

Critical Assessment of Entrepreneurship Education Programme Implementation in Public Universities in Cross River State during Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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Abstract

The study assessed the extent of entrepreneurship education programme implementation in public Universities in Cross River State during the post Covid-19 pandemic era. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study with a population of 12,095 undergraduates (300 level) of 2021/2022 academic session from Universities in Cross River State. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to sample 347 respondents. A validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha Analysis was used to establish the reliability at 0.81. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. Findings generally point to the fact that a significant number of the student population are not satisfied with the poor implementation of the entrepreneurial course content during the post pandemic era. It was also found that students' negative attitude towards Entrepreneurship education is a function of poor implementation of the programme in the sampled institutions. Results equally indicted that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University on the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era with Federal University scoring higher mean than State University. It was however concluded that most students may not wish, by all indications, to nurture intentions to get into self-employment upon graduation from the University due to poor implementation of the entrepreneurial programme. It is therefore recommended among others that a monitoring team should be set up by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to regularly appraise and report the progress and shortcoming of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship Education, course content, Implementation, post COVID-19 Pandemic*

Introduction

Before the eruption of COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11th March 2020. As of 24th November 2022, the pandemic had caused more than 639 million cases and 6.62 million confirmed deaths, making it one of the deadliest in history. COVID-19 is an acronym for a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus: 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease (Uzoigwe, Owashi & Opuwari, 2020). Among others, the symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties. But after the COVID-19 experience in Nigeria, some of the Universities lost their manpower, materials and financial resources. Also, the rate of teaching, research and community service slowed down. Many University programmes in Agriculture, Education, Arts, Law, Management, Social and Medical Sciences were in disarray, resulting in the inability of the University system to raise adequate manpower to meet the labour market expectations (Ukpong & Uzoigwe, 2020). The purpose of this study therefore is to appraise the extent of the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education programme in public Universities in Cross River State during post Covid-19 pandemic era.

For centuries, entrepreneurship is no doubt a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation (Aliu, 2018). It requires an application of energy and passion towards the conception and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Okon (2022) maintained that the characteristics of entrepreneurship policies include the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity, or career; ability to formulate effective venture teams. It also includes the evolvement of creative skills to eke out needed resources. It encompasses the fundamental skills of building solid business plan by recognising opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2014). That is why in 2006, the Federal Government directed Nigerian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to include Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) as a compulsory course for all students with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session (Aliu, 2018) which led to the inclusion of EEd in the curriculum of all universities and other higher education in Nigeria. Most of the universities in Nigeria (including University of Calabar and Cross River State University) now have a centre for Entrepreneurship Education in their respective institutions. The courses offered through the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) are: ENT 212 Entrepreneurship and innovation, ENT 213 Business and management principles for all 200 level students, ENT 311 business creation and Growth and ENT 312 Business and Management transition, for all 300 level students; while the National University Commission (NUC) has vested the responsibility of implementing by systematically planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, funding and teaching the above benchmark courses in the Universities through institutionalizing of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria Universities.

Unfortunately, the researcher has observed with dismay the poor implementation of entrepreneurship course contents in public Universities in Cross River State especially during the post-Covid pandemic period. It appears that Entrepreneurship Education can no longer provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings in Cross River State. The researcher has observed that the course content hardly creates better understanding about business ventures, provides opportunity for practical learning and as well identify business opportunities. It does not encourage students to develop the spirit of perseverance in any business of their choice. The programme is unable to enhance students' business management skills, teamwork and leadership skills, communication skills, customer service skills, financial management skills, business analytical skills and critical thinking skills (Obi & Okekeokosisi, 2018). Some students are not interested in attending Entrepreneurship Education lectures. Research evidence in Okon (2022) revealed that Entrepreneurship education management in Cross River State tertiary institutions lack strategic thinking skills and have failed to develop business intentions of students due to lapses in the course content. This results in laxity among the students and seems to be responsible for expanding the frontiers of unemployment in the labour market.

