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Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on the Entrepreneurial Intentions of Business Education Undergraduates in Universities in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study determined the influence of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. Two research questions were answered in the study and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Population of the study was made up of 619 (226 male and 393 female) business education undergraduates within the three universities in Anambra State offering the programme. Stratified random sampling and the simple random sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 243 (male and female) students. An entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) developed by Linan and Chen (2009) was adapted and used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was a 5-point scale containing 37 items in two clusters which was validated by experts in the field of Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient which yielded values of 0.85 and 0.77 respectively for the two clusters and overall value of 0.81. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data to answer the research questions and determine the cohesiveness or otherwise of respondents' mean ratings respectively. z-Test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship education influenced subjective norms and personality traits of business education undergraduates towards becoming entrepreneurs. Gender failed to significantly influence the respondents' mean ratings in all the contents covered. The researchers concluded that business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State would derive a great benefit from an effectively delivered entrepreneurship education programme because it would improve their entrepreneurial intentions. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that university authorities ought to assist business education undergraduates that indicate intention to become entrepreneurs while in school and after graduation through incubator programme.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intentions, business education*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship encourages innovation and creativity. It develops new products or services for the market to fulfill human needs and also encourages investment interest in new businesses being created. According to Onyemah (2011), entrepreneurship plays an important role in economic development through creation of utilities and generation of employment within a short period.

Entrepreneurship education is defined as all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurship mindset, attitudes and skills as well as covering a range of aspects such as idea generation, start-up, growth and innovation (Ediagbonya, 2013). It is designed to re-orient students from job seekers to become job creators. Entrepreneurship education is a specialized education offered to students to acquire relevant abilities, competencies and capabilities for self-employment instead of roaming the streets for unavailable paid employment (Osuala, 2011). Correspondingly, Oyemute (2011), asserted that entrepreneurship education programme is focused on the development of skills necessary for the following: development of entrepreneurial spirit characteristics and personality, development of enterprise-building and small business development capabilities to initiate and start one's own business and development of technical, technological and other professional competences needed for productive work and employment of managerial capabilities to run the business or other self-employment successfully.

Entrepreneurship education aims at precipitating employment generation, assist with the expansion of the economy and also the overall promotion of sustainable economic growth and development in a number of nations (Raimi & Towobola, 2011). Entrepreneurship education gives graduates the opportunities to acquire the selected entrepreneurial traits that influence their entrepreneurship behavior (Ediagbonya, 2013). In respect to this study, entrepreneurship education is an educational programme designed to inculcate in the consciousness of business education students, the spirit of creating their business ventures upon graduation.

Shai (2009) postulated a three-element categorization of entrepreneurship education curriculum considered to be comprehensive enough to equip the products of the school system with the required skills and capacities of future life as personal development, business development and entrepreneurial skills' development. These are integral elements for the acquisition of the desired skills and capacities that will enable the business education students to be self-reliant and productive in the society. In universities, entrepreneurship education is made compulsory for all business education students. Hence, Okoro (2015) asserted that in business education programme, there are several courses in entrepreneurship education that students are expected to take and pass before graduation.

Business education is an educational programme housed within the spectrum of vocational and technical education. Onyesom and Okolocha (2013) declared that business education is the intellectual and vocational preparation of individuals for earning a living in the modern industrial and business environment. Entrepreneurship education has been seen as an effective way of strengthening entrepreneurial intention and culture among business education students and university undergraduates at large. Business education is a tree of five branches that embody general education, office education, accounting education, marketing / distributive education and entrepreneurship education (Iwu, 2016). Entrepreneurship education will offer business education students such opportunities by helping them anticipate and respond to changes in the business environment. As a result, there has been a considerable increase in research on how entrepreneurship education influences individuals to become entrepreneurs. Exposure to this knowledge may instill entrepreneurial intention among business education students (Basu & Virick, 2008).

Intention is an individual's willingness or plans to engage in a particular behaviour and have several antecedents. According to Ajzen in Lee, Lim, Lim, Sern & Wong (2012), intention is the immediate antecedent of behaviour. The ultimate purpose of intentions is the prediction of behaviour (Assagioli in Dell, 2008).

Obschonka, Göthner, Silbereisen & Cantner, (2012), posited that entrepreneurial intentions are a central variable for researching the entrepreneurial process such as the transformation of knowledge into an economic outcome. Dell (2008), expressed that entrepreneurial intention is the willingness of people to perform entrepreneurial behaviour, to have interaction in entrepreneurial action, to be freelance, or to determine new business. It always involves a push force, ambition and the desire to stand on one's feet (Zain, Akram & Ghani, 2010). An individual may have potential to be an entrepreneur but not make any transition into entrepreneurship unless they have such intentions (Ismail et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial intention refers to individuals' states of mind that aimed at creating new venture, developing new business concept or creating new value within existing firms (Birds in Lee et al. 2012). It is an important factor in facilitating new venture establishment and has significant impact on the firms' venture success, survival and growth. Birds further stated that entrepreneurial intentions are mainly influenced by four main factors namely; personality traits, attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms.

