



Entrepreneurial Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Students in Rivers State Owned Universities

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Entrepreneurial skills and Entrepreneurial intentions of students of Business Education programmes in Rivers State owned universities. Two specific objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses were answered and tested at 0.05 significance level. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all final year Business Education students in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt which was 501 students. The entire population was used as sample size for the study. The census sampling technique was adopted. Self-designed instruments titled “Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire” (AESQ) and “Relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaires” (RESEIQ) was used for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of Business Education department and Measurement and Evaluation, faculty of Education Rivers State University and a reliability index 0.81 and 0.78 using test retest method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) formula was used to analyze the research questions and the hypotheses. Research questions were answered based on the value and direction of the correlation coefficient, (either positive and high, positive but low, or negative and high or negative but low or moderate). Findings revealed that there is a very high and significant relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students and there is a high and significant relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students. Based on the finding it was recommended that the curriculum contents of the business education programme should be updated with current accounting skills that will be able to tackle the challenge of surviving in the present Nigerian recession-bound economy, Rivers State owned Universities should teach managerial skills more intensely through a combination of practical and theoretical methods to equip students with all first-hand knowledge they need to thrive in the business environment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skills, Business Education students

INTRODUCTION

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has continuously been on the high side. Despite the enormous endowment of the country with human and natural resources, the problem appears to persist. While graduate unemployment remains an endemic problem in Nigeria, the situation is not peculiar to only Nigeria. It is a situation that is common to many nations (Olayinka, 2010). In fact, the problem of graduate unemployment is considered a long standing global phenomenon. Graduates refers to persons who have successfully completed their tertiary education programme and have been duly certified as being found worthy in character and learning. The tertiary level of education in Nigeria is the highest strata of education. This perhaps explains why it is called higher education by some educationists. A person is admitted into higher education programme only after the person has successfully completed secondary education and met the admission requirements.

When a person is admitted into higher education, the person is considered to be an 'undergraduate'. However, once the person successfully completes the higher education programme, the person is seen as a 'graduate'. The number of graduates that falls within a nation's working age, makes-up the size of the nation's workforce. The economy of any nation depends on the quantity and quality of her workforce. To achieve present and future national economic growth and development aspirations, nations demand for a growing quantity and quality of graduates. A nation's demand for graduates reflects her manpower demand for a planned period. The manpower demand is expected to be at equilibrium with the manpower supply (Agabi, 2002). The institutions that offer higher education are responsible for the production of anticipated quantity and quality of manpower (i.e. graduates) to meet the manpower demand in the society.

A shortage in the manpower supply of a nation could spell economic doom. In fact, such nation will depend on emigrants to harness its full economic potential. However, a surplus in manpower supply will also bring about an undesired problem of unemployment. Unemployment causes several problems that are detrimental to economic growth and development. Unemployment has been described as a situation where persons who are capable and willing to work cannot find the right type of job that matches their potential (Twumasi, 2013). Persons who are capable and willing to work may include persons with skilled, semi-skilled and un-skilled labour. The skilled labour covers persons who are graduates that have successfully completed academic programmes in tertiary institutions of learning. The semi-skilled labour refers to persons who have completed informal trainings in specific area of vocational and technical skills.

The unskilled labour refers to persons whose skills require little or no training and certification. The total number of unemployed graduates in a nation forms the size of graduate unemployment in the nation. As its name implies, graduate unemployment is a peculiar case of a graduates who are trained, certified, capable and willing to work but cannot find jobs. It appears that there is a growing increase in the rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This is unconnected with persistent growth in the number of persons graduating from the various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. It is commonly observed that every year, thousands of youths graduate from higher education offering institutions. These youths are excited as they join the nation's labour market in search of employment opportunities. The growth in number of persons graduating from universities every year appears to be unmatched with the rate of growth of industries in Nigeria.

The implication for this is that the demand for labour in the economy appears to be less than the size of labour supplied to the market by institutions that graduate thousands of youths every year. This disequilibrium in demand for graduates and the supply of graduates into Nigeria's economy is what is known as graduate unemployment. Graduate unemployment affects the nation in diverse negative ways. It accounts for; dearth of interest amongst younger people and households in pursuing a degree in higher education, poor level of academic commitment amongst undergraduates, rise in crime and vices amongst graduates, political apathy amongst graduates and negative economic growth and development indices (Okon, 2018). It appears that any nation whose graduates are allowed to roam the streets will have the corners of its streets as flashpoints for kinds of crimes. Nigeria is no exception. Various economic stakeholders have continued to blame the high rate of graduate unemployment for the rise in clandestine activities of youths who are expected to be role models of the values of formal education.