In view of how to resolve these problems, the National Universities Commission through its accreditation agency in the past five years has found many factors which were responsible for poor implementation of Entrepreneurship Education programme in the University. Some of the factors identified include but not limited to brain drain, students' negative attitude, shortage of qualified lectures, inadequate facilities, insufficient teaching techniques, poor funding and lack of government support hinder the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in Cross River State (NUC, 2017).

Contrarily, Bassey and Archibong (2015) strongly argued that entrepreneurship education is designed to empower undergraduate and graduates alike irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills and competences that will enable them to engage in income yielding venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sectors. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators. The rationale for the inclusion of entrepreneurship curricula according to Kuratko and Hodgetts (2014), include the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity, or career, the ability to formulate an effective venture team, the creative skill of building solid business

plan, and finally, the vision to recognized opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion. Bhandari (2016) rightly found that more educational institutions now offer a wide range of entrepreneurship programme and training activities. The programme appear to be influencing students in terms of generating entrepreneurial interest and going into the business of their choice.

Souitaris, Zerbinati and Al-lahan (2016) revealed that entrepreneurial programme raise attitudes and behavior capable of provoking entrepreneurial intentions among youth who have interest in the economic development. Ogbiji (2018) assessed the implementation of entrepreneurship education programme in tertiary educational institutions and graduate employment in Nigeria: the perspective of Cross River State. The findings revealed that ENT is widely implemented (67.78%) among tertiary educational institutions; the course is not well taught (61.94) among schools; that there were no industrial experience or visits by learners (76.79%) and that the course has not introduced learners to many trades (59.27) and that some beneficiaries of the course have not become self-employed through the inspiration drawn from it (9.93%). There is no consensus view that the course holds great potentials for graduate employment (90.90%). From the findings it was concluded that ENT does not have great prospects for graduate's self-employment and accordingly recommended for improvement in programme implementation.

Obi and Okekeokosisi (2018) worked on extent of implementation of National Entrepreneurship Curriculum in Tertiary institutions as perceived by Educators. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The result indicated that the extent of adherence to entrepreneurship curriculum is too low. It was also found that students' attitude towards the programme has not been favourable due to poor course content. Akpan and Etor (2013) found that some students' attitude revealed that their Entrepreneurship Education knowledge was not enough for practicalities and that they were not satisfied with the poor Entrepreneurship Education provisions. Similarly, Nian, Bakar and Islam (2014) found that the 71% of the undergraduate students developed negative attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education when they discovered that the curriculum is not linked to their various areas of specialization. In the same vein, Ekpiken, and Ukpabio (2015) found that 34 percent of the sampled students were not able to establish small scale businesses based on the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired. It was also found that their negative attitude increased because the entrepreneurial curriculum could not motivate them to attend entrepreneurial classes and workshop.

Ugwoke and Basake (2020) evaluated the administrative constraints to implementation of entrepreneurship education in Federal Colleges of Education. Mean and standard deviation were used as statistical tool for answering the research questions. Major findings include inadequate provision of funds, facilities and personnel's, among others. Bright and Oroma (2020) surveyed the extent of implementation of entrepreneurship education for self-reliance in public Universities in Rivers State. The findings revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of Federal and State Universities on the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education. The study concluded that realizing the benefits of entrepreneurial studies at the University level depends to a significant extent on the pedagogical practices of its lecturers, including the usefulness of the learning activities. Nnaemeka and Osuji (2022) explored the implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in the Universities in Enugu state, Nigeria. The result of the study shows that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of students on the available resources for entrepreneurship education curriculum implementation in Federal and State Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The result also shows that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent lecturers utilize educational resources for the implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum in Federal and State Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria

Amini-Philips and Ikibo-Areh (2019) examined status of the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Universities in Delta State, Nigeria. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples z-test was used to test the

null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It was found that entrepreneurship education was not properly implemented in the undergraduate and post graduate levels in Delta State Universities. However, the programme was bedeviled with conspicuous challenges. It was however recommended among others that a monitoring team should be set up by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to monitor the progress and shortcoming of entrepreneurship education in the Universities.