According to Ademiluyi (2007), entrepreneurial intention is the intent to go into entrepreneurship ventures. Entrepreneurial intention is a self-acknowledged conviction by individuals that they will be able to establish new business ventures in the future. It is not merely a yes or no but can range from very low, zero, to a very high level of intention to set up a business. Birds in Zhao & Cal, (2010), stipulated that intention is a state of mind directing a person's attention, experience and actions toward a specific goal or path. An individual cannot engage in entrepreneurial pursuit without an intention to do so. Hence, entrepreneurial intention is a representation of a future course of action. It is not merely an expectation or prediction of future course of actions but a proactive commitment to get involved in business ventures.

Chell (2001) argued that individuals develop entrepreneurial intention from subjective norms in social context. Subjective norms are entrepreneurial intentions that measure the perceived social pressure to carry out or not to carry out entrepreneurial behaviors (Ajzen, 2001). In particular, it refers to the perception of family members, close friends, business consultants and teachers' expectations of an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur. Accordingly, individuals' entrepreneurial intention can be understood in terms of the types of situations encountered and the social (reference) groups to which individuals relate throughout their lives (Mwiya, 2014).

Personality trait is another predictor of entrepreneurship intention. An understanding of an individual's personal traits could assist in determining the required characteristics for entrepreneurs. Coon (2004) declared that personality traits as stable qualities that a person shows in most situations. To the trait theorists there are enduring inborn qualities or potentials of the individual that naturally make one an entrepreneur. The personality trait model focuses on enduring inborn qualities and locus of control on the individual's perceptions about the rewards and punishments in his or her life. Entrepreneurs possess some personal traits that make them more likely to start an enterprise than others (Li, 2007). Thus, McClelland in Mwiya, (2014) indicated that some individuals have certain psychological characteristics that determine whether or not one finds the tasks and roles of entrepreneurship attractive and viable. Personal trait comprises of fundamental characteristics of a person that endure over time and account for consistent patterns of responses to entrepreneurial situations. There are a number of individual factors that motivate a person's decision to become an entrepreneur (Ashley-Cotleur, Kings and Solomon, 2009). Ismail et al. (2009) stressed that in addition to personality traits several individual variables have been found to predict entrepreneurship. Factors affecting entrepreneurship are gender, age, education, work experience, role models among other individual differences. The study by Linan and Chen (2009)

developed and tested a questionnaire aimed at measuring entrepreneurial intention using the theory of planned behavior. The questionnaire was adapted for this study after making some modifications on the items.

Martinez, Kelley & Levie, (2010) suggested that there is need to consider the influence of entrepreneurship education on university students. Gender of business education undergraduates is a significant variable in determining the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions. In his view, Gerba (2012) asserted that male and female business education students who had undergone entrepreneurship education tend to have better entrepreneurial intentions than those who had not taken the course. However, the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State is not clearly known. To get an insight of the influence of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State intensified the need for this study.

1.1. Problem Statement

The high rate of youth unemployment and its attendant consequences such as arm robbery, terrorism, insurgences, kidnapping and youth restiveness, further call for different strategies and actions in order to tackle unemployment problems and minimize its consequences. One of the problems of Nigerian tertiary education is that too much emphasis is laid on the value of the certificate rather than the performance of the holder. In other words, undergraduates struggle hard to acquire certificates rather than the knowledge and skills which would make them self-reliant. This could be the reason why some graduates (business education graduates in particular) find it difficult to defend their certificates in the labour market. The establishment and practical acquisition of self-reliant skills by graduates of Nigerian higher institutions can only be obtained through effective entrepreneurship education. The study was therefore conducted to empirically ascertain the influence of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intentions of university undergraduates (business education undergraduates in particular) in Nigeria especially in Anambra State. Ascertaining the influence of entrepreneurship education on the factors that shape university undergraduates' intentions to become entrepreneurs is imperative to enable business education stakeholders make informed decisions. In this recognition, the study sought to determine the influence of entrepreneurship education on the:

- Subjective norms of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions.
- Personality traits of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions.

1.2. Research Questions

The research questions answered in the study were:

- What is the influence of entrepreneurship education on the subjective norms of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions?
- What is the influence of entrepreneurship education on the personality traits of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State towards entrepreneurial intentions?

1.3. Hypotheses

The null hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance were:

- The mean ratings of male and female business education university undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly on the influence of entrepreneurship education influences on their subjective norms towards entrepreneurial intentions.
- The mean ratings of male and female business education university undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly on the influence of entrepreneurship education influences on their personality traits towards entrepreneurial intention.

2. Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Survey research design was considered most appropriate for the study because a questionnaire was used to elicit respondents' opinions concerning the information that this study sought to establish. The study was conducted in Anambra State which is located in the south eastern part of Nigeria with a geographical positioning system of 6°20'N 7°00'E. The population for this study was made up of 243 (98 male and 145 female) students selected using stratified random sampling technique. In the process, two strata were purposely formed based on gender (male and female students). The Simple random sampling technique was used to choose 164 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 64 students from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram and 15 students from Madonna University, Okija giving a total of 243 students. The instrument used for data collection was an adapted Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) developed by Linan and Chen (2009). The researchers made some modifications on the items of the instrument adapted to suit the present study. To determine the validity of the instrument, three experts were used. Two from the field of Business Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used. The reliability coefficient obtained for the two clusters are 0.85, and 0.77 respectively with the overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 indicating that the instrument was reliable for study. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views, while the z-test was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision was that

when the mean scores of respondents fall within 2.50 and 5.00, the research question was taken as agreed. Any score otherwise was taken as disagreed. Similarly, when the z-cal is equal to or greater than the z-crit, the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise the null hypothesis was retained.

3. Results

S/N	Items on Subjective Norms	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Pressure from my parents makes me want to be an entrepreneur	3.43	1.14	Agree
2	My society's view of entrepreneurs motivates me to become an entrepreneur	3.20	1.15	Agree
3	Support from friend makes me want to become an entrepreneur	3.33	1.08	Agree
4	My parents are positively oriented towards a career as entrepreneur.	3.12	1.17	Agree
5	My friends see entrepreneurship as a logical choice.	3.10	1.03	Agree
6	I believe that people, who are important to me, think that I should pursue a career as an entrepreneur.	2.42	1.14	Agree
7	In my University, students are actively inspired to pursue their own ideas.	4.13	0.98	Agree
8	There is a well-functioning infrastructure and a place to support the start-up of new firms.	1.88	0.92	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	3.07		Agree

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on the Subjective Norms of Business Education Undergraduates towards Entrepreneurial Intentions

Data in Table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed on items 1 - 7 of the listed items but disagreed with one which is item 8 of the questionnaire. This shows that entrepreneurship education influences subjective norms of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. This is shown by the cluster mean of 3.07 which fell within moderate extent category. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

S/N	Items on Personality Trait	Mean	SD	Remarks
9	Entrepreneurship education: Enhances my likeness to try new things.	3.73	0.85	Agree
10	Enables me start new business if I detect an opportunity.	3.64	1.05	Agree
11	Makes me confident of my skills and abilities to start a business.	4.59	0.62	Agree
12	Enhances my leadership skills that are needed to be an entrepreneur.	3.94	1.14	Agree
13	Develops my mental maturity to be an entrepreneur.	4.39	0.69	Agree
14	Increases my entrepreneurial spirit	4.42	0.64	Agree
	Cluster Mean	4.12		Agree

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on the Personality Traits of Business Education Undergraduates towards Entrepreneurial Intentions

Data in Table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed with items 9 - 14 of the questionnaire. This shows that entrepreneurship education influences personality traits of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State. This is shown by the cluster mean of 4.12 which fell within agreed category. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range indicating that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	α	df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Male	79	3.52	0.77	0.05	213	0.09	1.96	Not significant
Female	136	3.51	1.06					

Table 3: z-Test Analysis of Male and Female Respondents on the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on Their Subjective Norms towards Entrepreneurial Intentions

Data in Table 3 showed that the calculated z - value of 0.09 is less than the critical z -value of 1.96 ($0.09 < 1.96$) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education undergraduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the influence of entrepreneurship education on their subjective norms. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	α	df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Male	79	3.85	0.67	0.05	213	0.10	1.96	Not significant
Female	136	3.84	0.79					

Table 4: Z-Test Analysis of Male and Female Respondents on the Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on their Entrepreneurial Intention on the Basis of Personality Traits towards Entrepreneurial Intentions

Data in Table 4 showed that the calculated z - value of 0.10 is less than the critical z -value of 1.96 ($0.10 < 1.96$) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education undergraduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the influence was accepted.

