

Higher Education Students' Perception towards Entrepreneurship Education: Evidence from Northern Nigeria

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Abstract - This paper assesses the perception of higher education students (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) towards entrepreneurship education in Northern Nigeria. A total sample of 360 UG students were collected by using proportionate stratified random sampling from 3 universities, 3 polytechnics, and 3 colleges of education from three regions of Northern Nigeria. Hypotheses of the study were tested by using two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results showed that students' perception towards entrepreneurship education, which was defined in this study in terms of adequacy (sufficiency of number of entrepreneurship courses, quality of the course contents, competence of teachers and teaching methods) and the relevance of studying the entrepreneurship courses were positively affected by type of institution in which student is enrolled. The study found that students of North-central region have significant positive difference in perception towards entrepreneurship education, when compared with students of both North-east and North-west regions. Further, university students have high positive perception for these courses, in contrast with the students of colleges of education and polytechnic who have high negative perception towards entrepreneurship education, when compared with university students. Findings of this study will add policy makers to redesign and tailor entrepreneurship courses to suit the needs of different institutions and regions.

Keywords- College of Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Perception, Polytechnic, Nigeria, University

I. INTRODUCTION

The rising unemployment around the world, particularly in the under-developed and developing economies has forced policy makers to embrace the promotion of entrepreneurial activities among the youth. Entrepreneurship has been acknowledged as a means of boosting economic growth, human potential development, new customer demands satisfaction, and job creation [1]. Like many other human endeavors, entrepreneurship is believed to be a phenomenon, which can be taught. This has led to wide adoption of entrepreneurship education as a course of study in institutions of learning across the globe [2].

In Nigeria, entrepreneurship education has been a mandatory part of students' curriculum in higher institutions of learning, irrespective of the areas of specialization since 2006/2007 academic session. The policy was introduced by the federal government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Education, National Universities Commission (NUC), and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to inculcate into the students, the entrepreneurial attitude and

skills to identify, create, and successfully manage a new venture [3]. This became necessary owing to the persistently increasing unemployment rate in the country, as universities and other tertiary institutions continue to turn out hundreds of thousands of graduates, without the corresponding job opportunities to absorb them [4]. Currently 7 out of 10 Nigerian graduates remain unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment Rate in Nigeria averaged 12.31 percent from 2006 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 23.10 percent in the third quarter of 2018 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010 [5]

Entrepreneurship education has been defined as that aspect of education, which equips an individual and creates in the person, the mindset to take the risk of undertaking new profitable venture by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school [6]. According to a wider conception, entrepreneurship education is "the whole set of education and training activities – within both formal and informal educational system that try to develop in the participants the intention to perform entrepreneurial behaviors, or some of the elements that affect that intention, such as

entrepreneurial knowledge, desirability of the entrepreneurial activity, or its feasibility” [7].

Entrepreneurship education is observed to have received a great deal of attention among researchers across the globe, with the focus of the studies being the relationship between the program and intention for new venture creation among participants [8], as well as the perception of the program among students. How students perceive entrepreneurship education, according to [9] would generally affect how they position themselves towards the program. This suggest that a students’ positive perception of the needs, relevance, and the general objective for which entrepreneurship education is introduced would affect the students’ projection of themselves as having what it takes to achieve the goals of the program in terms of learning outcomes. It is against this backdrop that we studied the perception of higher education students in different institutions in Nigeria.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

THE CONCEPT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship education emerged as a relatively new field in business schools in the 1970s and experienced rapid growth in the 1990s [10]. Entrepreneurship was first offered as a course of study at Harvard University in 1947. Since then, several courses, and teaching programs have followed particularly in the United States [11] and in the European countries [12]. The past decade witnessed the proliferation of entrepreneurship education beyond business to other disciplines such as engineering and arts [13]. Entrepreneurship education is often used interchangeably with entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition. It is, however, not synonymous with vocational education or business education. Conceptually, entrepreneurship education refers to a specialized knowledge that inculcates in learners, the skills, and attitude to enable them to apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realize new trends and opportunities for meeting those challenges in all aspects of human life. It instills into students, the traits of risk-taking, innovation, arbitrage and co-ordination of factors of production for creating new products or services for new and existing users within human communities [14], [15]. Entrepreneurship education has also been viewed as a learning process that equip learners with traits and competencies such as team spirit, leadership, problem solving and negotiation skills, self-direction and management as against the conventional education, which places less attention on skills and practical needs of the society [16].