In order to address these challenges and to make up for the curricula inadequacies in entrepreneurship education in public Universities in Cross River State, necessary mechanisms for staff recruitment, training and development, and procurement of digital support services. Also, NUC (2012) designed more Entrepreneurship courses for all levels and advised Universities to add more according to their needs through entrepreneurship skill acquisition and training. These efforts were intended to fill lapses in the curriculum and assist in changing the psyche of undergraduates from studying, get certificate and wait on blue-collar jobs, but instead prospective student should think and work for themselves as a strategy to develop and stimulate entrepreneurial process. Yet, despite these tremendous efforts, the programme has not made positive contributions to improve the entrepreneurship orientation of would be graduates, leading to acquisition of diverse skills. It is against this backdrop that this study is situated to examine the extent to which entrepreneurship education programme is implemented in public Universities in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Over a decade, Nigeria has been faced with unprecedented soaring rate of unemployment, and majority of the affected youths are confused, discouraged, and deeply troubled about the future. In response, government-initiated Entrepreneurship Education as a course of study in tertiary institutions. However, the courses offered through the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development are: ENT 212 Entrepreneurship and Innovation, ENT 213 Business and Management Principles for all 200 level students, ENT 311 Business Creation and Growth and ENT 312 Business and Management Transition, for all 300 level students; while the NUC has vested the responsibility of organizing and teaching the above benchmark courses in the Universities through institutionalizing of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities. Sadly, recent observations especially after the pandemic era indicated poor implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State. Apart from dearth of manpower in the discipline, the researcher has observed that the course content hardly creates better understanding about business ventures among students. It does not provide opportunity for practical learning and as well identifying business opportunities. These among others tend to discourage most students from attending lectures and engaging in Entrepreneurship Education activities.

In a bid to address these issues in public Universities in Cross River State, the school management in collaboration with the government initiated necessary mechanisms for providing more entrepreneurial infrastructures, facilities and equipment. More Technical and Vocational lecturers were also recruited and subjected to intensive training and development. Also, NUC (2012) designed more Entrepreneurship courses for all levels and advised Universities to add more according to their needs through entrepreneurship skill acquisition and training. Yet, the critical stakeholders such as students, parents and employers of labour have not been impressed over the poor course content slow implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State. This is evident in undergraduates' inability to engage in effective business communication skills. Others do not have creativity and risk propensity skills. They cannot keep accurate business records. Some of them cannot engage in team work and embrace the skills and methods used in selling or promoting commercial products having offered entrepreneurial courses designed to promote self-employment. This study sought thus: What is the extent of implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State during post Covid-19 pandemic era?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of implementation of Entrepreneurship Education programme in public Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the quality of the course content in the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era.
2. Examine students' attitude towards implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era.
3. Explore the difference in implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Federal and State Universities in Cross River State during post-covid-19 pandemic era.

Research questions

1. To what extent does the quality of the course content enhance the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post- Covid-19 pandemic era?
2. What is students' attitude towards the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University on the implementation of entrepreneurship education in in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This research design was appropriate because the study involved the collection of data from respondents on the Assessment of the extent of Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State, and presenting them without manipulation. The area focused in the course of this study, comprises the two Universities in Cross River State, namely Cross River State University and University of Calabar. The population of this study consists of students in 300 level offering Entrepreneurship Education in the Federal and State Universities in Cross River State. Records obtained from Centres for Entrepreneurship Education (CEE) in each of the institutions showed that there are 12,095 students offering Entrepreneurship Education in Faculty of Management Sciences and Business Education in 2021/2022 session. An instrument titled: Appraisal of the extent of Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire for Students (AEIEEQS) was used for data collection. The instrument was a 4 point Likert Scale with four response options: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 point. Out of 387 copies distributed, only 347 was retrieved and used for data analysis. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research question 1

To what extent does the quality of the course content enhance the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era?

