



Facilitating Strategies for Gaining Entrepreneurship Skills through Business Education Programme of Public Universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for Self-employment

Augustina Chinweoke Anyigor-Ogah (Ph.D)

**Department of Business Education,
Faculty of Education,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria
austking4real@yahoo.com**

ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education programme of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 35 business educators in public universities in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. There was no sampling. A structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was validated by three experts, two from Business Education Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Cronbach Alpha reliability procedure was used. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.92. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The finding of the study showed that business educators agreed to all the items listed as the lecturer-related facilitating strategies and government related-strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education programme of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment. It was also found from the hypotheses tested that there was no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female business educators with respect to lecturer-related facilitating strategies and government- related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education programme of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment. Based on the findings, it was concluded that lecturers and government-related facilitating strategies can be used to gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education for self employment. It was also recommended among others that lecturers in universities should device ways to ensure that students are provided with data and materials for entrepreneurship skill acquisition.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Skills, Business Education, Self-Employment

INTRODUCTION

The rate at which unemployment thrives in Nigeria is alarming. Unemployment is a situation where people have the ability and are willing to work but do not have the work to do. The inability to get young people employed creates sense of vulnerability, idleness and attraction of illegal activities. The remedy to such deplorable is to equip the youths with requisite skills needed for them to make positive changes, be self employed, better their living and help develop the economy. This is made possible through functional education.

Nigerian nation needs an educational system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values for wealth creation, poverty reduction, value re-orientation and empowerment. Agu (2016) opined that education remains a vital transformational tool and formidable instrument for socio-

economic empowerment, wealth creations, employment generation, poverty alleviation and value re-orientation. This kind of educational system can only be achieved through business education programme. Business education programme is concerned with the acquisition of pedagogical and professional competencies in industry and education necessary for personal use; for entry into the business world as an employer, employee, or self-employed, and for effective participation in educational industry as professional business education teachers (Ubulum & Dambo in Anyigor-Ogah & Okoli, 2022). Business education is an educational programme that embraces basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practices. According to Ezeabii (2017), Business Education is an aspect of vocational Education which equips individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performance in the business world either for job occupations or for self-employment. Business Education is taught in Universities irrespective of gender. Lee in Igboke and Anyigor-ogah (2021) noted that gender is an attributed quality that differentiates female from male. The difference in competencies of male and female lecturers in instructional delivery of entrepreneurship has been reported by researchers. Iwuoha, Baba and Ebenezar-Nwokeji (2021) reported that there is no significant difference between male and female business educators in Imo State on entrepreneurial skills acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation. Ezeonwurie (2017) found that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers in fostering entrepreneurship education. Ezeabii (2017) observed that is no gender bias in teaching and learning of the course in the university as both male and female students are enrolled for the programme and are exposed to the same skills. In essence, well planned Business Education programme should be able to produce male and female graduates armed with necessary skills for them to be self-employed.

Self employment means being involved in economic activities of production and distribution of goods and services but being your own boss. Hurst (2022), Wan (2017), and Onoh (2013) defined self-employment as the promotions of free enterprise and self-sufficiency by creating and spreading wealth to the grass root level as a contribution to economic growth, employment generation and social process. However, the self-employment in question can only be achieved through Business Education programme via entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education is a programme aimed at training individuals on how to acquire skills and knowledge in order to apply available resources to start business and make success. Ekoh-Nweke, Mkpá and Ezeabii (2020) defined entrepreneurship education/training as a systematic, conscious and goal-oriented process, through which non entrepreneur individuals who have the necessary potentials are creatively trained. Entrepreneurship is seen as a tool for skills acquisition and job creation in any nation.

The Nigerian government through her Federal Ministry of Education introduced entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of universities through their regulatory and supervisory agency Nigerian University Commission (NUC). The objective of entrepreneurship education at the university level include: providing graduates with adequate training and initiatives in identifying noble business opportunities; providing functional education for youths so as to enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.

Entrepreneurship education is taught in universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. Ebonyi State is one of the 36 states in Nigeria and in the South East Geopolitical Zones. The state has two public universities offering Business education programme which harbours entrepreneurship education as a course. It is expected that the entrepreneurship education in those universities will arm the students with entrepreneurship skills for job dexterity and self reliance.