“Unpublished” [17] pointed out that entrepreneurship education provides students with innovative skills and inculcate into them the positive attitudes toward

entrepreneurship and self-reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment. Exposure to entrepreneurship education builds self-confidence and capacities among graduates for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development. Similarly, [18] stated that entrepreneurship education is designed to change the orientation and attitude of students, and in the process, it equips them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business enterprise. [19] defined entrepreneurship education “as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act on them.” It has also been described as a formal or informal structured learning that inculcates in trainees the ability to identify, screen, and seize available opportunities in the environment in addition to skill acquisition [20]. From a wider perspective, entrepreneurship education is defined as “the whole set of education and training activities – within both formal and informal educational system that try to develop in the participants the intention to perform entrepreneurial behaviors, or some of the elements that affect that intention, such as entrepreneurial knowledge, desirability of the entrepreneurial activity, or its feasibility” [7].

PERCEPTION TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Perception studies in the domain of entrepreneurship seems to be at developing stage and scanty in literature. The few available ones at time of this review did not cover the various aspects of entrepreneurship education, rather, most of the studies emphasized on the perceived influence of the program on venture creation apart from [21], who has investigated students’ perception in terms of need for entrepreneurship education, relevance of the course curriculum, and competency of teachers. The study showed that entrepreneurship education was positively perceived across all the three dimensions. It also correlates positively, with intention for venture creation. However, students in another university felt that entrepreneurship would be more influential if the courses were embedded into the curriculum earlier, instead of offering it at fourth and final year level as the case in many institutions [22]. The need for entrepreneurship education was emphasized in [23]’s study, who has observed a significantly high perceived importance of entrepreneurship education courses among students of college of education in Nigeria, as the course afford them the opportunity to be innovative, self-reliant, and leaders in the future.

A similar study of vocational educational students in Southern Nigeria also showed significantly positive perception of the relevance and desirability of entrepreneurship education among students as they believe the course will prepare them for future entrepreneurial careers. The study did not find significant difference in

perception across students running various degree program [24]. Also, [25] showed that entrepreneurial education is perceived as good policy among students, as they expressed optimism that the program would reduce the unemployment problem in the country. Students however, expressed the fear that the prospect of the program will hardly be achieved due to poor policy implementation. The study also showed that students significantly differ in their perception of entrepreneurship education. While university students showed lack of committed and perceived the course as menial, polytechnic students are more committed to the program, which may be due to technical and vocational (TVE) training they undergo. In a related study, [26] found positive perception of relevance of entrepreneurship education as an empowerment strategy for graduate self-employment among lecturers. In addition, male and female lecturers did not differ significantly in their rating of the relevance of entrepreneurship education to graduate self-employment.

Similarly, studies in Oman and Malaysia showed that students' perception of entrepreneurship education is favorable, as they are hopeful that the course will boost their confidence and ability to take risks and minimize the fear of failure in business [27], [28], [22]. However, investigation of the perceptions and attitude towards entrepreneurship education program, and employment ambitions of final year undergraduate students in Kano revealed mixed result since negative and positive perception among students were equally observed. Students who had negative perception believed that the course is inadequate and too generic [29]. The issue of inadequacy of entrepreneurship education in terms of the emphasis on theory than practical manner of teaching was earlier observed by both university students and their teachers [30]. Another study showed different perception of entrepreneurship education among business major students and non-business students and instructors. Business major students perceived entrepreneurship as a course as being limited to business related fields while non-business students and teachers hold the view that entrepreneurship course can be offered by anyone [31].

Whether entrepreneurship education is perceived as desirable and or relevant by business or non-business related students and teachers, it only leads to careers in entrepreneurship if course curriculum are designed in such a way that motivate critical thinking toward creative and profitable ideas among participants [8], [24]. Although students in Nigeria perceived entrepreneurship courses curriculum in a significantly positive light, they expressed poor utilization of instructional facilities [32], which are the real practical ways through which "critical thinking abilities" can be motivated [8].

