Entrepreneurship Education and Small Scale Business Performance of Business Education Graduates in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of the study is to examine entrepreneurship education and small scale business performance of Business Education graduates in Rivers State. To carry out the study, two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was tested. Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. Data were collected using questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis. The result revealed that there is strong influence of entrepreneurship education on graduates small scale business competitiveness and profitability. The study therefore, recommended that the duration of entrepreneurship education should be increased for maximum impact on tertiary students.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship Education, Business Graduates, Competitiveness, Profitability.

INTRODUCTION
Employment creation and the boosting of income opportunity are some of Nigerian's top challenges in this 21st century. Democratic governance has placed them at the top of its policy priorities. Government policies and strategies are now being geared to encourage and support the private sector in generating growth in self-employment (Okechukwu, 2016). According to Okechukwu (2016), self-employment is a situation where an individual creates wealth that would enhance self-reliance and independence. He further posited that the development of the economy and the growth of employment opportunities actually depends on the investment decision of the private sector made up mainly of major corporate investors and medium-scale businesses, but this also includes small-scale entrepreneurs.

An entrepreneur is an innovator and developer having untried technology. He coordinates other factors of production such as land, labour and capital to make greater value and so, initiates changes and innovation of a new order business (Okechukwu, 2016). He further asserted that for poverty to be reduced to the barest minimum, the tertiary educational system should begin to tailor the students towards becoming entrepreneurs after they graduate from school. To him, entrepreneurship education is therefore, inevitable judging by the numbers of students graduating from the institutions of higher learning every year with at least 60% of the graduates not able to gain employment immediately.

According to Aluwong (2010), entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management of abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking employment. Entrepreneurship education is a functional education which exposes young people to the acquisition of skills, knowledge and the right attitude towards floating their own businesses (Akpomi, 2010). It is an aspect of education which preaches poverty eradication and creates self-confidence in the mind of those wishing to be self-reliant by developing their potentials towards making wealth (Yellowe, 2013). Entrepreneurship is about personal development, creativity, self-reliance, initiative and action orientation. According to Akpomi...
(2010), entrepreneurship education has the capacity to inculcate in the young graduates, the skill and technical-know-how of at least starting their own business upon graduation from the tertiary institution. According to Akpomi (2010), small scale business is a type of enterprise that requires little or no capital to start and which can either be managed through sole proprietorship, partnership, private or public limited companies. This kind of business organization as mostly carried out by an individual requires courage, creativity and proactiveness on the part of the owner for effective operation.

**Statement of the Problem**

Entrepreneurship education involves teaching young people the process of creating wealth by converting inputs into output. It is considered as an important driver of economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment, and is globally accepted as a key aspect of business performance (Oyinlola, 2016). Business Education graduates as recipients of entrepreneurship education are supposed to possess the right skills, knowledge and attitudes that would enhance their successful operation of at least, small-scale business outfits upon graduation from the tertiary institutions. They are supposed to have developed entrepreneurial spirit of generating income of their own legitimately, without waiting for white collar jobs.

However, it has been observed by Ekpo (2010), that about seventy-one percent (71%) of graduate students from Nigerian universities and other forms of tertiary institutions are incapable of owning and managing their own business successfully and therefore, seeking for jobs in organizations. Salim (2003), blamed the high rate of university graduates' failure to become successful entrepreneurs on poor delivery of entrepreneurship lessons by lecturers to students. Hence, this study is investigating the relationship between entrepreneurship education and small-scale business performance of business education graduates in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.  

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine entrepreneurship education and small-scale business performance of Business Education Graduates in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study examined the:

1. extent to which entrepreneurship education influence competitiveness of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.
2. extent to which entrepreneurship education influence the profitability of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the competitiveness of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the profitability of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State?

**Research Hypotheses**

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between the influence of entrepreneurship education to small-scale business competitiveness and profitability of Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Design of the Study**

The study adopted a correlational survey design. According to Nworgu (2015), correlational survey research type seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables hence, its adoption in the study is suitable.

**Area of the Study**

The study was carried out in Rivers State.

**Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised two hundred and thirty seven (237) masters' degree students in the Department of Business Education in Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) both in Port Harcourt.

69
Population distribution is shown in table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rivers State University (RSU)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ignatius Ajuru University (IAUOE)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Offices of the Deans, 2018

Sample and Sampling Techniques
There was no sample since the researcher could manage the population size.

Research Instrument
The instrument for gathering data was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised two sections, A and B. Section A was on bio-data of respondents while section B contained items to elicit responses on the respondents opinion on the research focus using a five point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE = 5), High Extent (HE = 4), Moderate Extent (ME = 3), Low Extent (LE = 2) and Very Low Extent (VLB = 1).