Skill is the ability to perform expertly well, facility in performance with dexterity and tact through what one has learnt and practiced in training (Onoh 2013). University students need entrepreneurship skills. Ezeabii, Ekoh-Nweke and Agbo (2020) defined entrepreneurship skills as those human attributes and dexterity used for establishment, management and controlling of investment opportunities for economic gain.

Nevertheless, for the aim of entrepreneurship education to be achieved in universities in Ebonyi State and in the lives of the graduates, the programme has to be facilitated. Facilitation involved improvement of the programme by all concerned. Business education programme and entrepreneurship skills gaining have

to be facilitated by all stakeholders by their being actively involved in playing their parts very well. The stakeholders include the government, the institutions administration, the students themselves and the community the institution are situated in. with respect to this study, the lecturers and the governments as stakeholders were discussed.

The Nigerian government as a stakeholder through appropriate agencies should enforce the implementation of the policies with respect to entrepreneurship in University. The government should provide the fund needed for the implementation as entrepreneurship involves a lot of fund. Also, the government should make provisions for training of lecturers on practical entrepreneurial skills, provide facilities and employ technical assistants needed by universities for entrepreneurship education. To buttress the above, Olaitan (2017) opined that proper funding is very essential if the goals and objective of entrepreneurship education are to be monitored and adequate maintenance of such equipment.

Secondly, the government should provide incentives to lecturers and students to motivate them. Also, entrepreneurship mindsets can be awakened in the students and lecturers alike when the governments provide school based enterprises which will help entrepreneurship attributes to them. According to Kehinde (2019) government should established students enterprise centers for the students at all level of education to provide business advice, mentorship and other practical support towards the realization of self-employment aspirations of the students.

Further, the objectives of entrepreneurship cannot be achieved in university for student's skill gaining towards self employment if the lecturers who are also the stakeholders do not play their part very well. It is expected that this lecturers should combine teaching methods and use more of students centered interactive approach to teach for conceptualization of facts by the students. They should try and cover the curriculum set and provide adequate practical expediencies for the students. Obaji Anosike and Ezeji (2019) concurred that for teaching entrepreneurship, teachers should use learner-centered teaching methods that are activity-based during Business Education curriculum implementation to promote active participation of all learners so as to enhance acquisition of entrepreneurship skills for job and wealth creation. In essence, lecturers should make sure that students are provided with the right data and materials necessary to focus their thinking and interaction in the lesson for the process of information analysis.

From the foregoing, mentoring and monitoring of the students learning experiences to checkmate the achievement of the set objectives are expected of the lecturers. Nevertheless, the lecturers cannot achieve the above if they are not retained and retrained. Hence, they need to avail themselves for workshops and seminars towards capacity building. Owaji, Dambo and Owaji (2017) affirmed that for achievement of entrepreneurship education, teacher training and retraining packages should be provided and universities authorities should endeavour to organize workshops and in-service training programme for Business Educators.

Despite all these inevitable necessities for the gaining of entrepreneurship skills, it has been observed that there is a miss-match between the education acquired by the graduates of business and display of competency. Hence, some of them roam about the streets in search of non existing jobs. Ezeabii (2017) observed that some business education graduates join other graduates in roaming the streets looking for paid employment. These ought not to be so and the situation must not be left unattended. Upon this backdrop, there is need to ascertain strategies for facilitating entrepreneurship skill gaining through business education programme of public Universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self-employment. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. Lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.
2. Government- related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

Research Questions

1. What are the lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment?
2. What are the government- related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female business educators with respect to lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female business educators with respect to government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through business education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Ebonyi State comprising two universities offering business education namely: Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, and Elex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo. The population of the study comprised of 35 business educators which was made up of 22 male and 13 female in the two institutions. The data for the study was collected using structured questionnaires The instrument was validated by three experts: two from Business Education Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92 was achieved from the research instrument. The statistical mean, standard deviation, and t-test were applied for the data analysis using SPSS 20.0 version. The decision rule for the mean statistic was 2.5. A mean of 2.5 and above was accepted while a mean below 2.5 was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment?*

Data answering the above research question are contained in Table 1

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation on Lecturers-Related Facilitating Strategies for Gaining Entrepreneurship Skills through Business Education of Public Universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for Self Employment