Table1: Summary of simple percentages on the quality of Entrepreneurial course content implementation in public Universities in Cross River State during post Covid-19 pandemic era

S/N	Items on quality Entrepreneurial course content implementation	Agree	Disagree
1	Our content creates better understanding about business ventures	147 (34.7)	200 (65.3)
2	Our course content helps me to develop entrepreneurial skills	112 (22.1)	235 (77.9)
3	Our course content raised interest towards Entrepreneurship	139 (29.4)	208 (70.6)
4	Our course is taught to deal with ambiguity in the real world.	158 (47.5)	189 (52.5)
5	Our course content provides opportunity for practical learning	119 (25.7)	228 (74.3)
6	Our course content triggers students' interest to learn and practice	115 (26.5)	232 (73.5)
7	Our course content provides new method of teaching and learning	117 (25.1)	230 (74.9)
8	I now have a good knowledge in identifying business opportunities	125 (30.3)	222 (69.7)
9	I have developed the spirit of perseverance in any business I choose	110 (21.7)	237 (78.3)
10	Our course content is designed to fit in at all field of study	133 (26.9)	214 (73.1)
11	Our course content has enhanced my business management skills	166 (33.2)	181 (66.8)
12	Our course content has boosted my teamwork and leadership skills	142 (37.4)	205 (62.6)
13	Our course content has enabled my communication skills	128 (32.6)	219 (67.4)
14	Our course content has built up my customer service skills	118 (29.8)	229 (70.2)
15	Our course content has upgraded my financial skills	134 (27.1)	213 (72.9)
16	Our course content has intensified my business analytical skills	151 (35.3)	196 (64.7)
17	Our course content has increased my critical thinking skills	144 (33.5)	203 (66.5)
18	Our course content has enhanced my strategic thinking skills	130 (28.7)	217 (71.3)
19	My business intentions have been enhanced through the course content	114 (24.9)	233 (75.1)
20	Overall quality entrepreneurial course content implementation	133 (22.0)	214 (78.0)

