



Entrepreneurship Orientations And Start-Up Initiatives Among Business Educationists In Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper empirically investigated the effect of entrepreneurship orientations (EOs) on startup initiatives among business educationists of the Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The six (6) entrepreneurship orientation proxies considered include: proactiveness, risk taking, innovativeness, competitiveness, leaning orientation, and achievement orientations. The study randomly sampled 450 undergraduate and post graduate students (225 females and 225 males) aged between 18 and 57 years. Specifically, 35% of our respondents are Undergraduates while 65% of our respondents are Post graduates. Out of the 450 distributed questionnaires, 442 were returned. The study adopted the multivariate analysis. The statistical package that was used to run the regression is Econometric Views version 9. The validity test revealed that, both EO and start-up initiatives yielded a high/satisfactory internal consistency indexes. The study evidenced that, proactiveness, innovativeness, competitiveness; and achievement orientations exerted a high/significant positive effect on startup initiatives. However, risk taking exerted high adverse effects on startup initiatives. Meanwhile, learning orientations exerted minimal direct effects on startup initiatives. Hence, the paper concludes that, proactiveness, innovativeness, competitiveness; and achievement orientations are instrumental influencers of startup initiatives. In view of this, all levels of government should give start-up packages to highly proactive, innovative, competitive, and result oriented young graduates. Lastly, academic regulators must entrepreneurship courses are considered compulsory courses in higher instructions of leanings. This will equip both undergraduates and post-graduates with both learning and achievement orientations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Orientations, Start-up Initiatives, Business Educationists

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of entrepreneurship orientations (EO) have series of scholarly attentions since the early 1940s in the United States of America-USA. This is borne out of the critical roles EO play in addressing huge unemployment gaps. Worthy to note is that, EO help to mitigate breakdown in laws and order alongside other associated crime rates (Prabhu, 2019). Initially, the construct (EO) initially originated from the field of management but in present times, it cut across all fields of human endeavour. Consequent upon its strategic role in reducing unemployment rates, the Nigerian University Commission-NUC under the surveillance of the Federal Nigerian ministry of Education incorporated Entrepreneurship education (EE) into the Nigerian University Brochure in 2006. This is with the hope that, by 2014, about 34,000 Nigerian university graduates would have been self-employed (Olayemi, 2018). However, this proactive initiative is yet to yield much result since the unemployment rates keep increasing by the day. As a result, this once introduced initiative has become a failed policy. Thus, this policy gap formed one of the major overriding issues which necessitated the study in line with Okoli, Nwosu, and Okechukwu (2021) submission.

Furthermore, another major issue which necessitated this study lies in the wide differences between the developed country's approach towards EO with that of and the developing countries. Comparably, while the developed countries consider EO has a voluntary endeavour, a conscious process, and a career path, EO is not considered in this light in developing countries like Nigeria. This therefore demands the collective efforts both the government (public sector), and the institutions of learning especially in developing economies like Nigeria (Olayemi, 2018).

Again, outside the fact that, having EO is highly demanding, starting up a new business venture with less support remains another challenging factor (Jwara & Hoque, 2018). Again, even with the rate at which students graduates from higher institutions of learning consequence upon the proliferation of higher institutions of learning (universities, polytechnic, and mono-technic), coupled with the reduction of JAMB cut-off marks, unemployment rate still persists. Although, the inability of the Nigerian government to create enabling business environment dissuades many young graduates from venturing in that path (EO paths), mismatch between students' future expectations and their current state of the Nigerian economy remains another issue. This therefore suggests the need for educators to come up with a policy framework that will help address the huge employment gaps recorded over the years is also germane. Beyond financial supports from the government, it is also pertinent that, individuals are self-motivated to conceive business ideas, organize these ideas, and at the same time establish new businesses with or without financial assistance. This line of thought is not encapsulated in the Nigerian curricula as the greatest dreams of most graduates are "to find white collar job vacancies which in most times are bought by those who are affluent" (Jwara & Hoque, 2018).

Lastly, another area of concern lies on whether academic and hand on knowledge are critical to the success of a business or not? While one school of thought hold that, academic and hand on knowledge are critical to the success of a business, the other school of thought hold that, academic and hand on knowledge are not critical to the success of a business. The rationalization is that, what are thought in schools especially in developing countries is not obtainable in business world (Mustaffa, Singaravelloo, & Othman, 2019).