The need to tackle the problem of graduate unemployment cannot be overemphasized. There seem to be different alternative ways that the problem of graduate unemployment can be surmounted in Nigeria. While some stakeholders have continued to clamour for job creation through various means of stimulation of growth in level of industrialization and privatization of public sector corporations, others throw their weight behind preparing graduates to become entrepreneurs instead of job seekers (Okon, 2018). Educationists and curriculum developers all over the world tend to vehemently support the introduction of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of higher education. This is expected to tackle the problem of graduate unemployment in the face of job unavailability. Emeraton (2008) opined that Entrepreneurship is an educational programme that assists students to develop positive attitudes, innovation and skills for self-reliance, rather than depending on the government for employment.

Entrepreneurship education is adopted as a veritable tool for stimulating the growth of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria's economy. Small and medium scale enterprises have played

important role in the development of various economies of the world. The following governmental and non-governmental organizations in Nigeria are responsible for the design and implementation of programmes and policies for growth of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria; National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Bank of Industry (BOI), Federal Institute of Industrial Research, Oshodi (FIIRO), Industrial Development Centre (IDC), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP), Raw Materials & Development Council (RMRDC).

These organizations are also saddled with the responsibility of ensuring conducive environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), poverty alleviation, provide financial support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), capacity utilization and to address the problem of unemployment among Nigerian citizens (Akhueomonkhan, Raimi & Sofoluwe, 2013). Entrepreneurship Education programme is put in place by successive government to tackle the issue of graduate unemployment amongst Nigerian youths. It is a programme that produces graduates who possess self-confidence and capacities for independent thought to discover new information leading to economic development. Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students especially those in tertiary institutions with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting. Nigeria's teeming population plagued with unemployment can drastically be reduced through entrepreneurial explosion.

Entrepreneurship education therefore, seeks to provide students with skills, knowledge and motivation, as well as to effect attitudinal changes, necessary to encourage self-reliance through involvement in entrepreneurial activities (Abiodun, 2017). Through entrepreneurship education, young people learn organizational skills, time management, and leadership involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Students are therefore exposed to basic entrepreneurial skills such as accounting, managerial, marketing, office management, as well as information and technology in order to become good entrepreneurs on graduation. The outlined indicate an individual's entrepreneurial competence that can determine his/her intention to start a business. According to Schmitt-Rodermund as cited in Zhengxia Peng, Genshu Lu and Hui Kang (2012), students' entrepreneurial competences refer to their leadership, curiosity and entrepreneurial skills which are influenced by personality traits.

Entrepreneurial education seeks to immerse people in real life experiences which encourage and empower them to take risks, manage the results and learn from the outcome. Different aspects of entrepreneurship education are offered at all levels of schooling from primary or secondary schools through graduate university programmes; as the Business Education programme that is put in place to offer learners the varieties of skills for effective performance in the world of business. Business Education is a program that is designed for acquisition of knowledge and skills needed in the work place. Business Education is an aspect of technical education. Business Education is a specialized training given in tertiary institutions for preparation of individuals as qualified graduates in business, managers of their own business and business teachers who can teach others the rudiments of business (Koko, 2010).

Ubulom and Enyokit (2017) asserted that Business Education is an educational or training process which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for his personal or for vocational usage, for career as administrator or manager and for career as a business teacher wherever he may find himself in the world of work. Val-Ossai and Akpomi (2017) viewed Business Education as programme in education that prepares students for entry into and advancement of jobs within the business. It is an education programme which involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies which make the recipient/beneficiary proficient. Business Education as an educational programme is designed to provide individuals with the needed business and vocational attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills.

It 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 or employee or self-employed and for effective participation in the educational industry as a professional business teacher. Koko (2010) asserted that Business Education serves society by enabling individuals to develop competencies in accounting, business law, career development, communication, computation,

economics and personal finance as well as entrepreneurship, information technology management and marketing. Business education is expected to inculcate basic entrepreneurial skills (accounting and managerial skills) into the students (Ademiluyi, 2007). Accounting entrepreneurial skills refers to skills that have to do with the planning, budgeting, controlling, documenting and reporting of cash-flows in a business in order to achieve predetermined goals.

There is no business venture that does not involve the utilization of financial and other resources. The skills needed for effective management of financial resource in a business is known as accounting skills. Accounting skills exposes entrepreneurs to basic knowledge and competence in accounting (Okoli, 2013). An entrepreneur that possesses accounting skills, can therefore carryout basic functions of an accountant. At the inception of a small and medium scale enterprise, the entrepreneur may be unable to afford the cost of hiring a trained and certified account to carry-out the functions of an accountant. Alternatively, the entrepreneur armed by accounting skills will be able to keep, interpret and use different accounting records for the business to achieve desired goals. Accounting skills is one of the important skills that students are exposed to, during entrepreneurship education delivery. This is because finance is a scarce and essential business resource and it is also the life-wire of all businesses.