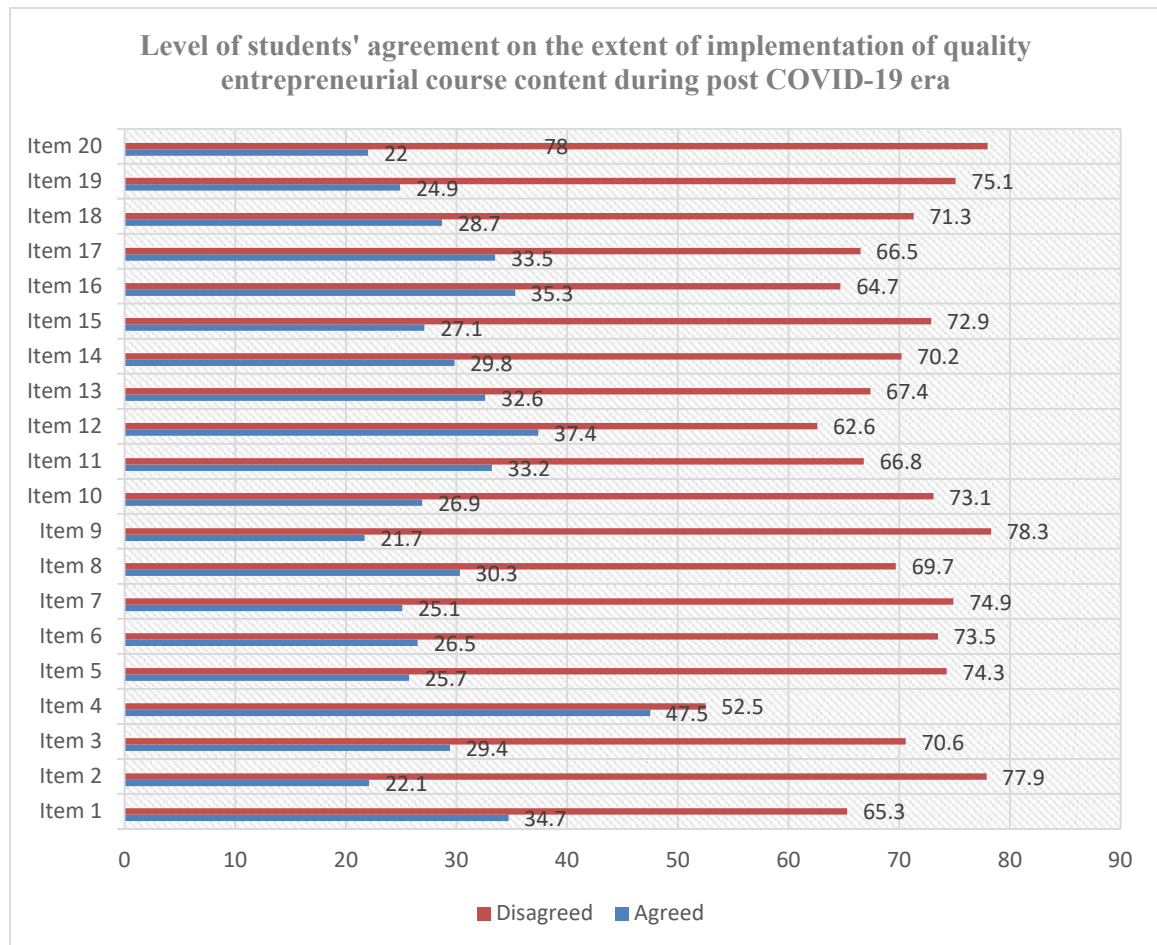
Source: Field work

In an attempt to answer the research question relating to the extent to which the quality of the course content enhanced the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era, frequency counts and simple percentages were used. The actual responses were dichotomized between strongly agree and agree into agree. Meanwhile, strongly disagree and disagree were fused into disagree. This implies that agree and strongly agree were merge to connote agreement, while disagree and strongly disagree were merged to connote disagreement. This way the frequency and percentage of the subjects who either agreed or disagreed to the item descriptions of Entrepreneurial course content implementation were determined in the sampled institutions.

The Table shows that a greater proportion of the subjects (more than 78 percent) disagreed with the statement that were used to measure the quality of course content implementation in Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era. For instance, as 78.3 percent disagreed that they have not developed the spirit of perseverance in any business of their choice, 78.0 percent disagreed with the overall quality entrepreneurial course content implementation. Also, 77.9 percent disagreed with their course content helping me to develop entrepreneurial skills, 75.1 percent disagreed that the course content did not enhance their business intentions. Similarly, 74.9 percent did not accept that the course content provides new method of teaching and learning, 74.3 percent disagreed that the course content did not provide them with the opportunity for practical learning while 73.5 percent disparaged that the course content triggered students' interest to learn and practice. In the same vein, 73.1 percent despised that the course content is designed to fit in all field of study. In the Table, it is equally observed that 72.9 percent disagreed that the course content could not upgrade their financial skills, 71.3 percent did not accept that the course content has enhanced their strategic thinking skills. Also, 70.6 percent rejected the fact that the course content has raised their interest towards Entrepreneurship, 70.2 percent disagreed that the course content has built up their customer service skills 69.7 percent declined having a good knowledge of identifying business opportunities.

Likewise, 66.8 percent dismissed that the course content has enhanced their business management skills, 66.5 percent disagreed that the course content has increased their critical thinking skills while 65.3 percent denied the fact that the content creates better understanding about business ventures and 52.5 percent did not accept that the course is taught to deal with ambiguity in the real world.