It is in recognition of the above series identified gaps that, the present study is motivated to contribute to extant education studies on the effect of EO on start-up initiatives among business educationists in Delta State, Nigeria by looking at the subject of interest from a more pragmatic point of view. Pragmatically, the current study will aid in policy formulation on the current huge employment gaps recorded over the years. Again, this paper will prepare young undergraduates, and graduates on how best to address the challenges associated with starting up new businesses. Again, this study will expose undergraduate business educationists on how they can improve their employability skills and at the same time change their attitude towards the unforeseen future (Jwara & Hoque, 2018). Lastly, the present study will serve as a resource material to subsequent researcher desiring to bridge the gaps between the educational system and business world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "EO" was first conceptualized by Miller in 1983. Miller (1983) defined EO is an organization's strategic posture reflecting risk-taking, proactiveness, and innovativeness. Simply put, EO accounts for the extent to which individuals/entrepreneurs are relaxed, highly calculated, and is able to face business ups and down. According to Perera and Samarakoon (2021), EO is the tendencies to be innovative, take risk, and act autonomously. In its broadest term, is the strategy-making processes and process which an entrepreneur takes (Lumpkin & Dess, 2016). Avlonitis and Salavou, (2017) averred that, EO provides a valuable policy frameworks for studying entrepreneurial activities.

Haroon, Muhammad, Saifoul, and Noor (2016) defined EO is a proactive effort made by an entrepreneur to create value via the creation of new business opportunities. More so, EO is defined using five (5) parameters which are: innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness; and autonomy. Benazzouz (2019) emphasized that; EO serves as a fundamental part of innovativeness since it prompts new knowledge-seeking. He further stressed that, entrepreneurial attitudes are essential to starting up innovative of young graduates.

The term "start-up initiatives is the mindset that is borne out of the desire to invent one's business outfit. More so, it is one's desire to conceive business ideas, organize these ideas, and at the same time establish new businesses with or without financial assistance (Jwara & Hoque, 2018). This

suggests the need for start-up grant while ensuring that, educators to come up with a policy framework that will help address the huge employment gaps recorded thus far in the country.

Furthermore, the paper relied on the socio-cultural theory of entrepreneurship. This theory stressed that, EO is affected by various factor of which the culture (norms, ways of life, and belief system) of an individual determines the success of such business endeavour. This theory further revealed that, business enterprise attributes, such as inventiveness, advancement, activity, forcefulness, competitiveness, hazard taking, and aggressiveness are critical factors which sustains business endeavour.

Although, related studies abound, they are mostly conducted outside the Nigerian context. Even the existing studies in the Nigerian context are tailored towards SMEs' performance. For example, Akinwande and Akinola (2021) studied the relationship between EO and the performance of 96 SMEs in Lagos State, Nigeria. The three (3) EO dimensions considered are: innovation, risk taking, and proactiveness. The study gathered responses using both inferential and descriptive analysis. The study affirmed that, strong synergy exists between EO dimensions and the performance of 96 targeted SMEs. Also, Al-Hussain et'al (2020) reported same result.

Mohammed and Zakari (2021) reported that, transformational leadership behaviours did not moderate the between EO and performance firms in Ghana having sampled 300 SMEs. Also, Perera and Samarakoon (2021) & Okoli, Nwosu, and Okechukwu (2021) reaffirmed that, EO (risk taking, proactiveness, and innovativeness) improves SMEs in Sri Lanka and South-Eastern Nigeria. Meanwhile, competitiveness influences SMEs' innovative performance minimally. However, Mohammad, Luka, and Daniel (2021) EO reduces firm performance minimally.

Okřęglicka, Haviernikov , ., Mynarzov , and Emańska-Majdzik (2017) studied EO creation among 300 students in Poland. They reported that, EO helps stimulate student desire to start their own business endeavour.

Again, Koe (2016) studied the effect of Individual EO and EO among university students. The primary data research approach was used. He reported that, most of the university students that were sampled are interest in EO. Also, Individual EO is a critical factor which influences the risk taking, proactiveness, innovativeness, and the level of innovativeness of the sampled university students.

More so, Yusoff (2016) ascertained whether agro-preneurship education improves the EO and entrepreneurial intentions (EIs) of Malaysian agricultural students or not students. They reported that, EO is a critical factor which influences the risk taking, proactiveness, innovativeness, and the level of innovativeness of the sampled university students.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Participants

The sample comprised 450 students (225 females and 225 males) aged between 18 and 57 years in the Department of Business Education of the Delta State University, Abraka. To ensure that the sample size was sufficient for carrying out the multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by gender, we recruited a minimum of 200 participants per group in line with the submission of Akinwande, and Akinola (2021).

3.2. Instruments Entrepreneurial Orientation Scale (EOS)

In the initial stage of drawing up the research instrument, we drew up 50 items covering six EO dimensions. While 40 of the items were worded positively (i.e., strongly agreed and agreed indicating high EO mindset), the rest were worded negatively (i.e., strongly disagreed and disagreed indicating poor EO mindset), and neutral (i.e. neither high EO mindset nor poor EO mindset). To confirm that, the research instruments meet ethical considerations, the research items were submitted to a four man panel of research experts/professors in the faculty of business education. Consequently, the following criteria were made base on their: mean/average score for relevance >3 on 1–5 scale in line with extant experts.

To further ensure that the research instrument is valid, a pilot survey of 85 vocational training students (49% males and 51% females) from other departments in the university was considered. Accordingly, each items were rated on a 5-point Likert-like scale (1 = Disagreed Strongly to 5 = Agreed Strongly). The questionnaire before sharing contained 32 items.

