
Beyond entrepreneurship education: business incubation and entrepreneurial capabilities

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Abstract

Purpose – As a way of dealing with Nigeria’s macroeconomic challenge of unemployment and its concomitant socio-economic problems, the federal government, in 2006, made entrepreneurship study a compulsory course for all higher education students irrespective of their area of specialization. However, studies have shown that the programme is yet to achieve its goals as many Nigerian graduates still remain unemployed long after graduation. Using Sen’s capability approach, this paper aims to investigate business incubation as an effective tool for enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities beyond entrepreneurship education.

Design/methodology/approach – This study has engaged both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative methodologies (semi-structured interview).

Findings – The result shows that through business incubation, budding entrepreneurs have increased access to infrastructures and resources necessary for entrepreneurial success, thereby enhancing their real opportunities (capabilities) for success.

Practical implications – For greater effectiveness, business incubation should be integrated into the current entrepreneurship education programme in Nigeria.

Originality/value – This study is a debut of research endeavours which theoretically assess entrepreneurship programmes via the capability approach lens. It has developed a conceptual model for assessing business incubation using the capability approach.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has long been offered as the panacea for poor economic growth and high rate of unemployment (Matlay, 2008). This is especially true in developing countries grappling with heavy weights of high unemployment and poverty. In many African countries, the rate of population growth oversteps employment growth, necessitating the need to promote entrepreneurship as a means of creating employment and alleviating poverty (Okafor et al., 2015). However, the quest for enhancing entrepreneurial culture is a global endeavour. This explains the recent focus by governments and other stakeholders in various countries worldwide, on boosting entrepreneurial activities through investment in entrepreneurship education (European Commission, 2003; Harry Matlay et al., 2013). A major assumption in these developments is that entrepreneurship education increases students’ career prospects and employability, either through enabling them to become self-employed persons or through increasing their potential value as more enterprising

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Further reading

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