S/N	Lecturers-Related Facilitating Strategies	X	SD	Decisio
1	Use activity based method of teaching	3.08	0.57	Agree
2	Arouse the interest of the students in the class	2.94	0.23	Agree
3	Cover the entrepreneurship curriculum for the semester	3.08	0.39	Agree
4	Use demonstration method of teaching	3.23	0.59	Agree
5	Encouraging students to set up a mini-enterprise before graduating	3.11	0.77	Agree
6	Give students proper analytical and practical assignments	3.18	0.64	Agree
7	Monitor the students in entrepreneurship skills activities	3.05	0.84	Agree
8	Organizing seminars and workshops for students	3.84	0.39	Agree
9	Practical counseling on entrepreneurship skill acquisition for students	3.39	0.69	Agree
10	Using problem based method of teaching	3.25	0.76	Agree
11	Provide students with data and materials for class interaction.	3.50	0.55	Agree
12	Encourage students to be creative and discover things by themselves	3.19	0.83	Agree
13	Using learner-centered teaching methods	3.03	0.64	Agree

14	Rewarding students that perform well in entrepreneurship skill acquisition activities	3.47	0.68	Agree
Grand Total		3.24	0.61	Agree

Data in Table 1 reveal that items 1-14 had a mean rating of 2.94 – 3.84 with a grand mean of 3.24. This indicates that lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurial skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment was rated agree by the respondents.

Research Question 2: *What are the government- related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment?*

Data answering the above research question are contained in Table 2.

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation on Government-Related Facilitating Strategies for Gaining Entrepreneurial Skills through Business Education of Public Universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for Self Employment

S/N	Government-Related Facilitating Strategies	X	SD	Decision
1	Adequate provision of fund for entrepreneurship programme	3.06	0.66	Agree
2	Enforce the implementation of the policies with respect to entrepreneurship in universities	2.82	0.67	Agree
3	Maintenance of entrepreneurship equipment in the universities	2.84	0.50	Agree
4	Proper monitoring of entrepreneurship programme	3.04	0.81	Agree
5	Provide incentives to lecturers to motive them for entrepreneurial skills impartation in students	2.80	0.80	Agree
6	Provision of instructional materials in business education programme	3.07	0.68	Agree
7	Provision of quality and relevant equipment for entrepreneurship skill acquisition in the universities	3.75	0.89	Agree
8	Provision of textbooks and training materials	3.83	0.65	Agree
9	Staffing of business education programme with entrepreneurship lecturers	2.57	0.55	Agree
10	Train and re-train lecturers towards entrepreneurship skills acquisition through seminars and workshops	2.83	0.55	Agree
Grand Total		3.06	0.68	Agree

Data in Table 2 reveal that items 1-10 had a mean rating of 2.57 – 3.83 with a grand mean of 3.06. This indicates that government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurial skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment was rated agree by the respondents.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between male and female business educators with respect to lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurial skills through business education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

Data answering the above hypothesis are contained in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of T-Test Analysis of the Mean Responses of the Respondents with respect to Lecturers-Related Facilitating Strategies for Gaining Entrepreneurial Skills through Business Education of Public Universities Ebonyi State of Nigeria for Self Employment.

S/N	Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision	Remark
1	Male	22	3.79	0.40	33	1.16	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.76	0.42					
2	Male	22	3.03	0.17	33	0.61	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.03	0.19					
3	Male	22	3.00	0.67	33	1.56	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.07	0.60					
4	Male	22	3.51	0.55	33	0.52	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.49	0.54					
5	Male	22	3.30	0.61	33	0.90	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.26	0.69					
6	Male	22	1.11	0.32	33	1.82	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	1.15	0.36					
7	Male	22	3.33	0.60	33	0.42	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.31	0.62					
8	Male	22	3.13	0.94	33	0.23	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.11	1.11					
9	Male	22	3.40	0.80	33	1.54	2.04	Accept HO₁	NSD
	Female	13	3.33	0.69					
10	Male	22	3.45	0.65	33	0.94	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.49	0.71					
11	Male	22	3.10	0.59	33	0.56	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.07	0.55					
12	Male	22	3.84	0.39	33	0.46	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.84	0.39					
13	Male	22	3.07	0.54	33	0.68	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.10	0.60					
14	Male	22	3.85	0.37	33	0.82	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.83	0.41					
Grand Total	Male	22	3.21	0.54	33	0.87	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.20	0.56					