On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents in the sampled institutions (less than 48 students) disagreed with all the statements that were used to measure the quality of course content implementation in Entrepreneurship Education in Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era. There are 21.7 percent who agreed to have developed the spirit of perseverance in their chosen businesses, 22.0 percent agreed with the overall quality entrepreneurial course content implementation. Meanwhile, 22.1 percent agreed that the course content helps them to develop entrepreneurial skills, 24.9 percent agreed that their business intentions have been enhanced through the course content, 25.1 percent and 25.7 percent agreed that the course content provides new method of teaching and practical opportunity for learning. In the same vein, 26.5 percent and 26.9 percent agreed that the course content triggers students' interest to learn and practice, and that the course content is designed to fit in at all field of study. It was also noticed that 27.1 percent and 28.7 percent agreed that the course content has upgraded their financial skills and equally enhanced their strategic thinking skills. The Table equally showed that 29.4 percent and 29.8 percent did agree that the course content has raised interest towards Entrepreneurship and built up their customer service skills. More so, 30.3 percent and 32.6 subsequently agreed that the course content has built in then the knowledge of identifying business opportunities and communication skills. Similarly, 33.2 percent and 33.5 percent agreed that the course content has enhanced their business management skills and critical thinking skills. This is followed by 34.7 percent and 35.3 percent who agreed that the course content creates better understanding about business ventures and intensifies their business analytical skills. Finally, 37.4 percent and 47.5 percent agreed that the course content has boosts their teamwork skill and leadership skill by having exposed them to deal with ambiguities in the real world. Therefore, this result generally points to the fact that a significant number of the student population are not satisfied with the poor implementation of the entrepreneurial course content during the post pandemic era, hence they may not nurture intentions to get into self-employment upon graduation from the University as indicated by their overall percentage of disagreement.



Research question 2

What is students’ attitude towards the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era?

Table 2: Summary of simple percentages on students’ attitude towards Entrepreneurship education implementation in public Universities in Cross River State during post Covid-19 pandemic era

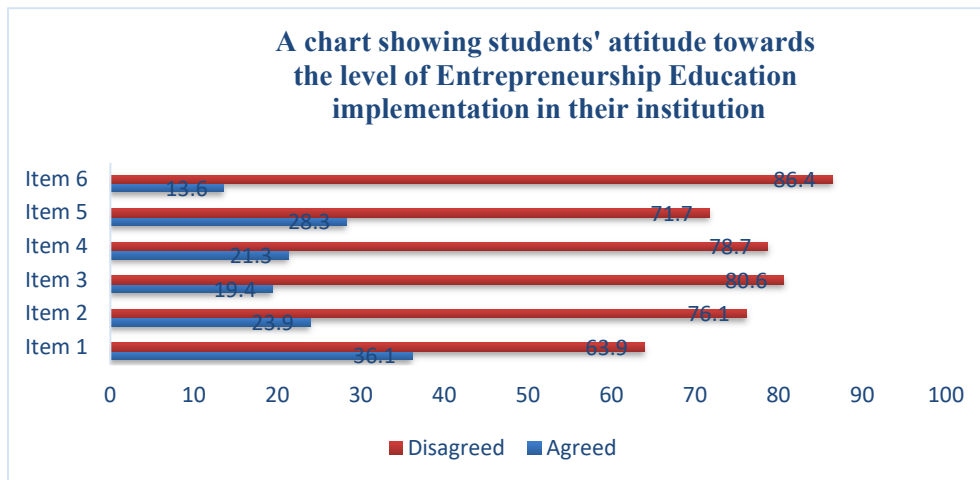
S/N	Items on students’ attitude towards Entrepreneurship education implementation	Agreed	Disagreed
1	We feel that our Entrepreneurship Education knowledge is enough for practicalities	141 (36.1)	206 (63.9)
2	We are satisfied with all the Entrepreneurship Education provisions	123 (23.9)	224 (76.1)
3	We feel that the Entrepreneurship Education curriculum is linked to our various areas of specialization.	117(19.4)	230 (80.6)
4	We are able to establish our business outfits based on the entrepreneurial skills we have acquired	128 (21.3)	219 (78.7)
5	We are highly motivated after undertaking entrepreneurial classes and workshop	132 (28.3)	215 (71.7)
6	Overall students’ attitude towards entrepreneurship curriculum implementation	125 (13.6)	222 (86.4)