III. IDENTIFIED RESEARCH GAP

Most of these studies have focused on students' perceived relation between entrepreneurship education and intention for new business creation using small samples in isolated institutions. There is a dearth of literature on studies in which perception of entrepreneurship education is examined comparatively in terms of adequacy and relevance of the program among students enrolled in the three major types of higher education institutions in Nigeria. The current study attempts to fill this gap by extending the work of [21], who made similar attempt, but limited in terms of scope and comparison.

The study specifically contributes to literature by answering the following research questions (RQ): What is the perception of UG students towards entrepreneurship education in terms of adequacy and relevance in the three main types of higher education institutions in Nigeria? Is there a statistically significant difference in higher education students' perception towards entrepreneurship education based on the type of institution they enrolled (university, college of education, and polytechnic), as well as based on the geo-political region they belong (Northeast, North-central and North-west)?

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is 'To Assess Higher Education Students' Perception towards Entrepreneurship Education in Northern Nigeria'. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the perception of higher education students towards entrepreneurship education based on their institutions of study.
2. To assess the perception of higher education students toward entrepreneurship education based on their geographical regions.
3. To examine the perceived differences among higher education students towards entrepreneurship education based on regions and the institutions they enrolled.

V. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Descriptive survey research design is adopted to assess the perception of higher education students towards entrepreneurship education. Perception of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) was defined in this study in terms of perceived relevance of entrepreneurship education and perceived adequacy of entrepreneurship education. Data were collected through questionnaire-based sample survey. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers with items that specifically target the variables in the study. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Section A comprised of background information, section B consists of a scale of 5-items, measuring the perceived relevance of entrepreneurship education. Section C comprised a scale of 9-items,

measuring the perceived adequacy of entrepreneurship education. All the items in section B and C were measured on 5 – point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree.

The target population for the study were final year undergraduates of university, polytechnic, and college of education. Since under the entrepreneurship education policy of Nigerian government, the number of entrepreneurship courses and semesters in which they should be offered have not been specified, the final year students are chosen because they must have taken at least one entrepreneurship course.

For the study, multi-stage sampling technique was employed. At the first stage, the study adopted the existing Northern Nigerian geo-political structure (The North East, North Central, and North West Regions) as the initial sampling frame. From each of the regions, one state was selected. These states represent the next sampling frame for the study. After numbering and categorizing all the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education in the three states selected from the three regions, simple random technique (lottery) was applied to select three institutions consisting of a university, polytechnic, and college of education from each of the three states, thus, making a total 9 institutions as sample institutions. The total population of final year students in the nine institutions, which served as the final sampling frame for the study as at November 2018, stood at 9903. [33]’s sample sizes table was used to determine the absolute sample size of 360. According to it, the minimum and maximum absolute sample sizes for a population of 5000 to 9900 at 5% margin of error ranges from 357 – 369. Accordingly, a sample size of 360 was determine for the current study. To arrive at the 360 usable responses, about 385 questionnaires were administered, and 25 responses were dropped after data cleaning. The questionnaire were administered during scheduled lecture periods, after obtaining ethical clearance from the institutions. Prior to the commencement of administering the questionnaire, an overview of the nature of the study was provided to students and clear instructions were given that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and it will not affect continues assessment of their entrepreneurship courses.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study. Specifically, descriptive analysis was used to assess the frequency distribution and percentages of the demographic profile of the respondents such as gender, age groups, and type of institution of study and regions while two-way Analysis of Variance (Two Way ANOVA) was used to test students’ perception towards entrepreneurship education as well as the variances therefrom. Prior to the analysis, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach alpha. The coefficients for the final items in the questionnaire was 0.658, which is approximately 0.7. According to [34], the coefficients of internal consistency depends on the number of items in the questionnaire, i.e. the higher the number of items, the higher the Cronbach’s alpha. For example, the Cronbach’s alpha of 5 items test might be 0.4 and for 12 items might be 0.6. Thus, 0.7 is acceptable, since the questionnaire comprised of 14 items. There were no problems of multicollinearity in the data, as the tolerance level was above 0.2 and variance inflation factor (VIF) of all the variables were less than four [35]. The assumption of homogeneity of variance, which is also a requirement for ANOVA is evaluated using Levene’s test and was found tenable ($F = 1.404, P = 0.193$).