A poor management of business financial records can negatively affect business management decisions. Managerial skill is another important entrepreneurial skill. It refers to the ability to carry-out management functions in order to ensure the effective and efficient of scarce resources for achieving the goals of a business venture. Simply put, managerial skills are skills possessed by a manger that enable him/her to effectively perform core management functions. Managerial skills are essential skills because it enhances the planning, organization, coordination and controlling of every aspect of the life of a business. The managerial skill covers human relations and technical abilities. An entrepreneur is saddled with the responsibility of performing core management function until he/she can afford the cost of hiring a trained and certified business manager. The success or failure of any business enterprise depends on the ability of the business owner to manage the business. Managing a business involves managing the human (personnel, suppliers and customers), material, financial, information and other resources.

Entrepreneurial intention is a major determinant of the action of new venture creation moderated by exogenous variables such as; family background, position in one's family, parents' occupation, education and training. Franco, Haase and Lautenschlager (2010) argued that Intention is a key concept when it comes to understanding the reason for individuals' careers. This is particularly true for explaining the decision to start up new venture, where the entrepreneurial intention has been considered a chief element. The entrepreneurial skills inculcated into students during their Business Education programmes may have some form of influence on the entrepreneurial intentions of the students. Such influence may be seen in the nature of business the student may want to pursue after graduation and students' perception of their readiness for the world of entrepreneurship. While emphasis has been placed on equipping Business Education students with entrepreneurial skills, the need to examine students' perception of the influence of entrepreneurial skills on their entrepreneurial intentions cannot be overemphasized. It is in line with this backdrop that this study will examine entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intention amongst Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The tertiary level of education is one that is concerned with the production of skilled manpower for domestic and global economics. Every year in Nigeria, large number of graduates is supplied to the society by tertiary institutions. These graduates end up increasing the number of people in the nation's labour market. This situation has no doubt been linked to the problem of high rate of graduate unemployment. The introduction of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of universities is aimed at finding functional solution to the challenge of persistent rise in the rate of graduate unemployment. The introduction of Entrepreneurship Education in universities was aimed at inculcating entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in students that will inspire and equip students to become driven by entrepreneurial intentions. Students of Business Education are exposed to Entrepreneurship Education so that they can acquire various entrepreneurial skills.

Beyond the skills, the students are also expected to develop idiosyncratic entrepreneurial intentions as a panacea for growing rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Sadly, despite the introduction of

Entrepreneurship Education in universities, Nigeria's economy continues to be bedeviled by the problem of persistent rise in graduate unemployment. This problem appears to be responsible for the high rate of crimes and vices amongst university graduates, political apathy amongst graduates and poverty amongst households with graduates. The researcher observed that there appears to be no known reported empirical survey conducted to ascertain whether or not entrepreneurial skills inculcated into students of Business education in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, have any implications on the development of entrepreneurial intentions amongst the students.

This problem of rising rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria may persist if the implications of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intentions of university students are not empirically established. The need to identify students' perception of the implications of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intentions amongst Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. It is upon this backdrop that this study will be conducted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was conducted to:

1. Determine the relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Find out the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.5 significance level:

1. There is no significant relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The study adopted the correlational survey research design. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study because it was used to establish the relationship between the major variables of the study, mainly the independent and dependent variables. The population of this study comprised all final year (2019), Business Education students in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The total population included 501 final year Business Education students was used for the study. The entire population of 501 final year Business Education students was studied, because the number was not too large, this implies that the population is manageable. The research instruments applied for data collection was two questionnaires designed by the researcher. The instruments are titled, 'Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire' (AESQ) and "Relationship between Entrepreneurial Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaires" (RESEIQ) were used for the study.

To validate the instrument, the researcher's supervisor and two specialists from Business Education, Measurement and Evaluation scrutinized the content, scope and comprehensiveness of the instrument. Their contributions in form of corrections, comments, suggestions etc., were used to determine the final state of the instrument. Reliability of the Instrument was determined using test-retest. A total of 20 copies of the questionnaires were administered to 20 Business Education students of Niger Delta University Amassoma, Bayelsa State within a period of two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the same group. The result obtained from the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient (r) and reliability coefficient of 0.81 and 0.78 was obtained.