4. Discussion

Finding of this study revealed that business education undergraduates agreed that entrepreneurship education influences their subjective norms. The findings of this study are consistent with that of Reynolds (1991) which reported that entrepreneurship education is geared towards impacting students' entrepreneurial intentions based on subjective norms. Reynolds stated that one of the goals of entrepreneurship is to teach students how to build social relationships and bonds that promote trust and not opportunism. In agreement, Dell (2008) reported that entrepreneurship education help students to identify their sociological background which is one of the decisive push factors to becoming an entrepreneur. Dell stated that subjective norms relate to social background of a person which determines how far one can go. Entrepreneurs can overcome all obstacles and strive for success, spurred on by their background and desire to make life better. Also, Talas, Celik and Oral (2013) demonstrated the robustness of entrepreneurship education in influencing students' weak subjective norm as reflected in their perceived general acceptability of entrepreneurship as a career choice. In addition, the result of the test of null hypothesis showed that male and female business education undergraduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the influence of entrepreneurship education on their subjective norms. This is similar with the findings of Lee et al. (2012) which revealed that gender did not influence business education students' ratings on their entrepreneurial intentions based on subjective norms. Krumrei, Newton, Kin and Wilcok (2013) disclosed that entrepreneurship education helps in enhancing students' desire to be entrepreneurs which improves their standings in the society.

The study also showed that business education undergraduates agreed that entrepreneurship education influences their personality traits. This finding is in line with that of Phuong and Hieu (2015) which revealed that entrepreneurship education influences personality traits, such as locus of control and need for achievement which has a strong impact on the intention to start a new venture. Specifically, self-efficacy, optimism and passion have all been found to be positively related to the intentions to start up a new business (Zhao, 2005). Ismaïet al.(2009) on the other hand reported that the study of entrepreneurship education by undergraduate students have a significant impact on their personality traits and entrepreneurial intentions. Mueller and Thomas (2000) equally disclosed that entrepreneurship education develop undergraduate students' ability to control the environment through their action and willingness to take entrepreneurial risks. Mueller and Thomas further stated that a key dimension of the entrepreneurial intention is risk-taking propensity. For undergraduate students to succeed as entrepreneurs, they must possess higher risk propensity and uncertainty tolerance. Entrepreneurship education develops undergraduates' creative skills (Hamidi, Wennberg & Berglund, 2008). The authors stated that creativity has been identified as a primary predictor of entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurs need to be able to recognize opportunities, generate ideas and innovate. The authors found out that the more creative graduates are, the more likely they are to engage in entrepreneurship. Bolino and Feldman (2000) had earlier proposed that undergraduate students with a strong creativity anchor are motivated to become self-employed on graduation. Sternberg (2004) similarly argued that entrepreneurship education enhances students' creative intelligence - the capacity to think outside the box, and might influence an individual's decision to form a new venture.

Furthermore, the result of the test of null hypothesis showed that male and female business education undergraduates did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the influence of entrepreneurship education on their personality traits. This is also in line with the findings of Lee et al. (2012) which revealed that gender did not influence business students' ratings on their entrepreneurial intentions based on personality traits.

5. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it could be concluded that business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State would profit a lot from effectively delivered entrepreneurship education programme because it would improve their entrepreneurial intentions. As Nigeria is facing increased youth unemployment, effective delivering of entrepreneurship education in universities is imperative because it might enhance business education undergraduates' intentions towards becoming entrepreneurs. The findings of this study have some implications for resources and material provision, research and development activities in the training and retraining of business education lecturers in all the universities in Nigeria. It was also found that entrepreneurship education influences subjective norms and personality traits of business education undergraduates. The findings are relevant considering the fact that employment creation has become a top priority for governments and especially for business education programme bearing in mind the present unemployment rate among graduates of the programme and the dwindling economic resources in the country.

There is thus, the need to organize workshops, seminars and conferences for business educators in entrepreneurial skills development in our universities and other tertiary institutions where business education is being offered. This would enhance the production of adequately prepared business education students that would be able to utilize the skills acquired for successful business venture and entrepreneurship development upon graduation.

Additionally, there is need for more research on entrepreneurship skills development in universities to avail policy makers with adequate empirical information. Finally, there is need for publishers and entrepreneurship experts in Nigeria to develop more books and instructional materials on entrepreneurship, to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies by business education undergraduates for entrepreneurial success on graduation.

6. Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the researchers proffer the following recommendations:

- Universities should devise a strategy to assist business education undergraduates that indicated their intention to start enterprise while in school and after graduation through incubator programme. This will assist to encourage more students to take their intentions to become entrepreneurs serious.
- Universities should ensure that well equipped and functional entrepreneurial development centers are made available for business education undergraduates in universities.
- Government should start entrepreneurship education from primary school level through secondary school level. This should be made compulsory in order to positively influence youth's attitude towards entrepreneurship development.
- Publishers in Nigeria as well as professional entrepreneurs should develop books and instructional materials to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies needed by business education undergraduates for successful business ventures on graduation.
- Governments and professional bodies such as Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) should organize regular training programmes for entrepreneurship education students in universities through workshops, seminars and conferences to enhance business education undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions.
- Business educators should create the awareness of the benefits of entrepreneurship education to students. This will help business education students to take entrepreneurship education seriously since it is a viable means of employment creation in
- Nigeria.

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