Table 3 above reveals a t-calculated value of 0.87 and a t-critical of 2.04 at 33 degrees of freedom. From the table, since the t-calculated is less than the critical t-value, we uphold the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference in opinion of the respondents regarding the lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment in the area of the study.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between male and female business educators with respect to government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurial skills through business education of public universities of Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

Data answering the above hypothesis are contained in Table 4

Table 3: Summary of T-Test Analysis of the Mean Responses of the Respondents with respect to Government-Related Facilitating Strategies for Gaining Entrepreneurship Skills through Business Education of Public Universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for Self Employment.

S/N	Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision	Remark
1	Male	22	3.31	1.19	33	0.40	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.33	0.86					
2	Male	22	3.01	0.71	33	0.29	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.00	0.00					
3	Male	22	3.07	0.62	33	1.72	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.00	0.66					
4	Male	22	3.48	0.54	33	1.18	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.52	0.55					
5	Male	22	3.30	0.70	33	0.99	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.25	0.60					
6	Male	22	1.17	0.46	33	3.83	2.04	Reject HO	SD
	Female	13	1.35	0.90					
7	Male	22	3.55	0.63	33	1.77	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.28	0.59					
8	Male	22	2.88	1.24	33	2.23	2.04	Reject HO	SD
	Female	13	3.04	0.94					
9	Male	22	3.31	0.70	33	2.35	2.04	Reject HO	SD
	Female	13	3.43	0.78					
10	Male	22	3.50	0.71	33	1.50	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.43	0.65					
Grand Total	Male	22	3.05	0.75	33	1.70	2.04	Accept HO	NSD
	Female	13	3.06	0.65					

Table 4 above reveals a t-calculated value of 1.70 and a t-critical of 2.04 at 33 degrees of freedom. From the table, since the t-calculated is less than the critical t-value, we uphold the null hypothesis and

conclude that there is no significant difference in opinion of the respondents regarding the government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result in Table 1 showed that the respondents agree to all the items as the lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment. These are in agreement with the suppositions of Obayi, Anosike and Ezeyi (2019) that for teaching entrepreneurship, teachers should use learner-centered teaching methods that are activity based during business education curriculum implementation to promote active participation of all learners so as to enhance acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for job and wealth creation. The finding are also in agreement with Owaji, Dambo and Owaji (2017) who posited that for the achievement of entrepreneurship education, teacher training and retraining packages should be provided and university authorities should endeavour to organize workshops and in-service training programmes for business education. The test of hypothesis (H_{O1}) in Table 3 proved that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators with respect to the lecturers-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in the area of the study for self employment. The findings are in agreement with Iwuoha, et al (2021) reported that there is no significant difference between male and female business educators in Imo State on entrepreneurial skills acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation.

The result in Table 2 showed that the respondents agree to all the items as the government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in Ebonyi State of Nigeria for self employment. The study concur with Olaitan (2017) who opined that proper funding is very essential if the goals and objectives of entrepreneurship education are to be achieved. Also, it agrees with the observation of Kehinde (2019) that government should establish students enterprise centers for the students at all levels of education to provide business advice, mentorship, and other practical support towards the realization self-employment aspirations of the students. The test of hypothesis (H_{O2}) in Table 4 proved that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators with respect to the government-related facilitating strategies for gaining entrepreneurship skills through Business Education of public universities in the area of the study for self employment. The findings are in agreement with Ezeonwurie (2017) found that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers in fostering entrepreneurship education.

CONCLUSIONS

Lecturers and government-related strategies can be used to facilitate entrepreneurship skills gaining through Business Education for self employment. Business Educators gender is not a determinate factor for strategies to be used applied. Hence, when the strategies identified are applied, they will go a long way toward helping our universities products acquire entrepreneurship skills, be self employed and employ others. It will help reduce unemployment rate and vices in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended:

1. That lecturers in universities should device ways to ensure that students are provided with data and materials for entrepreneurship skill acquisition.
2. That government should liaise with university authorities to provide and maintain entrepreneurship equipment for students use for proper skill acquisition.

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