VI. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The below given descriptive statistics table no 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and sample size for each condition in the study and the marginal means. A look at the table reveals that sample sizes are hugely unequal for various institutions in the three regions selected for this study. Out of the total number of 120 university who participated in the study, 76 (63%), were from the North-west, 25 (21%) from the Northeast and 19 (16%) from the North-central. North-west region had the highest number of participants from college of education (61%), followed by the North-central (33%). Among participating students from the polytechnic, the highest number was from Northeastern region (56%), followed by the North-west (30%). Overall, out of the total sample of 360 students, who participated in the study, 185 (51%) were from the North-central, 100 (28%) from the Northeast and 75 (21%) from the North-central. The unequal nature of the sample sizes will however, not be a threat to the validity of our ANOVA, since the differences in the sample sizes are proportionately associated with standard deviations.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Institution	Region	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
University	North-East	3.4400	1.15758	25
	North-West	3.0658	1.19259	76
	North-Central	3.2632	.93346	19
	Total	3.1750	1.14981	120
College of education	North-East	2.0000	.92582	8
	North-West	2.2877	1.11155	73
	North-Central	3.2821	.97194	39
	Total	2.5917	1.15588	120
	North-East	2.5373	1.09168	67

Polytechnic	North-West	2.4444	.73463	36
	North-Central	2.9412	1.19742	17
	Total	2.5667	1.01859	120
Total	North-East	2.7200	1.17275	100
	North-West	2.6378	1.13907	185
	North-Central	3.2000	1.01342	75
	Total	2.7778	1.14203	360

More so, the assumption of homogeneity of variance, which was tested using Levene's Test ($F = 1.404, P = 0.193$) was found tenable.

Table 2. Levene's Test

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.404	8	351	.193

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Institution + Regions + Institution * Regions

The factual results of the two-way ANOVA, which indicate whether there is a statistically significant difference in students' perception of entrepreneurship education based on the type of institution students are

enrolled for their course of study (University, College of education, Polytechnic) and region (North-east, North-central, North-west) are shown in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in table 3:

Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	62.364 ^a	8	7.795	6.742	.000	.133
Intercept	1717.042	1	1717.042	1484.956	.000	.809
Institution	23.750	2	11.875	10.270	.000	.055
Regions	15.285	2	7.643	6.610	.002	.036
Institution * Regions	10.610	4	2.652	2.294	.059	.025
Error	405.858	351	1.156			
Total	3246.000	360				
Corrected Total	468.222	359				

a. R Squared = .133 (Adjusted R Squared = .113)

The Test of between Subjects Effect is the summary of two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which allow us to reject or accept the hypotheses set for this study. The variables of interest in the table are the two independent variables (Institution & Region), the interaction between them and their corresponding F and P values.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

After meeting the assumption of normality and homogeneity variance, which was tested and found tenable using Levene's Test, $P = 0.193$, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the following null hypotheses:

H01: University, Polytechnic, and College of education students do not statistically significantly differ in their perception towards entrepreneurship education based on their institution and region (**Interaction effect hypothesis**).

H02: University, Polytechnic, and College of education students do not statistically significantly differ in their perception towards entrepreneurship education (**Main effect hypothesis**)

H03: There is no statistically significant difference in the perception of higher education students towards entrepreneurship education based on their geo-political region (**Main effect hypothesis**)