Source: Field work

In order to provide an answer to the research question seeking to find out students' attitude towards Entrepreneurship education implementation in public Universities in Cross River State during post Covid-19 pandemic era, frequency counts and simple percentage were applied. The concrete responses were merged between strongly agree and agree. On the other hand, strongly disagree and disagree were also merged. With this method, the frequency and percentage of the subjects who either agreed or disagreed to the item descriptions of students' attitude towards Entrepreneurship implementation were determined in the sampled institutions.

The information in Table 2 showed that more than 80 percent of the subjects disagreed with the items used to measure students' attitude towards the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education in public Universities in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era. For instance, 86.4 percent of the students did not show positive attitude by way of agreeing with the overall entrepreneurship curriculum implementation. This is followed alongside with 80.6 percent who discredited the fact that the Entrepreneurship Education curriculum is linked to their various areas of specialization while 78.7 percent could not establish their business outfits based on the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired. Similarly, 76.1 percent were not satisfied with all the entrepreneurial provisions in their institution whereas 71.7 were not motivated to embark on self-employment having passed through entrepreneurial classes and workshops. It was also found that 63.9 percent felt that feel that their Entrepreneurship Education knowledge was not enough for practicalities.

Contrastingly, 13.6 percent agreed with the overall entrepreneurship curriculum implementation while 19.4 percent felt that the Entrepreneurship Education curriculum is linked to their various areas of specialization. This is followed by 21.3 percent who admitted that they are able to establish their business outfits based on the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired and 23.9 who agreed that they are satisfied with all the Entrepreneurship Education provisions in their school. Similarly, 28.3 percent accepted that they are highly motivated after undertaking entrepreneurial classes and workshop while 36.1 percent felt that their Entrepreneurship Education knowledge is enough for practicalities. Therefore, this result largely indicates the fact that a larger proportion of the student population did not show positive attitude towards the poor implementation of entrepreneurial curriculum during the post pandemic era. They were not satisfied with the entrepreneurial provisions among other factors. Conclusively, this would most likely deter their self-employment intentions upon graduation from the University as indicated by their overall percentage of disagreement.



Hypotheses one

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University on the implementation of entrepreneurship education in in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era

Table 2: Result of independent t-test analysis on the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University regarding the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era (N=347)

Institution	N	Mean	S.D	t-cal.	Crit. (t)	Sig.
UNICAL	220	58.42	8.14	.091	-.546	.763*
CRSU	127	58.15	8.11			

*P<0.05, df = 345

From Table 2, the independent variable is the implementation of entrepreneurship education which is measured continuously in consonant with two independent samples (Federal and State University). To carry out this analysis, independent t-test was considered the most appropriate statistical tool because the two samples were randomly drawn from their populations. The result of the analysis indicated that the t-calculated of .091 is greater than the t-critical of -.546 at .05 sig level and 345 degrees of freedom. Based on the result, the stated null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University on the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era with Federal University scoring higher mean (X=58.42) than State University (X=58.15). This result shows that students in University of Calabar are exposed to more entrepreneurial activities than those from Cross River State University.