3.3. Instrument Reliability and Validity

The ordinal coefficients alongside their associated confidence intervals ((95% Conf. Int.). are presented in Table 1. Evidently, the coefficients of EO dimensions ranges from 0.60 to 0.81. The test-retest coefficients ranges from 0.61 to 0.69 (see Table 1). This implies that the six EO dimensions exhibited high internal consistency. Meanwhile, the psychometric property (start-up initiatives) of the research instrument with Start-up Initiatives index of 0.75 [95% Conf. Int.= 0.66–0.89]) indicated that, the start-up initiatives yielded a high/satisfactory.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Index of the Entrepreneurship Orientation Dimension

Dimensions of EO	Mean	SD	(95% Conf. Int.	Test Retest
Proactiveness	4.00	0.91	0.76 (0.65–0.86)	0.61***
Risk Taking	3.98	0.89	0.71 (0.64–0.83)	0.65***
Innovativeness	4.01	0.69	0.81 (0.71–0.91)	0.63***
Competitiveness	3.54	0.51	0.74 (0.75–0.89)	0.69***
Leaning Orientation	3.95	0.45	0.73 (0.65–0.95)	0.68***
Achievement Orientation	3.37	0.66	0.60 (0.65–0.69)	0.62***
Start-up Initiatives	4.01	0.84	0.75 (0.66–0.89)	0.64***

P-value < 0.001.

Source: E-Views (2022)

3.4. Method of Data Analysis

The sourced data from the field survey were obtained and analyzed using the multivariate analysis. This was run via the aid of Econometric Views version 9. Missing data (i.e. data below 5%) were addressed using a single mean/average imputation procedure.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Data Presentation

4.1.1. Questionnaire Retrieval Analysis

The Socio-demographic components of our data set captured the sex, age, level of studies (Undergraduate or post-graduates), previous work experiences. Result from the field survey evidenced that, out of the 450 questionnaires distributed accross 225 females and 225 males aged between 18 and 57 years, only 442 questionnaires were returned. Specifically, 35% of our respondents are Undergraduates while 65% of our respondents are Post graduates. Also, 57% of the respondents had worked before while the remaining 33% had no formal work experiences. Again, 54.3% had taken part in entrepreneurship related courses but 45.7% has no taken part in entrepreneurship related courses.

Table 2: Questionnaire Retrieval Analysis

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire Distributed	450	100
Questionnaire Returned	442	98.22

Source: Field Survey (2022)

4.2. Result Presentation and Discussions

The multivariate analysis stated in table 3 was used to test whether EO improves start up initiatives amongst business educationists:

Table 3: Multiple regression

Regressand: Start-up Initiatives

Parameter Estimates	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Constant	1.608249	0.772722	2.081277	0.0470
Proactiveness	0.497682	0.167255	2.975582	0.0061
Risk Taking	-0.515910	0.166448	-3.099522	0.0046
Innovativeness	0.786843	0.236768	3.323269	0.0025
Competitiveness	0.535762	0.162150	3.304107	0.0027
Leaning Orientation	0.033473	0.177438	0.188646	0.8517
Achievement Orientation	0.307146	0.134271	2.287498	0.0299
R ²	0.634247	Durbin-Watson stat		1.943972
Adj. R ²	0.626941	F-statistic		3.935618
		Prob(F-statistic)		0.018843

Source; E-Views 9.0 (2022)

The study evidenced that, proactiveness, innovativeness, competitiveness; and achievement orientations exerted a high/significant positive effect on startup initiatives. By implication, the higher values of proactiveness, innovativeness, competitiveness; and achievement orientations were linked with a higher new business start-up initiatives score. However, risk taking exerted high adverse effects on startup initiatives. Although, this outcome seems to be quite surprising as it is a general believe that, stronger risk-taking orientations increases startup initiatives. The justification here is that, the harsh business environment alongside the uncertainty of the future is the reason behind the adverse result recorded. Meanwhile, learning orientations exerted minimal direct effects on startup initiatives. These results are tandem with Hunt (2016) findings on the EO among undergraduates.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent upon the series of findings recorded in the last section (section four), the paper concludes that, proactiveness, innovativeness, competitiveness; and achievement orientations are instrumental influencers of startup initiatives in Nigeria. In view of this, the paper submits that, government at all levels should give start-up packages to highly proactive, innovative, competitive, and result oriented young graduates. Lastly, academic regulators must entrepreneurship courses are considered compulsory courses in higher instructions of leanings. This will equip both undergraduates and post-graduates with both learning and achievement orientations. This paper contributed to studies on EO as it linked EO with start-up initiatives. More so, the study included both Learning and Achievement Orientation into the EO model. Most existing studies did not see EO from that perspective but the current study did. However, the study is only confined to Delta State. It was also confined to the linkage between EO and start-up initiatives. It is in this light that, future researches look at other EO areas like the effect of University proliferations on unemployment rate in Nigeria; EO advances: Contributions, Challenges, and Strategic Prospects.

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