For interaction effect, the analysis of variance was found statistically **not significant**, $F = 2.294, P = 0.059, Eta$

squared = 0.025. Thus, there was insufficient reason to reject the null hypothesis. We therefore, conclude that there is no statistically significant interaction effect of institution of study and region on students' perception towards entrepreneurship education. This is evident by the Partial Eta Square (PES), which indicate that only 2.5% variation in students' perception towards entrepreneurship education is explained by the interaction effect of institution of study and region. However, there was a **statistically significant main effect of institution**, $F = 10.270, P = 0.000$. Thus, the null hypothesis that university, polytechnic, and college of education students do not statistically significantly differ in their perception towards entrepreneurship education is rejected. This is further confirmed by the PES ($n^2 0.055$) score, which indicates that about 5% variance in students' perception towards entrepreneurship education is explained by the institution; the student is enrolled in to study. Similarly, the main effect for region is **statistically significant**, $F = 6.610, P = 0.002$ and **PES ($n^2 = 0.036$)**. The Eta-squared value of .036 suggest that about 4% of the variance in students' perception towards entrepreneurship education is explained by the geo-political regions of the students. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of students towards entrepreneurship education based on their geo-political regions is rejected. Although we did not have enough

reasons to conclude that students' type of institution and the regions they belong to, interact in affecting the students' perception towards entrepreneurship education but we did find enough evidences for main effects of institutions and regions. Thus, perception towards entrepreneurship education, which was defined in this study in terms of adequacy - sufficiency of number courses, quality of courses content, competence of teachers, teaching methods etc. and relevance of the entrepreneurship were significantly affected by institutions

in which students are enrolled in for their course of study and affected by students' geographical regions too. To further support the summary of results in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects shown above, Univariate analysis – one-way ANOVA was performed, which isolated the separate effect of students' institution of study on their perception of entrepreneurship education. The univariate test shown in table 4 indicates the same significant **P = 0.000 with associated F = 10.270 and Eta Squared = .055** values as reported in the Test of between Subjects, which led us to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4. Univariate Tests for separate effect of institution

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	23.750	2	11.875	10.270	.000	.055

The F tests shows the effect of Institution. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal mean.

Table 5. Univariate Tests for separate effect of Geographical Region

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	15.285	2	7.643	6.610	.002	.036

The F tests shows the effect of Regions. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Similarly, the Test of Between Subjects, which led us to reject the null hypothesis that students do not statistically differ in their perception towards entrepreneurship courses based on geographical regions is also validated by a separate univariate test – one-way ANOVA. The Univariate Test for separate effect of geographical regions in table 5 indicate that the **P-value (0.002)** and associated **F = 6.610 and Eta Squared = 0.036** are exactly same with the Test of between Subjects.

and 5 led us to accept interaction effect null hypothesis and reject the null hypotheses of two main effects. However, we do not know the individual contributions of various institutions (University, Polytechnic, and College of education) as well as regional contributions (Northeast, North-central, and North-west), which culminated in statistically significant main effects on students' perception of entrepreneurship education. Thus, Pairwise Comparisons was conducted based on estimated marginal means at 95% confidence level and the results are shown in tables 6 and 7.

Further, the results of analysis in tables 3, 4,

Table 6. Pairwise Comparisons for Institutions

(I) Institution	(J) Institution	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
University	College of education	.733*	.186	.000	.367	1.099
	Polytechnic	.615*	.163	.000	.294	.936
College of education	University	-.733*	.186	.000	-1.099	-.367
	Polytechnic	-.118	.185	.525	-.481	.246
Polytechnic	University	-.615*	.163	.000	-.936	-.294
	College of education	.118	.185	.525	-.246	.481

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

The Institutions' Pairwise Comparison (table 6) revealed that university students showed high positive perception towards entrepreneurship education when compared with students of colleges of education (**Mean diff. 0.733**). Similarly, the perception of university students is also

positive and high in comparison with students of polytechnics (**Mean diff. 0.615**), but lower as compared to their perception comparison with colleges of education students. The perception of polytechnic students towards entrepreneurship education, when compared with students

of colleges of education is not statistically significantly different (**Mean diff. 118, P = 0.525**), but positive. However, both polytechnics and colleges of education students showed statistically significant (**P = 0.000, P =**

0.000), but negative (**Mean diff. -0.615, -0.733**) perception towards entrepreneurship education, when compared with university students.