Discussion of findings

The first finding of this study generally points to the fact that a significant number of the student population are not satisfied with the poor implementation of the entrepreneurial course content during the post pandemic era. With this, they are not interested to embrace self-employment upon graduation as evident in their overall percentage of disagreement response. This finding is in consonant with that of Ogbiji (2018) whose findings revealed that the course is not well taught (61.94) among schools; that there were no industrial experience or visits by learners (76.79%) and that the course has not to some extent introduced learners to many trades (59.27) and that some beneficiaries of the course have not become self-employed through the inspiration drawn from it (9.93%). The finding is also in consonant with that of Obi and Okekeokosisi (2018) whose result indicated that the extent of adherence to entrepreneurship curriculum is too low. It was also found that students’ attitude towards the programme has not been favourable due to poor course content. This result is expected because the reason for this finding could be inadequate provision of funds, inadequate facilities and insufficient personnel, among others, which must have negatively affected the implementation of quality entrepreneurial course content in the sampled institutions in Cross River State.

The second finding of this study also largely indicates the fact that a greater proportion of the student population did not show positive attitude towards the poor implementation of entrepreneurial curriculum during the post pandemic era. This means that they were not satisfied with the entrepreneurial provisions among other factors. Pragmatically, this would most likely prevent their self-employment intentions upon graduation from the University as indicated by their overall percentage of disagreement. This finding is in tandem with that of Akpan and Etor (2013) who found that some students’ attitude revealed that their Entrepreneurship Education knowledge was not enough for practicalities and that they were not satisfied with the poor Entrepreneurship

Education provisions. Similarly, the finding is in agreement with that of Nian, Bakar and Islam (2014) who found that 71% of the undergraduate students developed negative attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education when they discovered that the curriculum is not linked to their various areas of specialization. The finding is equally in line with that of Ekpiken, and Ukpabio (2015) who found that 34 percent of the sampled students were not able to establish small scale businesses based on the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired. It was also found that their negative attitude increased because the entrepreneurial curriculum could not motivate them to attend entrepreneurial classes and workshop.

The third finding of this study revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of students in State University and Federal University on the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Cross River State during post-Covid-19 pandemic era with Federal University scoring higher mean than State University. This result shows that students in University of Calabar are exposed to more entrepreneurial activities than those from Cross River State University despite the lapses in implementing the programme in both institutions. This finding is in congruence with that of Nnaemeka and Osuji (2022) and Bright and Oroma (2020) whose findings revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of Federal and State Universities on the implementation of Entrepreneurship Education. The result also shows that there is a significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the extent lecturers utilize educational resources for the implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum in Federal and State Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. It is also in agreement with that of Amini-Philips and Ikibo-Areh (2019) who found that entrepreneurship education was not properly implemented in the undergraduate and post graduate levels in Delta State Universities. However, the programme was bedeviled with conspicuous challenges. The implication of this finding appears to be that the Federal government pays more attention in managing Federal Universities than State government does in State Universities. But it behooves on both echelons of government to recall that realizing the benefits of entrepreneurial studies at the University level depends to a significant extent on supporting and funding pedagogical practices of its lecturers, including the usefulness of the learning activities. This is because there can never be an effective implementation process of the undergraduate entrepreneurship education when it is constrained by inadequate funding and managements' inability to procure learning materials and facilities for equipping the Entrepreneurship Centres of the Universities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that this result generally points to the fact that a significant number of the student population are not satisfied with the poor implementation of the entrepreneurial course content during the post pandemic era. This could be why many of them did not show positive attitude towards the implementation of entrepreneurial education in their school. Hence, they may not wish, by all indications, tend to nurture intentions to get into self-employment upon graduation from the University.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended amongst others that all critical stakeholders at the tertiary level should not denigrate and vilify the objectives of institutionalizing Entrepreneurship Education but rather:

1. A monitoring team should be set up by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to regularly assess and report the progress and shortcoming of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities.
2. Curriculum review should periodically be undertaken by the school management. This be done in line with auditing in order to ensure that monies meant for entrepreneurship education are used judiciously.

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