This showed that the instrument was reliable to apply for collection of data for the work. The copies of the questionnaire was administered to the students by the researcher and two research assistants who were briefed on the method for administration and retrieving of the instruments from the respondents on the spot and some were later retrieved within a period of two (2) weeks. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (r) was used to analyse the collated data in order to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was based on the results of the findings. Thus, if the calculated 'r' is greater than the r-critical, the null hypothesis was rejected, but accepted if the r-calculated is less than r-critical.

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities?*

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Accounting Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Students in Rivers State Owned Universities

Variables	N	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Remark
Accounting Skills (X) & Entrepreneurial Intentions (Y)	501	9218	9192	170332	169326	169742	0.88	Very High Relationship

Table 1 showed the relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities. However, the result indicated that the relationship that exist between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities is very high (r = 0.88).

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities?*

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Students in Rivers State Owned Universities

Variables	N	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Remark
Managerial Skills (X) & Entrepreneurial Intentions (Y)	501	9022	9192	163546	169326	166180	0.76	High Relationship

Table 2 revealed the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities. However, the result indicated that the relationship that exist between relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities is high (r = 0.76).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between accounting Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Students in Rivers State Owned Universities

Variables	N	df	r	Zcal.	Zcrit.	Sig.	Decision
Accounting Skills Entrep. Intentions	501	499	0.76	41.39	1.96	0.05	Significant

Table 3 indicated that the r = 0.88, Zcal = 41.39, Ztab = 1.96, and df = 499. Thus, since Zcal > Ztab, then the result implied that the null hypothesis one is rejected at the 0.05 significant level. Therefore, there is significant relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between managerial Skills and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Students in Rivers State Owned Universities

Variables	N	df	R	Zcal.	Zcrit.	Sig.	Decision
Managerial Skills	501	499	0.76	26.12	1.96	0.05	Significant
Entrep. Intentions							

Table 4 indicated that the $r = 0.76$, $Z_{cal} = 26.12$, $Z_{tab} = 1.96$, and $df = 499$. Thus, since $Z_{cal} > Z_{tab}$, then the result implied that the null hypothesis two is rejected at the 0.05 significant level. Therefore, there is significant relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of table hypothesis 1 showed that the relationship that exists between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities is very high. Also, the result of table hypothesis 1 showed that there is significant relationship between accounting skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities. This finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Olokundun (2017), whose study indicated that entrepreneurship pedagogy on accounting skills significantly influence students 'shared vision and identification of business opportunities positively. The study by Ezech (2011) also supports the finding of this study, as it indicated in his study that the requirement of accounting skills by graduates of secretarial studies of Polytechnics for entrepreneurial ventures is significant.

Furthermore, Okolie and Izedonmi (2014) maintained that skills required of accountants comprises of technological capabilities in the critical professional spheres of accounting, auditing, taxation, finance, business strategy, information technology, social skills, ethical skills, communication skills, managerial skills, Leadership skills as perceived and desired by employers. In the absence of any paid job, it is expected that these skills should spur the entrepreneurial intentions of students into starting up their own businesses.

The result in table hypothesis 2 showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the relationship that exists between relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities is high. While, the result of table hypothesis 2 showed that there is significant relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities. These findings are consistent with the findings of Olokundun (2017), whose study indicated that entrepreneurship pedagogy on managerial skills significantly influences students' shared vision and identification of business opportunities positively. Also collaborating the finding of this study Agbogidi, (2007), who's finding indicated that there is significant influence of managerial skills, financial management skills, marketing skills, and communication skills, and the intention for establishing small and medium scale enterprises.

Furthermore, Abdulazeez (2016) noted that managerial skills are essential for effective implementation of the management functions such as planning, organizing, controlling, and directing of the entire business. A lot of skills in this dimension have to do with the individual, the ideas and products and services. It is very necessary that students develop business management skills because this will help stimulate their entrepreneurial intentions and propel them into business start-ups.

CONCLUSION

The study measured the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education students in Rivers State owned Universities. As a result, the key findings of the study indicated that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intentions of Business Education student in Rivers State owned Universities. Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that Business Education students based on their training acquire the requisite knowledge in management and development of business enterprise. Therefore, they can

achieve business goals through the coordinated efforts of planning, organizing, directing, conscription, and controlling the business venture, which are also part of the business education programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The curriculum contents of the business education programme should be updated with current accounting skills that will be able to tackle the challenge of surviving in the present Nigerian recessed-bound economy.
2. Rivers State Universities should teach managerial skills more intensely through a combination of practical and theoretical methods to equip students with all first-hand knowledge they need to strive in the business environment.

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