Table 7. Pairwise Comparisons for Regions

(I) Regions	(J) Regions	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Lower Bound
North East	North West	.060	.174	.731	-.282	-.282
	North Central	-.503 [*]	.202	.013	-.900	-.900
North West	North East	-.060	.174	.731	-.401	-.401
	North Central	-.563 [*]	.157	.000	-.872	-.872
North Central	North East	.503 [*]	.202	.013	.106	.106
	North West	.563 [*]	.157	.000	.254	.254

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

Table 7 present the Pairwise Comparison of the effects of regions on students' perception of entrepreneurship education among the three Regions of Northern Nigeria (North-east, North=central, and North-west). The analysis indicates that students in the Northeastern region of Nigeria perceived entrepreneurship education positively, but not statistically significant when compared with Northwestern students (**Mean diff. = 0.060 and P = 0.731**). However, perception of entrepreneurship education among students in Northeast region, was found to differ significantly in negative direction (**Mean diff. -0.503, P = .013**), when compared to student in North-central region. Similarly, the perception of students in Northwestern region towards entrepreneurship education was negatively significant (**Mean diff. -0.563, P = .000**) when compared with students in North-central region. However, students in North-central region showed statistically significant and positive difference in perception of entrepreneurship education, when they are compared with students in both Northeast and North-west regions (**Mean differences = 0.503, 0.563 and P = 0.013, 0.000**) respectively.

VII. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This paper assessed the perception of higher education students (universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education) towards entrepreneurship education in Northern Nigeria. Descriptive statistics revealed that sample sizes are unequal in terms of geographical regions. North-west had highest number of participants among university students and college of education. Most of the polytechnic students, who participated in the study, were from the Northeastern region, followed by the North-west. Overall, the North-west region had the highest number of participants in the study, followed by the North-central. The study found that perception towards entrepreneurship education was significantly affected by institutions in which students are enrolled for their course of study. Perception was defined in this study in terms of the adequacy of the program (sufficiency of number courses, quality of course content, teachers' competence, teaching

methods etc.) and relevance (developing one's entrepreneurial abilities, creating capacity of being self-employed, need for the policy, etc.) The finding suggests that students in the universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education hold different views about the entrepreneurship education program in their respective institutions. Earlier studies such as [35] and [25], found that university students' perception towards entrepreneurship education was not encouraging, as they demonstrated indifferent attitudes and lack of commitment towards entrepreneurship courses. They perceived entrepreneurship courses simply as formalities and requirements for graduation. [36] claimed that university students were more likely to be aiming at paid jobs than starting businesses, as most of them came from high class background. [25] study showed on the other hand that perception of polytechnic students towards entrepreneurship education was positive as they showed more interest and commitment to entrepreneurship courses to the fact the courses were too theoretical rather than practical.

In a sharp contrast to these studies, results of the current study showed that university students have positively high perception towards entrepreneurship education when compared with students of polytechnics and college of education. These findings, in researchers' opinion suggest that university students are gradually coming to know with realities of lack of employment opportunities in the country. Hitherto, university students generally believe that university education prepares them for lucrative and white-collar jobs, they tend to see entrepreneurship (starting new businesses) as risky venture full of uncertainty, and hence they perceive the entrepreneurship courses as boring.

However, as per the present study, university students are having more positive perception towards entrepreneurship education. The same has been confirmed with the results of more recent studies [31], [24], [32] which concur with the findings of current study that the perception towards entrepreneurship courses among university students are

encouraging. On the part of polytechnic and college of education students, this study showed that their perception towards entrepreneurship education do not significantly differ and was significantly negative in comparison with university students. This may be attributed to the deteriorating facilities and lack of innovative and experiential instructional materials that motivates learning and teaching in their institutions. Similar reason was advanced by [37], [38] who attributed the reasons for low students' inclination towards entrepreneurship education to the fact that the courses were too theoretical. This finding is consistent with [39], who established that the dispositions of polytechnic students towards entrepreneurship courses are not encouraging. But contradicts [25], who found polytechnic students as having more commitment and positive outlook towards entrepreneurship education.