Validation of the Instrument
The researcher validated the instrument by submitting the initial draft to the research supervisor and two other senior lecturers in the Department of Business Education, Rivers State University. Their comments and corrections refined the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument
To establish reliability, the instrument was first administered to 20 students from Niger Delta University, AMASOMA. After the trial-testing, Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the coefficient reliability in which 0.80 was obtained and which indicates that the instrument was reliable.

Administration of the Instrument
The research instrument was administered to the respondents in the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, both in Rivers State. The researcher ensured that all the copies administered were retrieved on the spot but some respondents failed to submit their copies. On the whole, the researcher retrieved 202 out of 237 copies of the questionnaire distributed. This shows 85.23% return out of 100% distributed.

Method of Data Analysis
Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. To agree to any degree of extent, the following decision rules were used:

- 4.50-5.00 Very High Extent (VHE)
- 3.50 - 4.49 High Extent (HE)
- 2.50-3.49 Medium Extent (ME)
- 1.50 - 2.49 Low Extent (LE)
- 0.50 - 1.49 Very Low Extent (VLE)
RESULTS
The results from the data analysis of the study are presented below;

Research question 1: To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the competitiveness of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on entrepreneurship education influence on the competitiveness of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Entrepreneurship education influence on Competitiveness of Small-Scale Businesses</th>
<th>Mean (X̄)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps entrepreneurs gain advantages over their rivals</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps businesses of entrepreneurs survive economic changes</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps in the improvement of quality of services.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education enhances product distribution.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education enhances ability of businesses to meet up with standard</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education promotes business sustainability</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education encourages production of more sophisticated products.</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education enhances the ability to access a more advanced technology in business</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The result of the analysis presented in table 1 indicated that the majority of the respondents generally agreed to a High Extent that entrepreneurship education influences competitiveness.

Research Question 2: To what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the profitability of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduate in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation on entrepreneurship education influence on the profitability of small-scale businesses owned by Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Entrepreneurship education influence on the profitability of small-scale business</th>
<th>Mean (X̄)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps entrepreneurs make more sales of their products</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps entrepreneurs manage their business with little capital</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps entrepreneurs make higher turn-over in their business</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps entrepreneurs develop the spirit of customer relationship</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education creates the spirit of innovation the entrepreneur.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education exposes the entrepreneur on the best location to site a business</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education teachers branding and packaging of goods for customer attraction</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship education helps the entrepreneur to learn how best to make profit without stress.</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2019
The result of the analysis presented in table 2 indicated that all the respondents agreed to a High Extent that entrepreneurship education influences profitability.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the influence of entrepreneurship education to small-scale business competitiveness and profitability of Business Education Graduates in Rivers State.

In testing the hypothesis, the grand mean and standard deviation obtained from graduates' small-scale business competitiveness and profitability in table 1 and 2 above were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Calculated Value</th>
<th>Table value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>8.940</td>
<td>1.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above shows that the grand mean of respondents on the influence of entrepreneurship education on graduates' small-scale business competitiveness was 3.96 with standard deviation of 0.68 while the grand mean of respondents on the influence of entrepreneurship education on graduates' small-scale business profitability was 4.12 with standard deviation of 0.94. The calculated value is 8.940 while the table value is 1.964. The calculated value is greater than the table value hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the influence of entrepreneurship education to graduates' small-scale business competitiveness and profitability in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
From research question one, to what extent does entrepreneurship education influence the competitiveness of small-scale businesses owned by business education graduates' in Rivers State? It was found that entrepreneurship education helps graduates of business education survive their businesses even in a competitive environment. The knowledge of entrepreneurship education helps them develop the skill of creativity and risk taking thereby, enhancing expansion. The findings are in agreement with Yellowe (2013) who posited that entrepreneurship education inculcates the spirit of creativity and makes the individual self-reliant.

From the data collected in research question two, it was found that entrepreneurship education has a very high influence on graduates' small-scale business profitability. Entrepreneurship education helps business education graduates to at least start-up and manages their business with little capital. This finding is in agreement with Akpomi (2010), who believes that entrepreneurship education has the capacity to inculcate in the young graduates, the skill and technical-know-how of at least starting-up their own small-scale business outfit upon graduation from the university.

CONCLUSION
Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusions were made; entrepreneurship education has a strong influence on graduates' small-scale business competitiveness and profitability. This implies that for graduates of Business Education to be able to operate and effectively manage any business outfit, the knowledge of entrepreneurship education is very vital.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:
1. The duration of entrepreneurship education should be increased for maximum impact on tertiary students.
2. Business schools should be provided where interested students and community members can participate.
3. Government should provide enabling environment and all the necessary equipment and materials for easy teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education needed for economic enhancement and youth empowerment.

REFERENCES


