dependency mentality	2.54	2.91
4	Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning entrepreneurship	2.81	3.15
5	Lack of skills	3.01	3.22
6	Poor knowledge based economy	3.21	3.56
7	Lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipments	2.65	3.03
8	Non inclusion of entrepreneurship programmes in	2.58	2.78

The table above revealed that the respondent responded positively to all the challenges facing entrepreneurship among undergraduate tertiary institution with a mean score greater than the scale mean of 2.5. That is the items were accepted by the respondent on the possible challenges facing entrepreneurship among undergraduates.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between mean score of the perception of male and female undergraduates of federal college of Agriculture Ishiagu on entrepreneurship challenges.

Gender	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-table	Decision
Male	60	2.61	0.46	298	0.74	1.96	NS
Female	60	3.08	0.63				

From table 2 above, it was discovered that at 5% Or  $P < 0.05$  level of significance and 298 df, calculated t (0.74) is less than the critical t (1.96). Therefore,  $H_0$  is upheld. The researcher concluded that this is no significance differences as views by the undergraduate by gender on the challenges of entrepreneurship.

### Discussion

From the results of this study, it was revealed that the respondent's male and female undergraduate responded positively on the challenges facing entrepreneurship among undergraduate. That is, Lack of capital; Poor government support; Dependency mentality; Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning entrepreneurship; Lack of skills; Poor knowledge based economy; Lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment's; Non-inclusion of entrepreneurship programmes in the school curriculum; Poor social attitude to technical and vocational education development; Insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and

expansion strategy; Poor plan and execution of processes of actions; Lack of effective policy on entrepreneurship. The findings is in line with the early finding of Osuala (2004), Brown (2012) on the challenges facing entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

The result of the analysis of the hypothesis reveals significant difference between male and female undergraduates in their perception of entrepreneurship challenges in tertiary institutions. The findings is in line with the early findings of Afolabi and Alaku (2008) who maintained that gender differentiation is evident in the way males and females are brought up as children, students, parents and workers in Nigeria.

Considering the mean scores of the males and the females, as is glaring that the mean of the male ( $x = 2.61$ ) less is than that of the female ( $x=3.08$ ) which implies that the males have greater perception than the males on entrepreneurship challenges. The finding also goes along way to confirm that male and female undergraduates did indicate that

entrepreneurship challenges are gender oriented. It has further proved that addressing entrepreneurship challenges in Nigerian higher institutions requires different approaches on the basis of gender. The finding is consistent with previous finding by Bojuwoye (1981) that male and female undergraduates revealed differences in their perceptions between groupings.

### Recommendations

- i. Notable and successful entrepreneurs should be invited to give talks from time to time to students at various tertiary institutions.
- ii. Ensure that school debilitating provide sector specific skills needed for the development of human capital, use professional and entrepreneur as instructors and mentors
- iii. Teach Entrepreneurship and creativity at early age
- iv. Organize for curriculum integration of education, entrepreneurship and community development
- v. Government should provide the necessary basic amenities and infrastructural facilities that will enable entrepreneurs to thrive in the country.

### Conclusion

The result of the research revealed various challenges facing undergraduate entrepreneurship skills. Both male and finance youth in Nigeria will now repositioning themselves to eradicate this challenges so as to transform themselves into a more confident, aggressive and purposeful individual and this study will provide the bases for a strong scientific, technical and factual background influence on future researcher.

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