In terms of regions, this study found that students in the Northeastern region of Nigeria perceived entrepreneurship education positively, but not statistically significant when compared with Northwestern students. Yet, perception of entrepreneurship education among students in Northeast region was found to differ significantly in negative direction when compared to student in North-central region. Similarly, the perception of students in Northwestern region towards entrepreneurship education was negatively significant in comparison with students in North-central region. Moreover, students in North-central region showed statistically significant and positive difference in perception of entrepreneurship education, when they are compared with students in both Northeast and North-west regions. The varying perception towards entrepreneurship education among students in different regions is not surprising as exposures to entrepreneurial experiences by family members or the extended members of the society in the students' respective regions may influence their perception towards entrepreneurship and by extension, towards entrepreneurship education. For instance, a student who witnessed a failed business in his/her family or community may not have favorable perception towards enterprise and entrepreneurship education. Similarly, a successful entrepreneurial venture in one's society would lead to perceived expectation of it from students growing up in such societies. Thus, findings are in line with [40] postulation that people tend to behave in a way that conforms to expectation of the society. Similarly, [41] and [37] observed that parental role that include nature of work and students experience in business related fields shapes their perception towards entrepreneurship education.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As governments and educational institutions have given priority to the teaching of entrepreneurship as a course of study everywhere in the world, Nigeria has made it

compulsory irrespective of streams. Many authors have attempted to understand the students' perception regarding these programs; however, there has been a remarkable lack of studies that compares students' perception towards entrepreneurship education, among different higher education institutions of Nigeria. This study makes a substantial contribution to this field as it measures and analyzes the perception of the students of university, polytechnic, and college of education in all the three geographical regions of Northern Nigeria. The study reveals that perception of university students has been found positive about the content and number of entrepreneurship courses taught, adopted teaching methods, teachers' competence etc. Further, they have positive perception towards the overall relevance of the program. However, students of polytechnics and colleges of education have shown negative perception towards the program. However, the previous studies (as mentioned in findings) have presented a contradictory picture. Therefore, the overall picture gives the understanding that the objectives with which the concept of compulsory entrepreneurship education had been introduced in Nigerian's higher education institutions; it could have been only partially achieved over a period of more than 10 years. The differences among the findings of these studies might be attributed because of the change in the government policies and due to change in the ruling government in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the major change has come in 2015 in terms of ruling party. The new party has promoted the concept of self-employment. In their agenda points, also they have mentioned the point of providing allowances to discharge but unemployed graduate interns for 12 months. They supported the training centers, created for skills acquisition by providing infrastructure for such institutions (universities and others) and matching grants wherever necessary. They have also focused on improvement of the entrepreneurial, vocational, and technical skills of youth in areas such as technology, agriculture, manufacturing, and other important fields to prepare them for jobs of the future [42]

Further, in addition to the abovementioned measures, entrepreneurship development centers (EDC) across the six geographical regions had also been established with an aim to provide entrepreneurship related training to graduates, undergraduates through registering them in the centers. The students are motivated to present their business proposal in these EDCs and they are evaluated and considered by government for funding purposes. Further, government also emphasized on better management of the natural resources as Nigeria is one of the richest country in terms of the natural resources. Government understood that there is a need to create an environment of job creation rather than an environment of job seeking among the youth and institutes of higher education can do it in highly polished manner, considering

its resources and capabilities to attract the young generations. However, the situation of polytechnics and college of education could have not been much improved due to poor implementation and monitoring of entrepreneurship courses curriculum and their teaching quality.

Therefore, the study suggests that there is a huge need of reassessment of the compulsory entrepreneurship education policy, considering the type of institutions, their economic resources, the kind of students' population they are serving etc. In addition to it, it is highly required to understand that entrepreneurship, being one of the highly practical and application-oriented subject, needs much more coordinated and synchronized efforts by academia and industry partners. There is a need to streamline the number, syllabus, and the teaching pedagogies used for the entrepreneurship courses among all the kinds of higher education institutions. Further, there is a need to understand the cultural differences among different geographical regions; the culture of Southern Nigeria is quite different in terms of infrastructure and risk orientation, as compared to the Northern Nigeria, due to the basic differences in religion and education level. These differences should be taken care well while reevaluating the existing policy or drafting the new updated policy. Lastly, higher education involves many stakeholders such as students, teachers, institute administration, parents, government, employers, etc., so the combined opinion of different stakeholders should be evaluated for making this policy of compulsory entrepreneurship education policy a sure shot success in the coming future.

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